

Sharif International School On Theism East And West

theological event to be held from this coming years. The three categories these schools. Our current first school is and Actions, which will be followed by Mind-body problem, The problem of one on Natural kind, Laws of nature, and significance of sharing ideas, international Nevertheless, I do have a great willingness are all subordinated to the art of listening, and on the top of these stands, the God's thinking and the freedom of thoughts. If and be committed to the intrinsic attribute of human beings. In that case philosophizing or making and showing the enhancement of free thinking let it consider it as the business, as undoubtedly worth mentioning the there is silence and tolerance that us make this event happen these pandemic. May God bless us to next year. You participants us your kindness and professors from all Iranian professors indebted to
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a n d



It is a great honor and pleasure for me to announce the beginning of our Sharif International School on Theism: East and West. This summer school is the first year of the three consecutive years of the ten years of our intentions and ambitions to plan and organize these events. Sharif International School on Theism: East and West is a philosophical-moment, and will hopefully continue in the of "God," "man," and "nature" are the focus of centered on God; Concepts, Proofs, Attributes, our second school with the main themes of evil, Free will continue in 2022, and our third Teleology in 2023. I am not here to undermine the cooperation, and academic collaborations. to emphasize that the goals mentioned above the virtue of dialogue, and the value of learning, exclusive gift bestowed to humankind, that is free-we could provide an infrastructure to recognize value and the requirements of this exceptional the consequence will flourish and shine. Thus, if off the argumentations shouldn't result in or improvement of tolerance and pluralism, a job, as a vocation, and even vacation. It is saying from Imam Ali, who tells us that signifies knowledge. Many have helped days of the wild rise of the coronavirus have you and our professors in person are among those who have given support. The distinguished over the world and our fellow are those whom I am them, and I appreciate warm acceptance attendance.

Digital Journal

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Sharif University of Technology

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Our team

Slides

Address:

Sharif University of Technology, Azadi St.,
Tehran, Iran.

“Sharif International School on Theism: East and West” is held by a group of Iranian professors and students interested in the topics of religion and theology. The purpose of this group is to raise the knowledge of individuals on the mentioned topics and to discuss and exchange ideas at the international level.

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SHARIF UNIVERSITY
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Sharif International School
on Theism: East and West

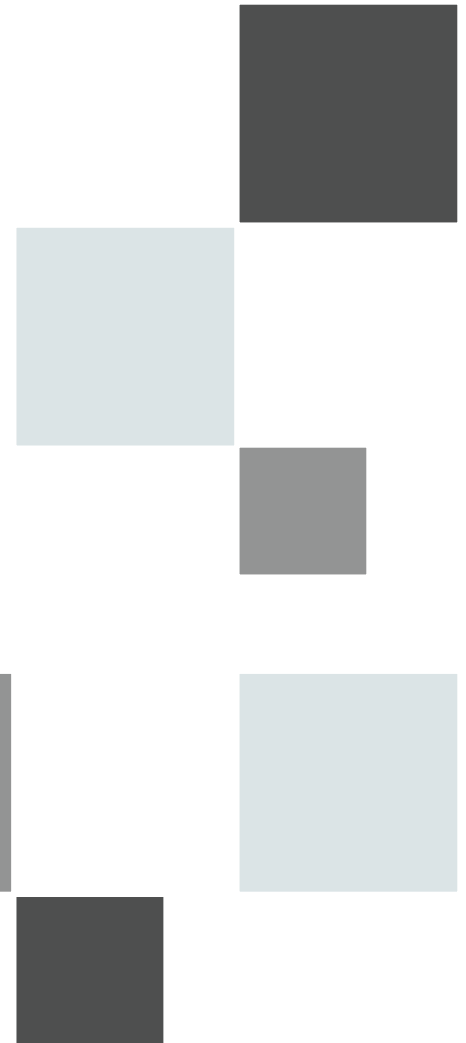
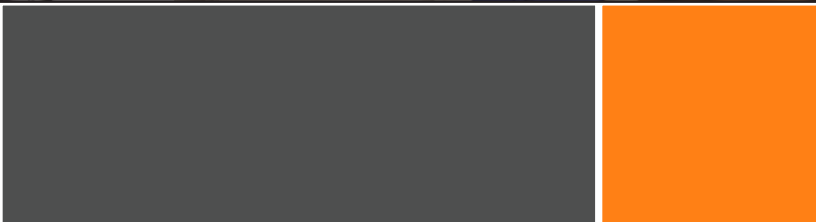


Sharif University
of Technology

Manifest

S. Hassan Hosseini

professor of philosophy at the Center for Philosophy of Science at Sharif University of Technology, Iran. He got his Ph.D. in philosophy, and his dissertation is on religious pluralism. Prof. Hessonni has been a visiting professor at Indiana University. His areas of interest are philosophy of religion, Islamic philosophy, and science and religion.



It is a great honor and pleasure for me to announce the beginning of our Sharif International School on Theism: East and West. This summer school is the first year of the three consecutive years of the ten years of our intentions and ambitions to plan and organize these events. Sharif International School on Theism: East and West is a philosophical-theological event to be held from this moment, and will hopefully continue in the coming years. The three categories of “God,” “man,” and “nature” are the focus of these schools. Our current first school is centered on God; Concepts, Proofs, Attributes, and Actions, which will be followed by our second school with the main themes of Mind-body problem, The problem of evil, Free will continue in 2022, and our third one on Natural kind, Laws of nature, and Teleology in 2023. I am not here to undermine the significance of sharing ideas, international cooperation, and academic collaborations. Nevertheless, I do have a great willingness to emphasize that the

goals mentioned above are all subordinated to the art of listening, the virtue of dialogue, and the value of learning, and on the top of these stands, the God’s exclusive gift bestowed to humankind, that is free-thinking and the freedom of thoughts. If we could provide an infrastructure to recognize and be committed to the intrinsic value and the requirements of this exceptional attribute of human beings. In that case the consequence will flourish and shine. Thus, if philosophizing or making and showing off the argumentations shouldn’t result in the enhancement of free thinking or improvement of tolerance and pluralism, let it consider it as the business, as a job, as a vocation, and even vacation. It is undoubtedly worth mentioning the saying from Imam Ali, who tells us that there is silence and tolerance that signifies knowledge. Many have helped us make this event happen these days of the wild rise of the coronavirus pandemic. May God bless us to have you and our professors in person next year. You participants are among those who have given us your kindness and support. The distinguished professors from all over the world and our fellow Iranian professors are those whom I am indebted to them, and I appreciate their warm acceptance and attendance.





Report

“Sharif International School on Theism: East and West” is a philosophical-theological event held in 2021, 2022, and 2023. The three categories of “God,” “human,” and “nature” have been the focus of these schools for three consecutive years. The first school was held from August 23 to September 2, 2021, concentrating on the subject of God. The central theme at the first school was these topics: God; Concepts, Proofs, Attributes, and Actions.

The first week began with a speech by Prof. **Seyed Hassan Hosseini** at the opening of the school, which gave a brief description of the goals of the event and the future perspective of the program, then Dr. Azadegan began his speech. **Ebrahim Azadegan** is the chairman and a professor of philosophy at the Center for Philosophy of Science at Sharif University of Technology, Iran. He got his Ph.D. from the Institute for Research in Fundamental Sciences in 2011. He was also a visiting scholar at the University of Oxford from 2010 to 2011. His research interests include the philosophy of religion, Science and Religion, and Ethics. Focusing on the effect of prayer on changing God's decisions, Azadegan said:

Islam, Christianity, and Judaism have been called Abrahamic religions in so far as their followers worship the God of Abraham. It seems crucial for our concerns regarding the questions which have been raised in the philosophy of religion and even theology to know who is the God which Abraham worships. There is a familiar story in all of the sacred texts of these religions, namely the story of Sodom and Lot's people, that I want to focus on to shed light on some of the attributes of Abraham's God. During the story, we can see two main themes. First, Abraham starts challenging God's decision to destroy Sodom, and second, Abraham pleads for their forgiveness. I shall try to argue that first, Abraham thinks that God's decisions can be changed, and second, that our human implications and praying can affect God's decisions.

The poster is for an event titled "THEISM: SHARIF INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL ON THEISM: EAST AND WEST". It features two speakers: Ebrahim Azadegan and S. Hassan Hosseini. The event is an "OPENING SPEECH ONLINE" on August 23, 3:00 p.m. (GMT+3:30) on 2021, in Iran. The poster includes contact information for the school and logos for Sharif University of Technology and the Center for Philosophy of Science.

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THEISM
SHARIF INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL ON THEISM:
EAST AND WEST

"Sharif International School on Theism: East and West" is a philosophical-theological event to be held in 2021, 2022, and 2023. The three categories of "God", "man" and "nature" are the focus of these schools for three consecutive years.

"Sharif International School on Theism: East and West" has gathered several most influential philosophers in the field to deliver their lectures on the relevant topics.

OPENING SPEECH
ONLINE
August 23
3:00 p.m.
(GMT+3:30)
2021, Iran

Ebrahim Azadegan **S. Hassan Hosseini**

S. Hassan Hosseini: School Director, Professor, Department of Philosophy of Science, Sharif University of Technology
Ebrahim Azadegan: Head of the Department of Philosophy of Science, Sharif University of Technology

Sharif University of Technology
Center for Philosophy of Science



THEISM
SHARIF INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL ON THEISM:
EAST AND WEST

ONLINE

August 23
4:00 p.m.
(GMT+3:30)
2021, Iran

SAJJAD RIZVI
University of Exeter, UK.



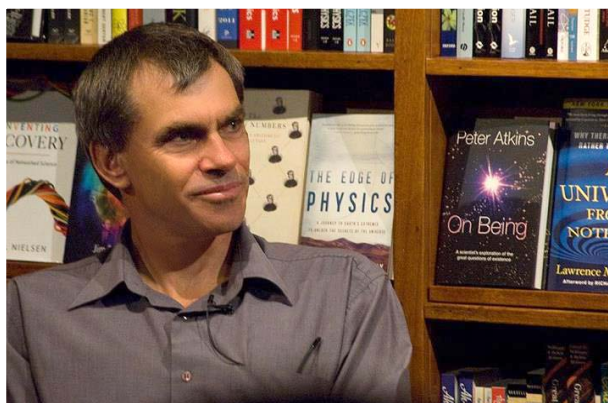
Divine Simplicity and its Implications for
a Philosophical Theology of the Divine
Names in Mulla Sadra



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At the end of the first day, Dr. Rizvi analyzed the issue of Divine Simplicity from Mulla Sadra's point of view. *Sajjad Rizvi* is an Associate Professor of Islamic Intellectual History and Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter, United Kingdom. Prof. Rizvi got his Ph.D. from Cambridge University in 2000. Rizvi's research interests lie in Islamic Philosophy and Qur'anic Studies. He is the author of around 60 papers and books, including his "Mulla Sadra and Metaphysics: Modulation of Being" from Routledge. Prof. Rizvi's lecture title was "Divine Simplicity and its Implications for a Philosophical Theology of the Divine Names in Mulla Sadra."



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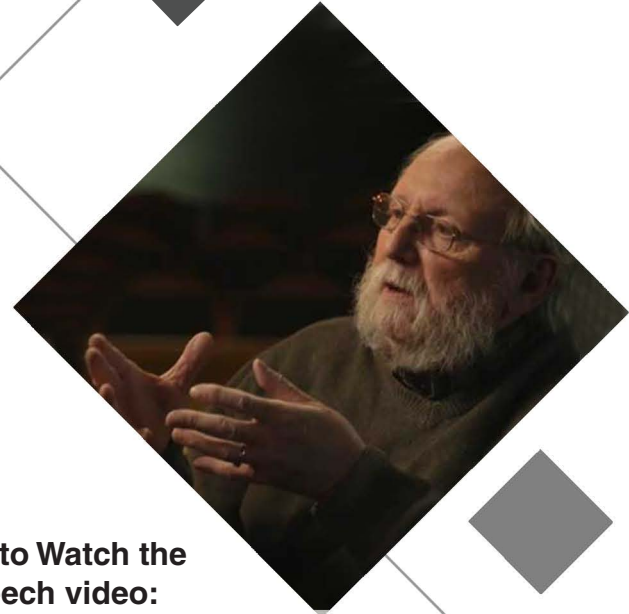
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The second day began with a lecture by Professor Oppy on “The Challenges of Atheism.” *Graham Oppy* is a professor of Philosophy at Monash University, Australia. He got his Ph.D. from Princeton University. Oppy is a founding editor of the Australasian Philosophical Review, and he has published around 200 publications, including 11 books. His books “Ontological Argument and Belief in God” and “Arguing about gods,” both from Cambridge University Press, are widely discussed among philosophers of religion. His research interests include philosophy of religion, metaphysics, philosophy of science, and epistemology. The lecture of Prof. Oppy was entitled “Challenges to Atheism.” He said briefly that: what atheism is and how it is distinguished from theism, agnosticism, and innocence and, why it is essential to distinguish

between atheism and atheistic worldviews. The bulk of the talk was then taken up to discuss ten objections to atheism (and atheistic worldviews). The charges to which he responds were that: (1) atheism is incoherent; (2) atheism is formally inconsistent; (3) atheism is impossible; (4) atheist is false; (5) atheism is unlikely; (6) atheism is less probable than theism; (7) atheism is irrational; (8) atheism is imprudent; (9) atheism is immoral; and (10) atheism is dangerous. In the end, he argued that most of these charges are no more plausible than the corresponding charges against theism, That is, that: (1) theism is incoherent; (2) theism is formally inconsistent; (3) theism is impossible; (4) theism is false; (5) theism is unlikely; (6) theism is less probable than atheism; (7) theism is irrational; (8) theism is imprudent; (9) theism is immoral; and (10) theism is dangerous.

The last speaker on the second day was Professor Ross, entitled “Did the Darwinian Revolution mean the Death of God?” was presented. **Michael Ruse** is a Professor of Philosophy and the Director of the History and Philosophy of Science Program at Florida State University, USA. He got his Ph.D. from Bristol University in 1970. His research interests include Philosophy of Biology (especially Darwinism), Ethics, and the History and Philosophy of Science. The Bertrand Russel Society awarded Michael Ruse for his dedication to science and reason in 2014. Prof. Ruse has also been the founding editor of the journal of Biology and Philosophy. He is the author and editor of around 50 books, some of which are translated into many languages.

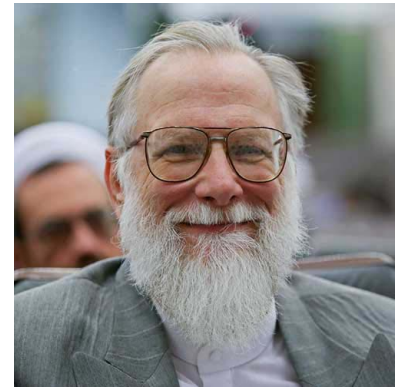
The Ruse began his speech as follows: Jerry Coyne, Darwinian evolutionist and ardent New Atheist, argue that Darwin’s theory of evolution is the “greatest Scripture killer, ever,” This would have been news to Darwin. Later in life, he became an agnostic, but this had nothing to do with science. He could not bear the thought that his father and his brother, two of the best men he had ever known, would go to hell because they were non-believers. He continued: Does Darwinian evolution imply that you are or, at least, you should be a non-believer? Coyne or Darwin?



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The third day began with a speech by Professor Legenhausen. **Mohammad Legenhausen** is currently a Professor of Philosophy at Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute, Iran. He got his Ph.D. from Rice University. He has taught philosophy at Texas Southern University from 1979 to 1989. His research interests include Philosophy of Religion and Islamic Philosophy. Muhammad Legenhausen authored numerous articles and books, including his “Islam and Religious Pluralism.” The title of Prof. Legenhausen’s lecture was “Is God a Person?”



He believes that the most striking difference between Christian and Muslim theologies is that while God is a person for Christians, Muslims worship an impersonal deity. Despite the importance of this difference for a host of theological issues, it is a difference that has gone largely unnoticed by Christians and Muslims alike. Yet Christians everywhere will affirm that God is a “person,” while the average English-speaking Muslim will readily deny this. Theism is often defined by philosophers of religion who work in the Christian tradition in such a manner as to require the belief that God is a person. Thus the Encyclopedia of Philosophy has it that, “THEISM signifies belief in one God who is personal, worthy of adoration, and separate from the world but continuously active in it”. He argued that this view is incompatible with classical philosophical theologies found in Maimonides, Aquinas, Avicenna, and Mulla Sadra, for the concept of a person applies properly only to temporal beings with mental faculties.

THEISM
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EAST AND WEST
ONLINE
August 25
4:00 p.m.
(GMT+3:30)
2021, Iran

Rahim Acar
Marmara University, Turkey

On Avicenna's Theology

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The third day ended with a speech by Professor Acar. **Rahim Acar** is a Professor of philosophy at Marmara University, Turkey. Prof. He got his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 2002. His research interests include Islamic Philosophy and Philosophy of Religion. Rahim Acar has published numerous articles and books, including his “Talking about God and Creation.” Prof. Acar’s lecture title was “On Avicenna’s Theology.”

His lecture provided an outline of Ibn Sina’s approach to major theological issues. The first issue concerns the possibility and limits of rational theology. In this regard, he looked at Ibn Sina’s discussion of whether God can be the subject matter of any science. Secondly, he related Ibn Sina’s argument(s) for the existence of God. He continued: Ibn Sina’s discussion regarding divine properties has been controversial since the middle ages. I would like to address concerns of divine action or control over the universe. I would like to highlight Ibn Sina’s conception of God as the fundamental cause of the universe and all in it.

Timothy O'Connor is a professor of philosophy at Indiana University, USA. He got his Ph.D. from Cornell University in 1992. His main research interests lie in metaphysics, philosophy of mind, and philosophy of religion. Prof. O'Connor has published around 60 articles, two books, and seven edited volumes. His "Theism and Ultimate Explanation" from Blackwell has sparked fruitful debates among scholars worldwide. Professor Timothy O'Connor's lecture focused on metaphysical theism and naturalism, including arguments about theism from a consciousness perspective and some naturalistic arguments about evil.

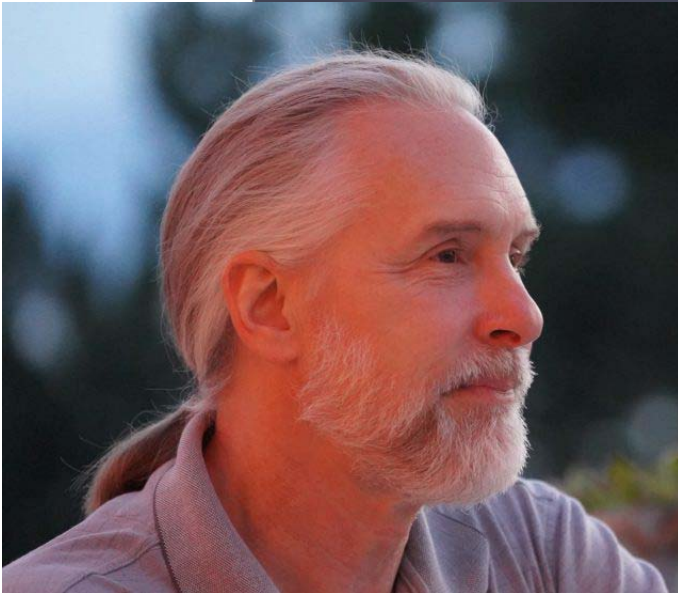
Each speaker devoted three sessions to presenting relevant topics in the event's second week.



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Jeffrey Koperski is a professor of philosophy at Saginaw Valley State University, USA. He got his Ph.D. from Ohio State University in 1997. His areas of specialization are philosophy of science and philosophy of religion.



He has published around 40 research papers and three books, including “The Physics of Theism” from Wiley. The first of lectures from Prof. Koperski, entitled “What is a Law of Nature?”. The second lecture entitled “Divine Action: An Overview of the Terrain” and the third lecture on “The Neo-Classical Model of Divine Action” were presented.



Ben Page

Oriel College University of Oxford, UK.
No Divine Power Lefto'ver?

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Speech video:

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Ben Page is currently a lecturer in philosophy at Oxford University, United Kingdom. He got his Ph.D. from Durham University in 2019. His areas of specialization are Medieval philosophy, Metaphysics, and Philosophy of Religion. In particular, he has a strong interest in Neo-Aristotelian approaches to metaphysics and their implications for the philosophy of religion. Ben Page has published a dozen of excellent articles in prestigious journals in the past six years. He gave his first lecture entitled “Timelessness à la Leftow “presented, and the title of his second speech was” No divine power it was “Lefto'ver.”

Seyed Hassan Hosseini is a professor of philosophy at the Center for Philosophy of Science at Sharif University of Technology, Iran. He got his Ph.D. in philosophy, and Seyed Hossein Nasr supervised his dissertation on religious pluralism at George Washington University. Prof. Hessonni has been a visiting professor at Indiana University from 2008 to 2009. His areas of interest are philosophy of religion, Islamic philosophy, and science and religion. Prof. His lecture focused on Ibn Sina's Theism, as well as on the evidence for the existence of God and God's Knowledge from Ibn Sina's point of view.

Mohammad Saeedimehr is a professor of philosophy at Tarbiat Modares University, Iran. He got his Ph.D. in philosophy from Tarbiat Modares University in 2001. His research interests include Avicennian philosophy, philosophy of religion, and metaphysics. Professor Saeedimehr delivered three lectures about "God's Necessity" and "God's Knowledge."

Yosef Daneshvar is currently a professor of philosophy at Imam Khomeini Education and Research Institute. He got his Ph.D. from the University of Toronto in 2008. His research interests include Islamic Philosophy and the Philosophy of Religion. His lectures were on "Abrahamic Faiths on Divine Action."

Mohammad Saeedimehr
Tarbiat Modares University, Iran



S. Hassan Hosseini
Sharif University of Technology, Iran



Yosef Daneshvar
Imam Khomeini Institute, Iran



**Click to Watch the
Speech video:**

<https://www.aparat.com/v/ZqfH4>



Seyed Hossein Nasr is a Professor of Islamic Studies at George Washington University. He got his Ph.D. from Harvard University. Prof. Nasr has published over 50 books and hundreds of articles that are translated into many languages. Prof. Nasr was the Templeton Science and Religion Award Winner in 1999, and he delivered the prestigious Gifford Lectures in 1980. The lecture of Profs. Nasr was entitled “God in Transcendent Theosophy.”



Brian Leftow currently holds the William Alston Chair for Philosophy of Religion at Rutgers University, USA. He has formerly served as a professor of religion at Oxford University. Leftow got his Ph.D. from Yale University in 1984, and his areas of specialization include philosophy of religion, medieval philosophy, and metaphysics. He has published over 50 research papers and five books, including his well-known “God and Necessity” from Oxford University Press. Prof. Leftow’s

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International Affairs



Prof. S. Hassan
Hosseini
School Director



Dr. Ebrahim Azadegan
Head, Department of
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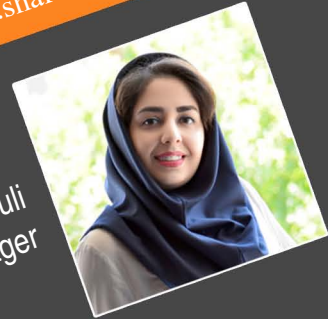
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SLIDE

To see the slides, click on the name of each speaker

*Jeffrey
Koperski*

*Timothy
O'Connor*

*Michael
Ruse*

*Graham
Oppy*

*Ben
Page*

*Mohammad
Legenhausen*

*S. Hassan.
Hosseini*

*Rahim
Acar*

Divine Action: An Overview of the Terrain



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Jeffrey Koperski
Department of Philosophy
Saginaw Valley State University

What's the Problem with Divine Intervention?

- Incompetence
 - An all-knowing, all-powerful Creator would not need to intervene
- Problem of Evil
- Conflict with Science
- Inconsistent

Three Main Approaches

- Interventionism
 - God intervenes in nature, breaking its laws
- Noninterventionism
 - God does not intervene
- Nonviolationism
 - Divine action without breaking the laws of nature

Thomism

- Primary Causation: God
- Secondary Causation: Everything else
 - God works “in and through” secondary causes
 - No intervention
- Problem: the history of science
 - 17th century science rejected Thomistic metaphysics



Panentheism

- Relation between God and nature is **not** Creator to created
 - More like soul to body
- Intervention is impossible
- Problems
 - Most Abrahamic theists believe that God **chose** to create the universe
 - Clarity: how does God act?
 - Problem of Evil



Divine Action through Quantum Mechanics

- Randomness
 - In classical mechanics, randomness is due to a lack of knowledge
 - Thought experiment: Laplacian Demon
 - (Remember this! I'll need it later.)
 - Quantum randomness is different
 - Schrödinger's Cat
- God and Quantum Randomness
 - "Divine Quantum Determination"

Problem:

The Need for Amplification

- Not many ways for quantum randomness to affect observable reality

Problem:

QM might not be Random

- Bohmian Mechanics
 - No collapse of the wave-function
 - Deterministic
- The Many-Worlds Interpretation
 - Also deterministic
- In neither case are there any ontologically random events in which God can act

Problem: Amplification (again)

- Nature tends to block quantum events from influencing the macroscopic realm
 - Nobel laureate Robert Laughlin: “quantum protectorates”
- Bottom line: Even if God influences quantum events, it will not make any difference in the macroscopic world

Conclusion

- Current nonviolationist models are interesting, but limited
 - If they are correct, then God cannot do much in the physical universe
- But maybe there is more to say...



The Neo- Classical Model of Divine Action

Jeffrey Koperski

Department of Philosophy

Saginaw Valley State University

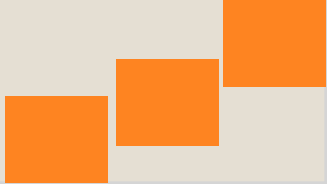
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More on laws

- Universal Gravitation: $F = G \frac{m_1 m_2}{r^2}$
- Conditional?
- Nancy Cartwright:
 - “*If* there are no forces other than gravitational forces at work, *then* two bodies exert a force between each other which varies inversely as the square of the distance between them, and varies directly as the product of their masses.”



What is a law and what is not

- Initial conditions: the state of the system at a point in time
 - Dynamical laws: how the system evolves over time
 - Models: differential equations for a specific system
- 

Euler's Method

- 1) Determine the type of system: particles, rigid bodies, etc.
- 2) Determine the relevant forces acting on these bodies.
- 3) For a given particle, determine the influence (direction and strength) of one force at a time.
- 4) Repeat (3) until all forces have been accounted for, and then do the same for every particle in the system.
- 5) For each particle, sum up the forces along each axis.
- 6) For each particle, set the sum of forces along a given axis equal to its mass times the acceleration ($F=ma$).

What can change?

- Change:
 - State of the system, initial conditions
 - Model of the system (=the equations produced by the Euler Method)
- Never Change:
 - Force laws
 - Laws of motion
- The laws adapt to change

Determinism?

- Older view:
 - All events determined by the laws of nature
- Modern physics:
 - Unique evolution
 - Example: grandfather clock

The Neo-Classical Model of Divine Action

- The laws of nature: Decretalism
- Euler method shows how laws work in physics
 - Lots of things can be changed, but not the laws
 - Slogan: the laws never break; they flow
- Free will acts and change
 - What we can do, God can do



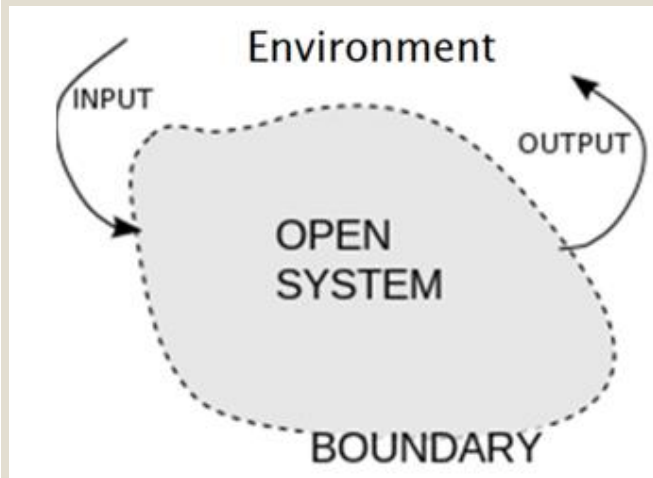
Problem

- Conservation laws
 - Energy, momentum, etc.
- Doesn't the Neo-Classical Model violate conservation laws?



Conservation of Energy

- Not absolute
 - Does not apply to open systems
 - Does not apply in Big Bang cosmology




When Energy is Conserved

- In physics, a Lagrangian L is a mathematical description of the energy of a system
- Mass on a spring:
 - Kinetic energy: $\frac{1}{2}mv^2$ (m=mass, v=velocity)
 - Potential energy: $\frac{1}{2}kx^2$ (k=constant, x=position)
- Noether's Theorem
 - If the Lagrangian changes over time, then energy is not conserved



What this means for divine action

- When God acts on a system, that influence changes over time
 - So the system's Lagrangian changes over time
 - By Noether's Theorem, conservation of energy does not apply
 - And so conservation of energy is not "violated"
- 

According to one physics textbook,


- It must be reiterated that we have not proved the conservation laws of linear momentum, angular momentum, and energy. We have only derived various consequences of Newton's laws; that is, **if** these laws are valid in a certain situation, **then** momentum and energy will be conserved. But we have become so enamored with these conservation theorems that we have elevated them to the status of laws and we have come to *insist* that they be valid in any physical theory. . . . **We do not actually have conservation laws in such situations, but rather conservation postulates that we force on the theory.** (Marion and Thornton 1988, 74)

Putting it together

- Decretalism about the laws of nature
- Looking for a model of divine action in which God does not violate the laws
- Euler's Method shows that the laws adapt to change
 - Including changes that God makes
- Conservation laws do not apply in those instances



Objections to the Neo-Classical Model

- Treats God as just another cause
 - God is not a good explanation
- 

Occasionalism

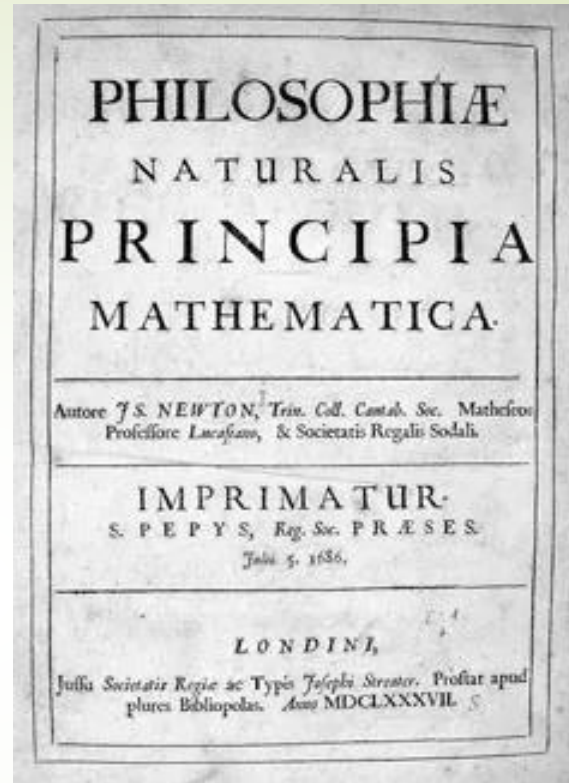
- Only God brings about change
- Malebranche: “there is only one true cause because there is only one true God; . . . the nature or power of each thing is nothing but the will of God; ... [and] all natural causes are not *true* causes but only *occasional* causes”
- My view: God decrees the laws of nature once at creation

Conclusion to the Three Lectures

- Three views of the laws of nature:
 - Humeanism
 - Dispositionalism
 - Nomological Realism
 - Decretalism
- Three views of divine action:
 - Intervention
 - Nonintervention
 - Nonviolation
- Laws and change
 - The laws never break; they adapt to changes of state
 - The Neo-Classical Model of divine action



The Laws of Nature



Jeffrey Koperski

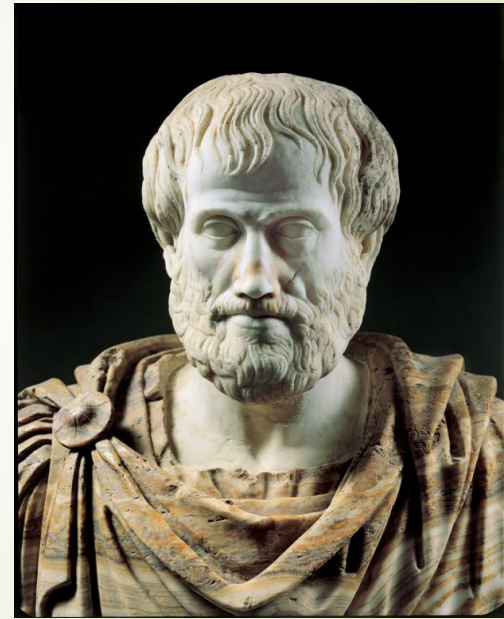
Department of Philosophy

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Aristotelian Metaphysics

- ▶ For Aristotle, each object that we see is composed of two things:
 - ▶ Prime matter
 - ▶ Essence (substantial form)
- ▶ Essences are responsible for action
 - ▶ Even inanimate objects act in a purposeful way in accordance with their essence
 - ▶ Solid objects naturally move toward the center of the earth
 - ▶ Fire naturally tries to reach up to the celestial realm



Aristotle

Experimentation was not valued

- ▶ Medieval thinkers did not generally test their ideas in the real world
 - ▶ Experiments produce “violent behavior,” counter to a thing’s nature
 - ▶ No insight into the essence

Voluntarism:

God can do whatever God wants

- ▶ God is not restricted by a divine nature/essence
- ▶ God chooses a set of laws from among many different options



William Ockham

From British Voluntarism to Experiments

- ▶ Reason alone cannot reveal the laws
 - ▶ Observations must be made in order to see what choices God actually made in creating the universe
 - ▶ Experimentation becomes important
 - ▶ Mathematician Roger Cotes in the preface of the 2nd ed of Newton's *Principia*: the laws of nature show "many traces indeed of the most wise contrivance, but not the least shadow of necessity. These therefore we must not seek from uncertain conjectures, but learn them from observations and experiments."

Three Views on Laws

- Humean Laws
- Dispositionalism
- Nomological Realism



1. Humean Laws

A. Regularity Theory

- ▶ Laws are descriptions of regular events
- ▶ Problems:
 - ▶ Which regularities are laws?
 - ▶ Science and laws



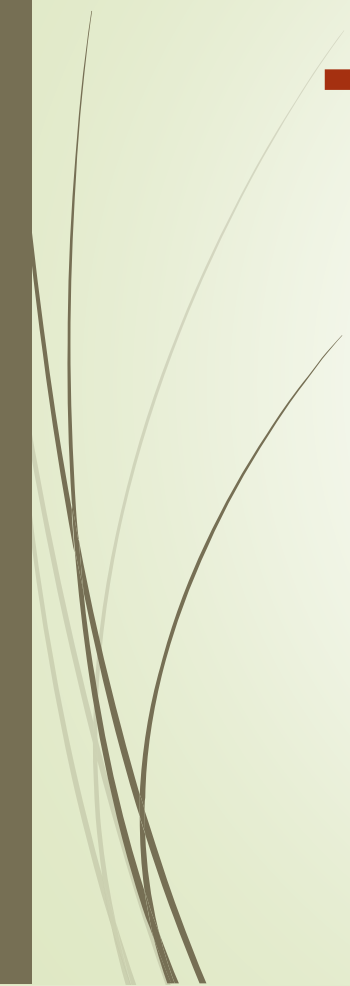

Humean Laws

B. Best System

- ▶ Laws are merely those generalizations that are most fundamental in our scientific thinking
- 



Laws vs. Law-statements

- ▶ Humean: There are only law-statements
 - ▶ They have no ontology
 - ▶ Which means that the laws don't govern nature or make anything happen
- 
- 

2. Dispositionalism

- ▶ Laws are not fundamental
 - ▶ Entities have dispositions/causal powers
 - ▶ E.g., a proton has the disposition to repel other protons and attract electrons
- ▶ More like what Aristotle had in mind
- ▶ Problems
 - 1: History of science
 - 2: Clarity



3. Nomological Realism

- A. Relation between universals (properties)
- B. Tim Maudlin's primitivism
 - ▶ Laws as fundamental
- C. Decretalism
 - ▶ Laws as expressions of God's will

Decretalism

- Positives (at least in my view)
 - Type of nomological realism
 - Conservative
 - History of science
- Problems
 - Naturalism
 - Epistemic access



Decretalism

- ▶ Do laws **govern**?
 - ▶ Laws and change
 - ▶ A different approach:
 - ▶ Laws as constraints
- 
- 

Ibn Sina's Theism, Conceptions, Principles and Proofs
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THEISM
SHARIF INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL ON THEISM:
EAST AND WEST



Back to List

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- ▶ **Introduction: What is Metaphysics?**
- ▶ **1. Conceptions and Principles**
 - 1.1. Primary Notions
 - 1.2. Essence and Existence
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What is Metaphysics? Theism in Metaphysics...



According to the Aristotelian methodology endorsed by Ibn Sina, every science assumes the existence of its own subject-matter.

“Let us now investigate what the subject matter of this science is; and let us consider whether it is the existence of God.... We will thus say: It is not possible that [God's existence] should be the subject matter. This is because the subject matter of every science is something whose existence is admitted in that science, the only thing investigated being its states...The existence of God cannot be admitted as the subject matter of this science; rather, it is [something] sought in it. This is because, if this were not the case, then [God's existence] would have to be either admitted in this science but searched for in another, or else admitted in this science but not searched for in another, Both alternatives are false. let us consider: Is its subject matter the ultimate causes for all the existents...”

[Then we should presuppose the existence of the ultimate causes as the presupposition, while the principle of causality needs separate argument and proofs].

...What is Metaphysics? Theism in Metaphysics...



“Thus, this science investigates the states of the existent-and the things that belong to it ...Thus, [some of] the things sought after in this science are the causes of the existent inasmuch as it is a caused existent; some [of the things sought after pertain to the accidental occurrences to the existent; and some pertain to the principles of the particular sciences.”

{ ١٧ } فهذا العلم يبحث عن أحوال الموجود، والأمور التي هي له كالأقسام والأنواع، حتى يبلغ إلى تخصيص يحدث معه موضوع العلم الطبيعي فيسلمه إليه، وتخصيص يحدث معه موضوع الرياضى فيسلمه إليه، وكذلك فى غير ذلك. وما قبل ذلك التخصيص كالمبدأ، [فيبحث] عنه [ويقرر] آ حاله. فتكون إذن مسائل هذا العلم فى أسباب الموجود المعلول بما هو موجود معلول، وبعضها فى عوارض الموجود، وبعضها فى مبادئ العلوم الجزئية.

[The ultimate causes as well as God, to be considered as the states and predicates of the existent as it is existent]

What is Metaphysics?...the First and the Head



- ✓ Metaphysics is “first” and “at the head” of all sciences and is universal not only because it concerns being *qua* being (instead of just some aspects of it), but also because it comprehends reality—and the system of knowledge this implies—as a whole (instead of just some portions of it).
- ✓ Metaphysics fits the definition as the science of **being *qua* being** or, literally, of **the existent *qua* existent**: *al-mawǧūd bi-mā huwa mawǧūd*.
 - ✓ [profound connection between theology and ontology...]

1.1. Primary Notions...Being, Thing, One, Necessary



- ▶ The primary notions of metaphysics are the common notions that are first known, the most known in themselves, through which all other notions are known (including the opposites of the primary notions). They are indeed the most universal notions. Along with *absolute being* Ibn Sina identifies *thing*, *one*, and *necessary* as the primary notions of his metaphysics. These primary notions are the same in extension but distinct in intension...
- ▶ The primary notions are prior to their opposite notions; this is because primary notions have a greater extension and more basic intensions than their opposites. First, the absolutely universal transcategorical extension of the primary notions reveals the subordination of *nonbeing*, *nothing*, *many*, and *possible or impossible*, to *being*, *thing*, *one*, and *necessary*, respectively. For Ibn Sina, every entity is **a being, a thing, one, and necessary**, but not all entities are nonbeings, nothing, many, and possible or impossible. Second, the intensions **existence, quiddity, indivisibility, and invariance of existence**—that is, the intensions denoted by the primary notions—are also prior to the intensions of the opposite notions. For **nonexistence, nothing, multiplicity, and possibility and impossibility** are all intellectually understood in virtue of the intensions of the primary notions.



1.1. Primary Notions...Being, Thing, One, Necessary

- ▶ (being = existence) ≠ (nonexistence = nonbeing)
- ▶ (necessary = invariance of existence) ≠ (possible and impossible)
- ▶ (thing = quiddity) ≠ (nothing)
- ▶ (one = indivisibility) ≠ (multiplicity)

1.1. Primary Notions...Being, Thing, One, Necessary



- ▶ Since the primary notions are all co-extensional with each other, their shared universal extensionality cannot provide the distinguishing factor required to determine which primary notions are more basic. Accordingly, we must turn to what distinguishes each of the primary notions, namely, their diverse meanings, in order to determine if there is any intentional priority or posteriority among the primary notions.
- ▶ Indeed, *Being* and *necessary* are the most basic primary notions in the ontology of the *Ilāhiyyāt*.
- ▶ To sum up the every detailed discussions of Ibn Sina:
 1. The primary notions being and necessary are identified as the most basic primary notions in Ibn Sina's *Ilāhiyyāt*, they are prior to the intensions of the other primary notions thing and one—namely, quiddity and indivisibility.
 2. The necessary is therefore the most fundamental primary notion in Ibn Sina's *Metaphysics of the Healing*.
 3. The primary notion thing stands between the least and most basic primary notions insofar as it is intensionally prior to one but is intensionally posterior to being and necessary...thus there is an intensional hierarchy among these notions.
 4. Necessary → being → thing → one

1.2. Essence and Existence...the Main Distinction



- Existence that is specific is distinct from the more general type of existence which Ibn Sina calls "affirmative existence" (الوجود الاثباتي). To predicate affirmative existence of an entity is to assert *that* the entity is, not *what* the entity is. To predicate existence that is specific, on the other hand, is to assert *what* the entity is, not *that* the entity is. Since existence that is specific is identical to inner reality, and since inner reality is identical to whatness (ماهيه), it follows that existence that is specific is identical to whatness, and that is distinct from affirmative existence. In other words, essence is distinct from existence.

1.2. Essence and Existence...the Main Distinction



So the analysis of being reveals two meanings of existence: the first affirms or establishes the existence of something; the second expresses, without affirming its existence, the reality by virtue of which something is what it is, namely, its essence. The first is what Ibn Sina calls "the existence related to the fact that [something] is established" (الوجود الاثباتي), the second identifies the "particular" or "proper existence" of the thing (الوجود الخاص).

As regards the latter, one is either not required to know whether the thing is or is not existent or else one ignores the whole question. In the first sense, then, the "existent" "existing thing" stands for "what is established" (al-muṭbat) or "realized" (al-muḥaṣṣal) and affirms that something exists. in the second sense, which is expressed by "proper existence", what is referred to is the "reality" (al-ḥaqīqa), "nature" (al-ṭabī'a), "essence" (al-dāt) or—according to Ibn Sina's technical terminology—"quiddity" (māhiyya) or "thingness" (šay'iyya) of the thing. Here no existential judgment is implied (one does not know if the thing exists); what is expressed is an note of intension, independent of its existence, which necessarily accompanies it.

1.2. Essence and Existence...the Main Distinction, Quotes



- "The thing, or its equivalent, may be used in all languages to indicate some other meaning. For, to everything there is a reality by virtue of which it is what it is. Thus, the triangle has a reality in that it is a triangle, and whiteness has reality in that it is whiteness. It is that which we should perhaps call "proper existence," not intending by this the meaning given to affirmative existence; for the expression "existence" is also used to denote many meanings, one of which is the reality a thing happens to have. Thus, [the reality] a thing happens to have is, as it were, its proper existence."
- "To resume, we say: It is evident that each thing has a reality proper to it—namely, its quiddity. It is known that the reality proper to each thing is something other than the existence that corresponds to what is affirmed."

[Both as fundamental notions of metaphysics and as real principles in real things]

(٩) والشئ وما يقوم مقامه قد يدل به على معنى آخر فى اللغات كلها ، فإن لكل أمر حقيقة هو بها ما هو ، فللمثل حقيقة أنه مثلث ، وللبياض حقيقة أنه بياض ، وذلك هو الذى ربما سميناه الوجود الخاص ، ولم نرد به معنى الوجود الإثباتى . فإن لفظ الوجود يدل به أيضا على معانى كثيرة ، منها الحقيقة التى عليها الشئ ، فكأنه ما عليه يكون الوجود الخاص للشئ .

(١٠) ونرجع فنقول : إنه من البين أن لكل شئ حقيقة خاصة هى ماهيته ، ومعلوم أن حقيقة كل شئ الخاصة به غير الوجود الذى يرادف الإثبات .

1.2. Essence and Existence...the Indifference of Quiddity



- The so-called theory of the "indifference of essence": in itself quiddity is only quiddity. it is then either universal or particular, although *in itself* it is neither universal nor particular and is nothing but quiddity.
- The indifference of quiddity to any kind of determination...is exactly because quiddity is in itself neither real (i.e. extra-mental) nor mental, that it can be present both in reality and in the mind, accompanied by the determinations of either individuality or universality: in concrete reality there is x in its particular existence, while in the mind there is x with its possible multiple predication. In this respect, the *consideration* of quiddity in itself—which corresponds to the thing in itself as expressed by its definition—transcends both levels of existence (external and mental).

1.2. Essence and Existence...the Domain



- ❖ Existence can consequently be said to be external to essence, so that an existing thing, whose essence or quiddity is possible, can be said to be composed of essence and existence. Conversely, in that which is in itself necessary there is no need for such a composition (there is no essence: no being something, but only being).
- ❖ Only in the Necessary Being (*wijjib al-wujjid*), or God, are essence and existence inseparably united.
- ❖ Everything other than God, from the lowest type of material thing to the highest angel, is a being composed of two ontological principles: quiddity and existence. In such composed beings, their existence is ontologically "other" than their quiddity. Consequently, such a being must be made to exist by some external efficient cause giving it existence.

1.2. Essence and Existence...Extension and Intension



- How things and existents relate to each other both *extensionally* (that is, whether or not the domain of things overlaps with the domain of existents) and *intensionally* (that is, whether or not thing and existent have the same meaning). The main theories:
 1. Existent is subsumed extensionally but not intensionally under thing: "existents are always things but things are not always existents; to be a thing and to be an existent have different meanings" (Mutazilites).
 2. Thing and existent are identical both extensionally and intensionally: "things are always existents, and existents are always things; to be a thing and to be an existent have the same meaning" (Asharites).
 3. Thing and existent are identical extensionally but different intensionally: "things are always existents, and existents are always things; to be a thing and to be an existent have different meanings" (Ibn Sina).

[Ibn Sina took a middle path between the Mu'tazilites and their rivals the Aš'arites.]

1.2. Essence and Existence...Rewriting the Argument for the Distinction



The distinction between essence and existence¹ is argued for by means of the analysis of five propositions :

1. "The essence so-and-so is existent in the concrete objects, or in the souls, = informative statement
2. "The essence so-and-so is the essence so-and-so" = tautology
3. "The essence so-and-so is an essence" = tautology
4. "The essence so-and-so is a thing" = not informative, unless "thing" is meant as "existing [thing]": "The essence so-and-so is an existing thing" = informative
5. "The essence is a thing" = even less informative [unless "thing" is meant as "existing [thing]": "The essence is an existing thing" = informative]

(١٩) وقد فهمت الآن أن الشيء بماذا يخالف المفهوم للموجود والحاصل ، وأنهما مع ذلك متلازمان .

- ▶ "Hence, you have now understood the way in which "the thing" differs from what is understood by "the existent" and "the realized" and that, despite this difference, the two [that is, "the thing" and "the existent"] are necessary concomitants". { متلازمان }
الهيات الشفاء، 27

1.2. Essence and Existence...Outcomes



✓ To Sum up:

1. All possible beings are ontologically composite, made up of the metaphysical principles of existence and quiddity.
2. There is no intrinsic connection between quiddity and existence, which is why existence must be caused by something extrinsic to a created "being."
3. The majority of philosophers including Ibn Sina hold that essence and existence are distinct conceptually.
4. In God, Ibn Sina asserts, essence and existence are identical intentionally as well as extensionally. God's essence refers to nothing other than his existence.

1.3. Contingency and Necessity...Definitions

- ▶ “It may also prove difficult for us to make known the state of the necessary, the possible, and the impossible through ascertained definition, [and we would have to make this known] only through a sign. All that has been said of the [things] that have reached you from the Ancients in defining this would almost entail circularity. This is because-as you have come across in the [various] parts of the Logic-whenver they want to define the possible, they include in the definition either the necessary or the impossible, there being no other way save this. And when they want to define the necessary, they include in the definition either the possible or the impossible. [Similarly,] when they want to define the impossible, they include in its definition either the necessary or the possible.”
- ▶ “Nonetheless, of these three, the one with the highest claim to be first conceived is the necessary. This is because the necessary points to the assuredness of existence, existence being better known than nonexistence. [This is] because existence is known in itself, whereas nonexistence is, in some respect or another, known through existence. “

وقد يفسر علينا أن نعرف حال الواجب والممكن والمنتهى بالترتيب المحقق أيضا ؛ بل بوجه العلامة . وجميع ما قيل في تعريف هذه مما يملك عن الأولين قد يكاد يقتضى دورا . وذلك لأنهم ، على ما سرك في فنون المنطق ، إذا أرادوا أن يحددوا الممكن ، أخذوا في حده إما الضروري وإما المحال ولا وجه غير ذلك . وإذا أرادوا أن يحددوا الضروري ، أخذوا في حده إما الممكن وإما المحال . وإذا أرادوا أن يحددوا المحال أخذوا في حده إما الضروري وإما الممكن . مثلا

وقد يفسر علينا أن نعرف حال الواجب والممكن والمنتهى بالترتيب المحقق أيضا ؛ بل بوجه العلامة . وجميع ما قيل في تعريف هذه مما يملك عن الأولين قد يكاد يقتضى دورا . وذلك لأنهم ، على ما سرك في فنون المنطق ، إذا أرادوا أن يحددوا الممكن ، أخذوا في حده إما الضروري وإما المحال ولا وجه غير ذلك . وإذا أرادوا أن يحددوا الضروري ، أخذوا في حده إما الممكن وإما المحال . وإذا أرادوا أن يحددوا المحال أخذوا في حده إما الضروري وإما الممكن . مثلا

1. 3. Contingency and Necessity...the logic of Distinction

- ▶ “Considered in themselves” (أندأ اعتير بذاته) , the things that find place in existence are subject to “two divisions in the intellect”, they are either “not necessarily existent”, and therefore possible, or “necessarily existent”
- ▶ Impossible existence is a null class, made impossible by the contradictory nature of its quiddity, such as “square circle.” Possible existence, when considered in itself, is possible because its quiddity is not self-contradictory; but on the other hand its quiddity does not require that it exist. So existence possible in itself, when realized, must also become necessary, but in a way, as “necessary through another,” because a pure possible in no way really exists. The third option, “necessary existence” in itself, is intrinsically necessary. Its quiddity is such that it must exist; it would be self-contradictory for it not to exist. Now “there are certain properties that belong respectively to necessary existence and to possible existence...Necessary existence in itself has no cause; but possible existence has a cause” (Ibn Sina 2005: 29–30).

1. 3. Contingency and Necessity...Prior and Posterior



Existence and necessity are related or even coincident: every existent is necessary; by virtue of this correlation existents are divided into two general categories: those that, considered in themselves require no (causal) connection with anything other than themselves, and those that, as they do need a (causal) link with something other, are not (in themselves) necessary. Independence and dependence on some other, correspond respectively to the necessity and non-necessity of “being” or the existent.

Indeed, what is necessary in itself is ontologically *prior* to the possible because it is independent, whereas the possible is *posterior* precisely because it depends on a cause. Insofar as it is autonomous, the necessary is also *rich*, while the possible, which is posterior and secondary, is needy, poor or indigent. The necessary is “rich” because it is independent of any thing; the possible is “poor” because it cannot exist without something else (i.e., without the cause).

1. 3. Contingency and Necessity...the Main Properties



- “On commencing a discourse on the Necessary Existent and the possible existent; that the Necessary Existent has no cause; that the possible existent is caused; that the Necessary Existent has no equivalent in existence and is not dependent [in existence] on another: ...The things that enter existence bear a [possible] twofold division in the mind. Among them there will be that which, when considered in itself, its existence would be not necessary. It is [moreover] clear that its existence would also not be impossible, since otherwise it would not enter existence. This thing is within the bound of possibility. There will also be among them that which, when considered in itself, its existence would be necessary.”
- “That the Necessary Existent has no cause is obvious. For if in His existence the Necessary Existent were to have a cause, His existence would be by [that cause]. But whatever exists by something [else], if considered in itself, apart from another, existence for it would not be necessary. And every[thing] for which existence is not [found to be] necessary-if [the thing is] considered in itself, apart from another-is not a necessary existent in itself. It is thus evident that if what is in itself a necessary existent were to have a cause, it would not be in itself a necessary existent. “

1.4. The Principle of Causality...The Main Argument



- ❖ "If the existence of a thing, when considered in itself, is possible, then its existence and nonexistence are both due to a cause. For if it comes into existence, then existence, as distinct from nonexistence, occurs to it. And if it ceases to exist, then nonexistence, as distinct from existence, occurs to it. In each of the two cases, what occurs to the thing must occur either through another or not through another."
- ❖ This passage suggests that the possible existent in itself hangs in the balance between existence and nonexistence: there is no intrinsic reason why it should exist and there is also no intrinsic reason why it should not exist.
- ▶ ...the thing's quiddity is either sufficient for this specification [takhsis, تخصيص] or not. If its quiddity is sufficient for either of the two states of affairs [existence or non existence] to obtain, then that thing would be in itself of a necessary quiddity, when [the thing] has been supposed not to be necessary [in itself]. And this is contradictory. If [on the other hand] the existence of its quiddity is not sufficient [for specifying the possible with existence] then its existence would be necessarily due to some other thing. [This,] then, would be its cause.

1.4. The Principle of Causality...the Priority of Existence over Essence



- ▶ All quiddities that have existence as an inseparable concomitant are caused; hence, to have a quiddity is to be caused. Since God, the necessary existence in itself is uncaused, all other things have and receive their existence from a prior extrinsic cause of existence and so are possible existences in themselves.
- ▶ In short, existence is prior to essence in the *Ilāhiyyāt*, Here he employs his primary hypotheses and doctrine of the accidentality of existence to argue that even though essence and existence are distinct in all composite entities, existence is nevertheless an inseparable concomitant of essence that is prior to essence insofar as it occurs accidentally to a thing's quiddity through a prior extrinsic efficient cause of existence.
- ▶ Ibn Sina rejects the idea that the existence of a quiddity might follow upon and so be posterior to the quiddity. This is because what follows something else presupposes the very existence of the prior thing.
- ▶ The modal distinction is also fundamental to Ibn Sina's metaphysics in another sense: it serves as the foundation on which Ibn Sina constructs his account of the order of being. The necessary existent in itself is not merely different from the Necessary Existent through another; the former is prior to the latter. The type of priority Ibn Sina has in mind is causal.

1.4. The Principle of Causality...the Four Causes



Ibn Sina classifies the causes into internal (material and formal causes) and external (efficient and final causes). From the point of view of terminology, Ibn Sina in the *Ilāhiyyāt* interchangeably uses two different terms for "cause" (*'illa*, *sabab*), and sometimes employs a third term, "principle" (*mabda'*), as a synonym of the previous two. "Form" is constantly expressed by a single term (*sūra*). "Matter", on the contrary, is rendered by a variety of terms (*mādda*, *'unsur*, *qābil*, *hayūlä*, *mawdü'*).

[٥] تقيمه

الشيء قد يكون معلولاً باعتبار ماهيته (٥) وحقيقته. وقد يكون معلولاً في وجوده. وإليه أن يتميز ذلك بالسلوك مثلاً. فإن حقيقته مسلّمة بالسطح والعمق الذي هو خطه. وبقيته من حيث هو مثلث وله حقيقة المثلثية. كأنهما علته السادة والصورية.

وأما من حيث وجوده فقد يتعلّق بمهله أخرى أيضاً غير هذه. ليست هي علة كقولهم مثلثيته ويكون (٦) جزءاً من حدّها. وذلك هي المهلة الماخلة. أو الماخلة (٧) التي

١٠. في الصانع المثلثي
١١. في الصانع المثلثي
١٢. في الصانع المثلثي
١٣. في الصانع المثلثي
١٤. في الصانع المثلثي
١٥. في الصانع المثلثي
١٦. في الصانع المثلثي
١٧. في الصانع المثلثي
١٨. في الصانع المثلثي

٢٦٦

في علة ماخلة لمهله الماخلة (٨).

[٦] تقيمه

اعلم أنك قد تقيمه (٩) معنى المثلث وسلطه (١٠). هل هو موجود بالوجود في الأعيان. أم ليس؟ بعدما تملك عندك أنه من عطف وسلطه (١١). ولم يتعلّق لك أنه موجود في الأعيان (١٢).

[٧] إشارة

المهلة الوجودية للشيء - الذي له علة مخرّجة للماخلة (١٣) - علة لبعض تلك الجليل كالصورة. أو لجمعها في الوجود. وهي (١٤) علة الجمع بينهما (١٥). والمهلة الماخلة والتي لأجلها الشيء - علة بمخاطبتها (١٦) ومخاطبا لمهله الماخلة. ومعلولها لها في وجودها. فإن المهلة الماخلة علة كما لوجودها إن كانت من الماخلة التي تحدث بالفعل. وليست علة لمخاطبتها ولا لمخاطبها.

CHAPTER 5. ADMONITION CONCERNING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE CAUSES OF QUIDDITY AND THOSE OF EXISTENCE (٥١٤)

ALTHOUGH THE CAUSE OF QUIDDITY IS THE CAUSE OF EXISTENCE AND THE REVERSE, FOR EXAMPLE, THE REALITY OF THE TRIANGLE DEPENDS ON THE SURFACE AND ON THE LINE WHICH IS ITS SIDE, BOTH THE SURFACE AND THE LINE CONSTITUTE THE TRIANGLE INASMUCH AS IT IS A TRIANGLE AND HAS A REALITY OF TRIANGULARITY, AS IF THEY ARE ITS TWO CAUSES: THE MATERIAL AND THE FORMAL. BUT INASMUCH AS A TRIANGLE EXISTS, IT MAY ALSO DEPEND ON A CAUSE OTHER THAN THESE [TWO], WHICH IS NOT A CAUSE THAT CONSTITUTES ITS TRIANGULARITY AND IS NOT A PART OF ITS DEFINITION. THIS IS THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OR THE FINAL CAUSE THAT IS AN EFFICIENT CAUSE OF THE CAUSALITY OF THE EFFICIENT CAUSE.

CHAPTER 6. ADMONITION REGARDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ESSENCE AND CONCRETE EXISTENCE (٥١٥)

YOU MUST KNOW THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE SCOPE OF TRIANGLE WHILE IN DOUBT AS TO WHETHER OR NOT CONCRETE EXISTENCE IS ATTRIBUTED TO TRIANGLE. THIS IS AFTER TRIANGLE IS REPRESENTED TO YOU AS CONSTITUTED OF A LINE AND A SURFACE AND IS NOT REPRESENTED TO YOU AS EXISTING.

CHAPTER 6. ADMONITION REGARDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ESSENCE AND CONCRETE EXISTENCE (٥١٥)

THE CAUSE OF THE CAUSALITY OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF QUIDDITY OF THE QUIDDITY OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF EXISTENCE IS THE CAUSE OF ALL OF THOSE WHICH CONSTITUTE THE CAUSE OF THE CAUSE OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF THE CAUSALITY OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF EXISTENCE.

CHAPTER 6. ADMONITION REGARDING THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN ESSENCE AND CONCRETE EXISTENCE (٥١٥)

THE CAUSE OF THE CAUSALITY OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF QUIDDITY OF THE QUIDDITY OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF EXISTENCE IS THE CAUSE OF ALL OF THOSE WHICH CONSTITUTE THE CAUSE OF THE CAUSE OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF THE CAUSALITY OF THOSE WHICH ARE CAUSES OF EXISTENCE.

1.4. The Principle of Causality...the Four Causes



- Chapter 5. Admonition: Concerning the Difference Between the Causes of Quiddity and Those of Existence. "A thing may be caused in relation to its quiddity or reality, and it may be caused in its existence. You can consider this in the triangle, for example. The reality of the triangle depends on the surface and on the line which is its side. Both the surface and the line constitute the triangle inasmuch as it is a triangle and has a reality of triangularity, as if they are its two causes: the material and the formal. But inasmuch as a triangle exists, it may also depend on a cause other than these [two], which is not a cause that constitutes its triangularity and is not a part of its definition. This is the efficient cause or the final cause that is an efficient cause of the causality of the efficient cause."
- Chapter 6. Admonition: Regarding the Difference Between Essence and Concrete Existence. "You must know that you understand the concept of triangle while in doubt as to whether or not concrete existence is attributed to triangle. This is after triangle is represented to you as constituted of a line and a surface and is not represented to you as existing."

1.4. The Principle of Causality...the Four Causes



(2) "Causes, as you have heard, consist of form, element, agent, and purpose. We say: **By the formal cause**, we mean the cause which is part of the subsistence of the thing and in terms of which the thing is what it is in actuality. **By the elemental [cause, we mean]** the cause that is part of the subsistence of the thing, through which the thing is what it is in potency and in which the potentiality of its existence resides. **By agent [we mean]** the cause which bestows an existence that is other than itself. This is because the metaphysical philosophers do not mean by "agent" only the principle of motion, as the naturalists mean, but the principle and giver of existence, as in the case of God with respect to the world. As for the natural efficient cause, it does not bestow any existence other than motion in one of the forms of motion. Thus, in the natural sciences, that which bestows existence is a principle of motion. **By "purpose,"** we mean the cause for whose sake the existence of something different from it is realized."

(3) "It may appear, then, that there is no other cause beyond these. We say: The cause of something is either included in its subsistence and is part of its existence or not. If it is included in its subsistence and is part of its existence, then either it must be the part where, in terms of its existence and definition, it is not necessary for it to be actual, but only to be in potency, and is termed "hyle"; or [it must be] the part whose existence is its being in actuality-namely, form. But, if it [the cause] is not part of its existence, then either it is that for whose sake it is, or not. If it is that for whose sake it is, then it is the purpose. If it is not that for whose sake it is, then it is either the case that [the effect's] existence derives from it in that it does not exist in [the cause] except accidentally-and this would be its agent-or else [the effect's] existence derives from it in that it is in it, [in which case] it would also be its element or its subject."

1.4. The Principle of Causality...the Four Causes are Finite



- ▶ The four types of cause are finite, Ibn Sina shows that nothing can have an infinite series of efficient causes; the same point is repeated with regard to the other three types of cause. In each case, according to Ibn Sina, it is necessary to arrive to a cause which is not the effect of a previous cause of the same type. These are the "ultimate causes" to which Ibn Sina refers.
- ▶ Then, Ibn Sina proceeds to show that God is the cause of these primary causes. Despite the fact that, in his opinion, divine causality is limited to efficient and final causality, Ibn Sina does not restrict his proof of the finiteness of the causal sequences to these two types of causes. He includes in the proof also material and formal causes.

1.4. The Principle of Causality...The Coexistence



(II) “Hence, with the existence of the cause, the existence of every effect is necessary; and the existence of its cause necessitates the existence of the effect. The two exist together in time, eternity, or whatever but are not together with respect to the attainment of existence. This is because the existence of [the former] did not come about from the existence of the [latter]. Thus, to the former belongs an attainment of existence not derived [from the latter's attainment of existence], while to [the latter] belongs an attainment of existence deriving from the [former's] attainment of existence. **As such, the former is prior with respect to the attainment of existence.**”

فإذن وجود كل معلول واجب مع وجود علته ، ووجود علته واجب عنه
وجود المعلول . وهما معاً في الزمان أو الدهر أو غير ذلك ، ولكن ليساً معاً
في القياس إلى حصول الوجود . وذلك لأن وجود ذلك لم يحصل من وجود
هذا ، فذلك له حصول وجود ليس من حصول وجود هذا ، ولهذا حصول
وجود هو من حصول وجود ذلك ، فذلك أقدم بالقياس إلى حصول الوجود .

1.4. The Principle of Causality...the Four Causes...Form and Matter



- ✓ **Form and matter, as causes, are part of the caused thing, whereas agent and end are external to the caused thing.**
- ✓ The form is the cause of the matter's existence, since the opposite is not the case, due to the potentiality of matter. The form is not the only cause of the matter's existence when corruptible corporeal substances are concerned, since, in order to account for their existence, also a cause determining the succession of forms in their matter is required. Form is anterior to matter, because of the one-way causal relationship connecting the former to the latter.
- ✓ By “matter's existence” caused by the form, Ibn Sina does not mean the existence of matter as such, but its actual existence within the hylomorphic compound. Second, the further cause of the matter's existence besides the form is an efficient cause. Form is one of the causes of the matter's existence. Matter is different from form in so far as it is the cause that accounts for the potentiality of the caused thing, whereas form is the cause that accounts for its actuality. Matter (= hyle) is not the cause of the form, but of the compound of matter and form.
- ✓ The form is not the cause of matter in the same way as it is the cause of the compound of matter and form. In the case of form and matter, the cause (i.e. the form) does not bestow existence to the other thing (i.e. to matter); the existence is bestowed by something else (i. e. by the efficient cause).
- ✓ Form is the proximate and intermediate cause in the process of bestowing existence; the ultimate cause of this process is another cause (i.e. the efficient cause). The form is not the efficient cause of matter (in the sense of the compound of matter and form), but it is part of the efficient cause. The form is the formal cause of the compound of matter and form; it is the form, not the formal cause, of matter. Form is an intermediate cause between matter and the prime cause of its existence.
- ✓ The form is the proximate and intermediate cause of the hylomorphic compound's existence; he also states that the prime cause of this existence is an efficient cause.
- ✓ Ibn Sina proposes a sharp division of the material cause into matter (in the strict sense) with regard to form and into subject with regard to, and as the cause of the existence of, accidents.



1.4. The Principle of Causality...the Four Causes...Agent and Purpose

- ▶ According to Ibn Sina, the final cause was prior *in terms of essence or thingness* to the efficient cause, while the efficient cause was prior *in terms of existence* to the final cause. The final cause enjoyed explanatory priority when an effect was explained in terms of its essence, while the efficient cause enjoyed explanatory priority when an effect was explained in terms of its existence.
- ▶ Ibn Sina describes the efficient cause as “the cause that bestows an existence (*wugud*) distinct from itself”, and the final cause as “the cause for the sake of which the existence (*wugūd*) of something distinct from it is realized”.



- ▶ **Introduction: What is Metaphysics?**
- ▶ **1. Conceptions and Principles**
 - 1.1. Primary Notions
 - 1.2. Essence and Existence
 - 1.3. Contingency and Necessity
 - 1.4. The Principle of Causality
- ▶ **2. Theism, Arguments for the Existence of God**
 - 2.1. Theism, First Version
 - 2.2. Theism, Second Version
 - 2.3. Theism, Third Version
 - 2.4. Theism, Fourth Version
 - 2.5. Sadra's Reconstruction and Objection
 - 2.6. Craig's Formulation
- ▶ **3. Theism, God's Knowledge of Particulars**
 - 3.1. The Main Argument
 - 3.2. The Objections and Responses

2. Theism, Arguments for the Existence of God

- ▶ **Introductory Reminds:**
 - I. The principle of being or existence
 - II. The distinction of essence and existence
 - III. The principle of causality (the coexistence)
 - IV. The classification of existent into two categories of necessity and contingency
 - V. The impossibility of infinite regress (controversial)



2. Theism, Arguments for the Existence of God



Islamic Philosophy, Sadra's Taxonomy

1. Seddiqin argument: the most valid proofs for God's existence (14-26)
2. Necessity and contingency:
 1. Conceptual framework (26-29)
 2. Causality (30)
 3. Contingent and existent (36-37)
3. Theological argument : the contingency of the corporeal cosmos and the need for the incorporeal cause (41-42)
4. Naturalistic arguments:
 1. The motion and the first mover (43-44)
 2. The creation of soul and the need of causality (45-47)

2. Theism, a General View of Ibn Sina's Theism



- Ibn Sina is well known as the author of an important and influential proof for the existence of God. This proof is a good example of a philosopher's intellect being deployed for a theological purpose, as was common in medieval philosophy. The argument runs as follows: **There is existence, or rather our phenomenal experience of the world confirms that things exist, and that their existence is non-necessary because we notice that things come into existence. Contingent existence cannot arise unless it is made necessary by a cause. A causal chain in reality must culminate in one uncaused cause because one cannot posit an actual infinite regress of causes (a basic axiom of Aristotelian science). Therefore, the chain of contingent existents must culminate in and find its causal principle in a sole, self-subsistent existent that is Necessary.**

2.1. Theism, First Version



الفصل الحادى عشر
تنبيهة

(١) إما أن يتسلسل ذلك إلى غير النهاية ، فيكون كل واحد من آحاد السلسلة ممكنًا في ذاته ، والجملة متعلقة بها ، فتكون غير واجبة أيضًا ، وتجب بغيرها

الفصل الثالث عشر
إشارة

(١) كلُّ علةٍ جُملةٌ هي غيرُ شيءٍ من آحادها ، فهي علةٌ أولاً للآحاد ، ثم للجملة ؛ وإلا فلنكن الآحاد غير محتاجةٍ إليها ، فالجملة إذا تمت بآحادها ، لم تحتاج إليها ، بل ربما كان شيء ما ، علة لبعض الآحاد دون بعض ، فلم يكن علة للجملة على الإطلاق .

الفصل العاشر
إشارة

(١) ما حقه في نفسه الإمكان فليس بصير موجودًا من ذاته ؛ فإنه ليس وجوده من ذاته ، أول من علمه ، من حيث هو ممكن . فإن صار أحدهما أولى ، فلحضور شيء أو غيبته . فوجود كل ممكن هو من غيره .

للتاها ؛ فإن تلك الجملة والكل شيء واحد .
وأما الكل ؛ بمعنى كل واحد ، فليس تجب به الجملة .
وإما أن تقتضى علة هي بعض الآحاد ، وليس بعض الآحاد أول بذلك من بعض ، إذا كان كل واحد منها معلولا ؛ لأن علته أول بذلك .
وإما أن تقتضى علة خارجة عن الآحاد كلها ، وهو الباقى .

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تمشييه
الفصل التاسع

(١) كل موجود إذا انفقت إليه من حيث ذاته ، من غير التفات إلى غيره :
فإما أن يكون بحيث يجب له الوجود في نفسه . أو لا يكون .
فإن وجب فهو الحق بذاته ، الواجب الوجود من ذاته ، وهو القيوم .
وإن لم يجب ، لم يجوز أن يقال : إنه ممتنع بذاته بعد ما فرض موجودا ؛ بل إن قرن باعتبار ذاته شرط ، مثل شرط ، عدم علته ، صار مستعسماً ، أو مثل شرط . وجود علته ، صار واجباً .
وإن لم يقترن بها شرط ، لا حصول علة ولا عدمها ، بقى له في ذاته الأمر الثالث ، وهو الإمكان ؛ فيكون باعتبار ذاته الشيء الذى لا يجب ولا يختص .
فكل موجود :
إما واجب الوجود بذاته .
أو ممكن الوجود بذاته .

الفصل الثاني عشر
شرح

(١) كلُّ جملةٍ كلُّ واحدٍ منها معلولٌ ، فإنها تقتضى علةً خارجةً عن آحادها .
(٢) وذلك لأنها :
إما أن لا تقتضى علة أصلاً ، فتكون واجبة غير ممكنة ، وكيف يثنأى هذا ، وإنما تجب بآحادها ؟
وإما أن تقتضى علة ، هي الآحاد بأسرها ، فتكون معلولة

2.1. Theism, First Version...An Abstract

► Here is the classic version of Ibn Sina's Argument:

1. Every being is either necessary or the otherwise (from its essence).
2. If the being is not necessary, it is contingent.
3. If the contingent being becomes existent, it needs a cause beyond its essence.
4. The infinite succession of causes is impossible.
5. The contingent being requires a necessary being.



2.1.Theism, First Version, Advanced



Here is the advanced form of the first version of Ibn Sina's Argument:

1. [there are existing entities, beings]
2. Every being is either necessary existence in itself or not.
3. If there is a necessary being, it is an independent Truth [God].
4. If there is not a necessary being, it would be a thing that is neither necessary in itself nor impossible (since we suppose it as existing). Therefore:
5. Every being has either necessary existence in its essence or has possible (contingent) existence in its essence.
6. Contingent being can not come into existence unless there should be the other.
7. That other is either (a) necessary being or (b) is caused by the contingent being itself, or (c) it goes to the infinite regress of other contingent beings.
8. (a) is the existence of the necessary being. (ثبت المطلوب) the required thing is demonstrated)
9. (b) is the vicious circle.
10. Thus there is (c) that the totality (collection) of infinite contingent beings exists.

2.1. Theism, First Version, Advanced



11. The totality is also contingent, because all the units (members) are contingent.
12. The totality does either require a cause or does not.
13. It is false that the totality does not require the cause, since it thus becomes necessary (uncaused), nevertheless the totality depends on and caused by its members.
14. Therefore, the cause of totality is either within the totality or in an external cause.
15. If the cause is within the totality, it is either the whole units or some of the units rather than the others.
16. The cause can not be the totality of the units, because It implies that there is a cause that is all its units; it is thus caused by itself, given that totality and all [its units] are identical.
17. If It requires a cause that is some of its units, and since each unit is caused, then some of the units are not more deserving of being the cause than the other units (and in fact the causes of that selected units are prior to be the cause than the units themselves).
18. If it requires a cause that is each of the units, then the totality can not be regarded through that unit which is only one unit among the many. [و اما الكل، بمعنى كل واحد، فليس تجب به الجملة]

Therefore:

19. It requires a cause external to all its units.

2. 1. Theism, First Version, a Conclusion

► Therefore:

الفصل الثالث عشر

إشارة

(١) كلّ علة جُملة هي غيرُ شيء من آحادها ، فهي علة
أولاً للآحاد ، ثم للجُملة ، وإلا فلتكن الآحاد غير محتاجة
إليها ، فالجُملة إذا نمت بآحادها ، لم تحتاج إليها ، بل ربما كان
شيء ما ، علة لبعض الآحاد دون بعض ، فلم يكن علة للجُملة على
الإطلاق .



CHAPTER 13. REMARK: THE CAUSE OF A TOTALITY OF UNITS IS FIRST THE CAUSE OF EVERY ONE OF THE UNITS (P. 25)

Every cause of a totality that is something other than its units is, first of all, a cause of the units and then of the totality. If this is not so, then let the units not be in need of this cause. Then, if the totality is completed by its units, it will not need this cause either. Rather, a certain thing may be a cause of some of the units to the exclusion of some [others]. Such a thing is not a cause of the totality in an absolute manner.

2. 2. Theism, Second Version

► Here is the second version of Ibn Sina's Argument:

ونعود إلى ما كنا فيه فنقول : إن لكل واحد من الواجب الوجود، والمكن
وجود، خواص . فنقول : إن الأمور التي تدخل في الوجود تحتل في العقل
لإقسام إلى قسمين ، فيكون منها ما إذا اعتبر بذاته لم يجب وجوده ، وظاهر
نه لا يتمتع أيضا وجوده ، وإلا لم يدخل في الوجود ، وهذا الشيء هو في حيز
إمكان ، ويكون منها ما إذا اعتبر بذاته وجب وجوده .
فنقول : إن الواجب الوجود بذاته لا علة له ، وإن المكن الوجود بذاته له علة ؛

وأيضا إن كل ما هو مكن الوجود باعتبار ذاته ، فوجوده وصدقه كلامه
بصلة ، لأنه إذا وجد فقد حصل له الوجود متميزاً من عدمه ، وإذا عدم حصل
له عدم متميزاً من الوجود . فلا يخلو إما أن يكون كل واحد من الأخرين
يحصل له عن غيره أولاً عن غيره ، فإن كان عن غيره فالغير هو العلة ؛
وإن كان لا يحصل عن غيره ، ومن البين أن كل ما لم يوجد ثم وجد فقد
تحصص بأمر جائز غيره .

أما أن الواجب الوجود لا علة له ، فظاهر . لأنه إن كان لواجب الوجود
علة في وجوده ، كان وجوده بها . وكل ما وجوده بشيء ، فإذا اعتبر بذاته
دون غيره لم يجب له وجود ، وكل ما إذا اعتبر بذاته دون غيره ، ولم يجب له
وجود ، فليس واجب الوجود بذاته . فبين أنه إن كان لواجب الوجود بذاته
علة لم يكن واجب الوجود بذاته . فقد ظهر أن الواجب الوجود لا علة له .



2. 2. Theism, Second Version

- ▶ 1. There are existents.
- ▶ 2. All existents are divided into twofold division (in the mind).
- ▶ 3. Existents are either considered as non necessary in itself (contingent) or necessary in itself.
- ▶ 4. The necessary being has no cause.
- ▶ 5. The contingent being does need a cause.
- ▶ 6. The contingent being must become necessary through a cause. (otherwise it will remain possible, not the existence nor the non-existence.
- ▶ 7. It is impossible for an entity to be both necessary and contingent being.
- ▶ 8. If there were not a necessary being, no contingent being came into existence.
- ▶ 9. There is a necessary being.



2. 2. Theism, Second Version, quotes from Ibn Sina

(4) "Moreover, whatever is possible in existence when considered in itself, its existence and nonexistence are both due to a cause. [This is] because, if it comes into existence, existence, as distinct from nonexistence, would have occurred to it..."

(5) "Hence, it is clear that whatever exists after nonexistence has been specified with something other than itself..."

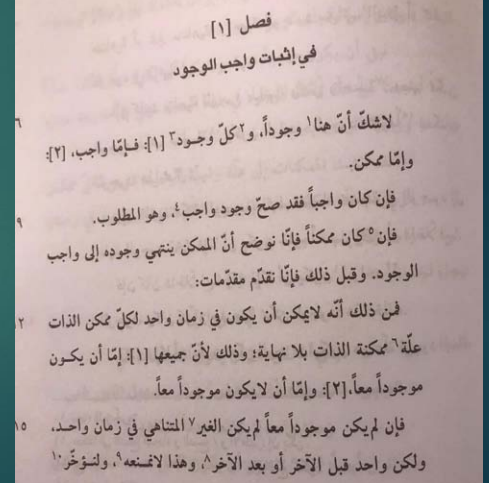
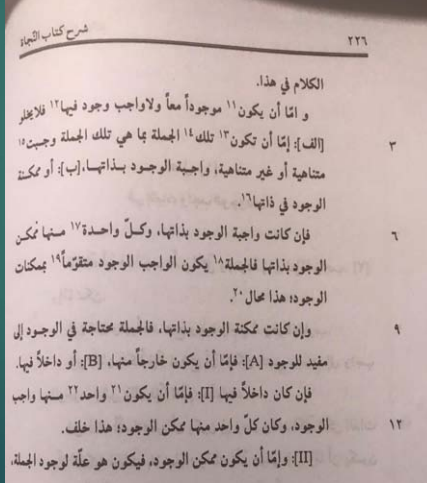
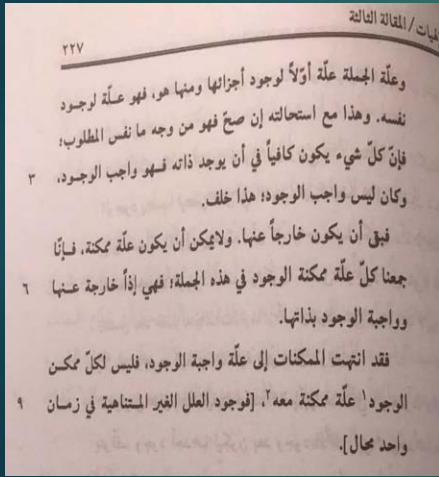
(6) We thus say: [The possible in itself] must become necessary through a cause and with respect to it. For, if it were not necessary, then with the existence of the cause and with respect to it, it would [still] be possible. It would then be possible for it to exist or not to exist, being specified with neither of the two states. [Once again,] from the beginning this would be in need of the existence of a third thing through which either existence (as distinct from nonexistence) or nonexistence (as distinct from existence) would be assigned for [the possible] when the cause of its existence with [this state of affairs] would not have been specified. This would be another cause, and the discussion would extend to an infinite regress. **And, if it regresses infinitely, the existence of the possible, with all this, would not have been specified by it. As such, its existence would not have been realized. This is impossible, not only because this leads to an infinity of causes-for this is a dimension, the impossibility of which is still open to doubt in this place-but because no dimension has been arrived at through which its existence is specified, when it has been supposed to be existing. Hence, it has been shown to be true that whatever is possible in its existence does not exist unless rendered necessary with respect to its cause.**



2. 3. Theism, Third Version



Here is the third version of Ibn Sina's Argument according to الهيئات نجاه which I think is the most advanced argument developed by Ibn Sina.



2.3. Theism, Third Version

Here is the third version of Ibn Sina's Argument according to الهيئات نجاه which I think is the best argument developed by Ibn Sina.

1. There are existents (beings).
2. Every existent is either necessary or contingent.
3. If there is a necessary existent, then necessary existent exists. ثبت المطلوب
4. If there is a contingent being, that needs a necessary being.
5. Necessary beings exists.



2. 3. Theism, Third Version

The main premise is (4). Here is Ibn Sina's proof for (4):

1. There are infinite contingent beings (no necessary being).
2. Either they all exist collectively or successively.
3. If they all exist successively, that is not the infinite regress of the beings.
4. If they all exist collectively, then there is a collection of all contingent beings.
5. The collection of contingent beings is either necessary or contingent.
6. The necessary collection of all contingent beings is impossible (the necessary can't rely on contingency).
7. Therefore, The collection is contingent.
8. The collection needs a cause.
9. The cause is either within the collection or outside the collection.
10. The cause can't be inside the collection, since it therefore should cause the collection and itself too.
11. The cause is outside the collection.
12. The external cause can't be contingent, since all contingents are inside the collection (inconsistent with 1).
13. The necessary being exists.

2. 4. Theism, Forth Version

Here is the forth version of Ibn Sina's Argument according to الهيئات شفا.

لشيء واحد فقط ، والمطلوب ليس علة لشيء ، ولكل واحد من الثلاثة خاصة ، فكانت خاصة الطرف المطلوب أنه ليس علة لشيء ، وخاصة الطرف الآخر أنه علة لكل فيه ، وكانت خاصة المتوسط أنه علة للطرف وسلول للطرف .

- وسواء كان الوسط واحداً أو فوق واحد ، فإن كان فوق واحد فسواء ترتب ترتيباً متناهيًا أو ترتب ترتيباً غير متناهٍ ، فإنه إن ترتب في كثرة متناهية كانت جملة عدد ما بين الطرفين كواسطة واحدة تشترك في خاصية الواسطة بالانزياح إلى الطرفين ، ويكون لكل واحد من الطرفين خاصة ، وكذلك إن ترتب في كثرة غير متناهية ولم يحصل الطرف كان جميع الطرف غير المتناهي مشتركاً في خاصية الواسطة ، لأنك أي جملة أخذت كانت علة لوجود المطلوب الأخير ، وكانت مملولة ، إذ إن كل واحد منها مملول ، والجملة منتقلة لوجودها ، ومتعلق الوجود بالمطلوب مملول ، إلا إن تلك الجملة بشرط في وجود المملول الأخير ، وعلة له ، وكذا زدت في الأمر كل الحكمة إلى غير نهاية إنجماً ، فليس يجوز إذن أن تكون جملة مملولة موجودة وليس فيها علة غير مملولة ، وعلة أولى ، فإن جميع غير المتناهي يكون واسطة بلا طرف وهذا محال ، وقول القائل إنها - أعني العلة قبل المال - تكون بلا نهاية مع تسليمه لوجود الطرفين ، حتى يكون طرفان بينهما واسطة بلا نهاية ، ليس يمنع فرضنا الذي نحن فيه ، وهو إثبات العلة الأولى .

- وإذ قد بلشنا هذا المبلغ من كتابنا فبالجهد أن نختمه بمعرفة المبدء الأول للوجود كله وأنه هل هو موجود ، وهل هو واحد لا شريك له في مرتبته ولا تدلُّه ؟ ونقل على مرتبته في الوجود ، وعلى ترتيب الموجودات دونها وصراحتها ، وعلى حال المود إليه ، مستعنيين به .
- فأول ما يجب علينا من ذلك أن ندل على أن العلة من الوجود كلها متناهية ، وإن في كل طبقة منها مبدءاً أول ، وإن مبدءاً جميعها واحد ، وأنه مبين لجميع الموجودات ، وأوجب الوجود وحده ، وإن كل موجود فنه ابتداء وجوده .
- فقول : أما إن علة الوجود للشيء تكون موجودة معه فقد سلف لك وتحقق .
- ثم نقول : إننا إذا فرضنا مملولاً ، وفرضنا له علة ، وامتنع علة ، فليس يمكن أن يكون لكل علة علة بنير نهاية ، لأن المملول وعانه وعلة عانه إذا اعتبرت جملة في القياس التي لبعضها إلى بعض كانت علة العلة علة أولى مطلقة للأمرين ، وكان للأمرين نسبة المملولية إليها ، وإن اختلفا في أن أحدهما مملول بمتوسط والآخر مملول بنير متوسط ، ولم يكن كذلك الأخير ولا المتوسط لأن المتوسط - الذي هو العلة الخامسة للملول - علة



2. 5. Sadra's Reconstruction and Objection...

- ▶ Here is Sadra's reconstruction of Ibn Sina's Argument: جلد ٦ صفحہ ٢٦
- ▶ 1. There are beings in the external world.
- ▶ 2. They are either necessary or contingent by mental classification.
- ▶ 3. if there is a necessary being that would be God. ثبت المطلوب
- ▶ 4. if there is the contingent being, there should be the determinant مرجح of the contingent, otherwise contradiction results.[since contingency does not require the existence nor the non existence.]
- ▶ 5. The determinant of the contingent being are either necessary or contingent beings.
- ▶ 6. If there is a necessary being that would be God. ثبت المطلوب
- ▶ 7. If the determinants are as well contingents, there would be three possibilities of the totality of the contingent beings; either it falls into circle or goes to infinite regress or requires the necessary being.
- ▶ 8. Circle and infinite regress are impossible
- ▶ 9. There should be the necessary being.
- ▶ **By such the narration of Ibn Sina by Sadra, he says that Ibn sina's argument needs to presuppose the circle and infinity to be false, so that the argument thus can proceed and succeed. But it seems that Sadra has his own account of Ibn Sina and it is not as that Ibn sina has mentioned in his many works.**

2.٦ . Theism, Sixth version, Craig's Formulation of Ibn Sina's Argument



- ▶ In his al-Risailat, ibn Sina formulates the argument in this fashion:

Whatever has being must either have a reason for its being or have no reason for it. If it has a reason, then it is contingent, equally before it comes into being (if we make this mental hypothesis) and when it is in the state of being—for in the case of a thing whose being is contingent the mere fact of its entering upon being does not remove from it the contingent nature of its being. If on the other hand it has no reason for its being in any way whatsoever, then it is necessary in its being. This rule having been confirmed, I shall now proceed to prove that there is in being a being which has no reason for its being.

Such a being is either contingent or necessary. If it is necessary, then

the point we sought to prove is established. If on the other hand it is contingent that which is contingent cannot enter upon being except for some reason which sways the scales in favour of its being and against its not-being. If the reason is also contingent, then there is a chain of contingents linked one to the other, and there is no being at all; for this being which is the subject of our hypothesis cannot enter into being so long as it is not preceded by an infinite succession of beings, which is absurd. Therefore, contingent beings end in a Necessary Being.¹⁴⁰

2.9. Theism, Sixth version, Craig's Formulation of Ibn Sina's Argument

conclusion, *therefore, a necessary being exists*. We may schematise ibn Sīnā's argument thus:

1. Definitions:
 - a. Contingent being: a being composed of essence and existence, which therefore requires an existential cause.
 - b. Necessary being: a being not composed of essence and existence, which therefore does not require an existential cause.
2. Every being is either contingent or necessary.
3. If it is necessary, then a necessary being exists.
4. If it is contingent, then a necessary being exists.
 - a. A contingent being requires an existential cause.
 - b. If this cause is also a contingent being, then an existential causal series is formed.
 - c. An existential causal series cannot be infinite.
 - i. An infinite series has no first cause.
 - ii. Therefore, there would be no cause of existence.
 - iii. Therefore, contingent being could not exist.
 - iv. But this is absurd.
 - d. Therefore, the existential causal series must terminate in a necessary being.
5. Therefore, a necessary being exists.

Ibn Sina's Theism, Conceptions, Principles and Proofs

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- ▶ Introduction: What is Metaphysics?
- ▶ 1. Conceptions and Principles
 - 1.1. Primary Notions
 - 1.2. Essence and Existence
 - 1.3. Contingency and Necessity
 - 1.4. The Principle of Causality
- ▶ 2. Theism, Arguments for the Existence of God
 - 2.1. Theism, First Version
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 - 2.4. Theism, Forth Version
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 - 2.6. Craig's Formulation of Ibn Sina
- ▶ 3. Theism, God's Knowledge of Particulars
 - 3.1. The Main Argument
 - 3.2. The Objections and Responses



Sharif International School
on Theism: East and West



Sharif International School
on Theism: East and West



3. 1. God's Knowledge of Particular, the Main Argument

- ▶ How God knows the world of intellects, the world of absolute souls, the world of celestial bodies, or the world of unchanging particulars or **changing particulars**?
- ▶ By particulars here we mean the physical, and changeable world, including our free will and actions, which must be considered as physically engaged with our minds even for those who believe rigidly in dualism (as did Ibn Sina himself). Thus it includes the physical world and entities composed of matter with the main characteristics of motion and temporality. To be clear, though, human action within the physical world does fall within this class, and hence *is* the subject of this problem concerning God's eternal essence and His incorporeal and non-temporal knowledge of particulars.
- ▶ **By *universals*, Ibn Sina means conceptual forms of particulars.**

3. 1. God's Knowledge of Particular, the Main Argument

1. God knows Himself (His essence). (Premise)
2. God's essence is neither changing nor changeable. (Premise)
3. God's essence is one and simple. (Premise)
4. God's knowledge is neither changing nor changeable. (Premise; 2 & 3)
5. The multiplicity of eternal beings is impossible. (Premise)
6. God's essence is the cause of all beings. (Premise)
7. Knowledge (perception) requires intelligible objects known by the knower. (Premise)
8. Knowing the cause implies knowing the effect. (Premise)
9. God's knowledge of His essence requires His knowledge of all beings. (1 & 6 & 8)
10. God knows all particulars from eternity. (2 & 9)
11. Either God knows particulars by themselves or God knows particulars by universals from eternity. (7 & 10)
12. God cannot know particulars from eternity by themselves. (4 & 11)





3. 1. God's Knowledge of Particular, the Main Argument

13. God knows particulars from eternity by universals. (11 & 12)
14. The universals are either separate entities or inseparable from God's essence. (13 & Law of Excluded Middle)
15. Universals cannot be separate entities. (14 & 5)
16. Universals are inseparable to God's essence. (14 & 15)
17. The inseparable universals are either parts of God's essence or consequential concomitants of His essence. (16 & Law of Excluded Middle)
18. The universals cannot be parts of God's essence. (17 & 3)
19. The universals are consequential concomitants of God's essence. (17 & 18)
20. God knows particulars by the universals that are consequential concomitants of His essence. (Conclusion)

3. 1. God's Knowledge of Particular, the Main Argument

- ▶ He would thus apprehend particular things inasmuch as they are universal—I mean, inasmuch as they have attributes. If these [attributes] become specified individually in [the particulars], [this takes place] in relation to an individuated time or an individuated circumstance. If this circumstance is also [simply] apprehended with its attributes, it will be in the same positions [the particulars]. But, inasmuch as [these attributes] would depend on principles where the species of each is [confined] to its individual [instance], they are attributed to individual things.
- ▶ Particular things may be known as universal things are known, i.e., inasmuch as they are necessitated by their causes, as they are attributed to a principle whose species is individuated in its particulars. This is exemplified by the particular eclipse; for the occurrence of such an eclipse may be known due to the availability of its particular causes, the intellect's complete knowledge of these causes, and their being known as universals are known. This is other than the temporal particular realization that judges that such an eclipse occurs now, that it occurred before, or that it will occur later.
- ▶ Therefore, the knowledge that whose existence is necessary has of particular things must not be temporal knowledge such that it includes the present, the past, and the future in order that change of an attribute of its essence would occur. Rather, His knowledge of particular things must be in a manner holy and above duration and time. He must know everything because everything is a necessary consequence of Him—whether through an intermediary or without an intermediary. His destiny, which is the detailing of his first determination, leads in a necessary manner to [the existence of] everything individually, since, as you have learned, that which is not necessitated is not.
- ▶ The necessary existence is pure intellect because He is an essence dissociated from matter in every aspect ... Hence, that which is free of matter and its attachments and is realized through existence separate from matter is an intelligible for itself. Its essence is hence at once intellect, intellectual, apprehender and intelligible. (not that there are multiple things here)."



3. 1. God's Knowledge of Particular, the Main Argument, A few remarks

1. Ibn Sina tries to prove that God does possess the main characteristics usually ascribed to Him: eternality, uniqueness, simplicity, non-changeability, and non-corporeality. But Ibn Sina's main contribution centers on his claim that God's essence and all His attributes are not only identical but also share unique conceptions and meanings, an idea that provoked later philosophers to criticize him severely.
2. The absolute oneness of God and His attributes requires the impossibility of the multiplicity of eternal entities. This is a substantial principle that Ibn Sina uses to refute the idea that God's disparate intelligibles might be eternal entities.
3. Ibn Sina's theory of knowledge presupposes that the perceiver can be identified distinct from the perceived as well as the perception. That is why he attacks Porphyry for his theory of unification.



3. 1. God's Knowledge of Particular...To Sum Up...

To summarize, particulars are known in two ways: First, via sensation and imagination, according to which particulars are perceived in a way which depends on time and motion, and hence such knowledge is restricted to the unending flux of corporeal entities. Second, via universals, where Ibn Sina states that if one knows the causes and all the chains of causes and laws beyond the limitations of time and motion, one necessarily knows the particulars through the causes and origins without any reference to time whether past, present or future. His use of the analogy of the solar eclipse is designed to indicate how knowledge of laws and causes in a general and universal way could issue in knowledge of a particular, and that our ability to make specific reference to that particular would not be via locating the event in its particular time but rather via the chains of antecedents. This interpretation requires us to recognize a distinction between *actualizing* knowledge and *actualized* knowledge. While the knowledge in the former case *determines* the particulars, the knowledge in the latter case is acquired through our sensory or imaginative faculties, and is affected by spatial-temporal events in our actual world.



3. 2. God's Knowledge of Particular, Sadra's Objection

Although Sadra rejected a number of philosophers' objections to Ibn Sina's theory of God's knowledge, he himself strongly criticized Ibn Sina's argument. Below is one of them:

1. God knows particulars by the universals (conceptual forms).
2. Universals are God's consequential concomitant.
3. God's consequential concomitants are either with respect to His quiddity or his existence.
4. God's quiddity is identical with God's existence .
5. God's consequential concomitant is either with respect to His mental existence or his external existence.
6. God's consequential concomitant cannot be with respect to His mental existence.
7. God's consequential concomitant is to His external existence.
8. Universals are externally (not mentally or conceptually) existent.

Therefore, if (8) is correct, (1) is false.



3. 2. God's Knowledge of Particular, Sadra's Objection

- ▶ Here is the second objection:
- ▶ 1. God is the cause of all beings, including the particulars.
- ▶ 2. God's knowledge of His essence requires the caused beings to be known as they are externally existent.
- ▶ 3. God knows the particulars by their external existences.
- ▶ 4. God does not know the particulars via their concepts or via universals.

3. 3. God's Knowledge of Particular, Conclusion



Ibn Sian or Sadra

Timelessness à la Leftow

Ben Page

Pembroke College and Oriel College
University of Oxford

[Back to List](#)



Brian Leftow!

Tonight Tehran I am going to be



A few preliminaries

- I'm only going to concentrate on what is central to Leftow's view
- Brian discusses optional extras, but they are not needed for his view
- Won't talk about general arguments against timelessness
- You need to understand Brian's overall view first in order to understand them
- I'll ignore the arguments to God's timelessness Brian gives and the responses some have given to them (e.g. Craig)
- I'll also ignore any historical debates, namely as to whether historical person X really thought what Brian claims of them

A few preliminaries

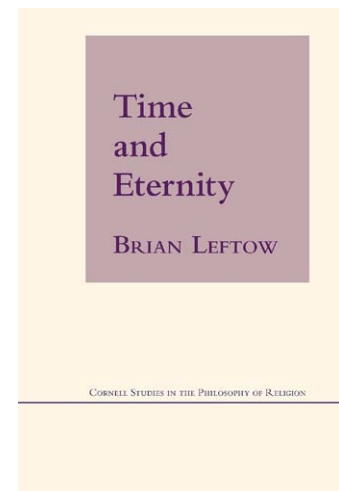
- What we are about to discuss, is really difficult and many people don't understand it.
- Rogers is quite explicit in admitting this, writing of Leftow's theory, 'that "I am not sure" and "I fear I do not understand" are phrases that will crop up repeatedly in the following discussion.' (2009, 321)
- This is also evident from most of the objections to Leftow's view, which we will see miss the mark when one understands his theory.
- They largely miss either because Brian does not require what they are arguing against, or because he can get what he wants in another way.

The work I shall be interested in

- Brian has written a lot on God and time, but if you want to orientate yourself with his views, I think these are probably the best place to start:
 - These are the best place at present, but in the future I would say a paper by myself is the best place! (And I think Brian might agree)
- (2005) 'Eternity and Immutability', in W. Mann, ed., *The Blackwell Guide to Philosophy of Religion*. New York: Blackwell.
- (1991) 'Eternity and Simultaneity', *Faith and Philosophy* 8:148-179.
- (1990) 'Time, Actuality, and Omniscience', *Religious Studies* 26:303-321.
- (2002) 'The Eternal Present', in G. E. Ganssle, & D. M. Woodruff, eds., *God and Time*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- (2018) 'Presentism, Atemporality, and Time's Way', *Faith and Philosophy* 35:173-194.

The work I shall be interested in

- The content of the earlier papers is also found in his book:
- It's a brilliant book, **BUT** it discusses lots, and unless it is read very carefully can cause confusion.
- That's why I would say start with these papers first!



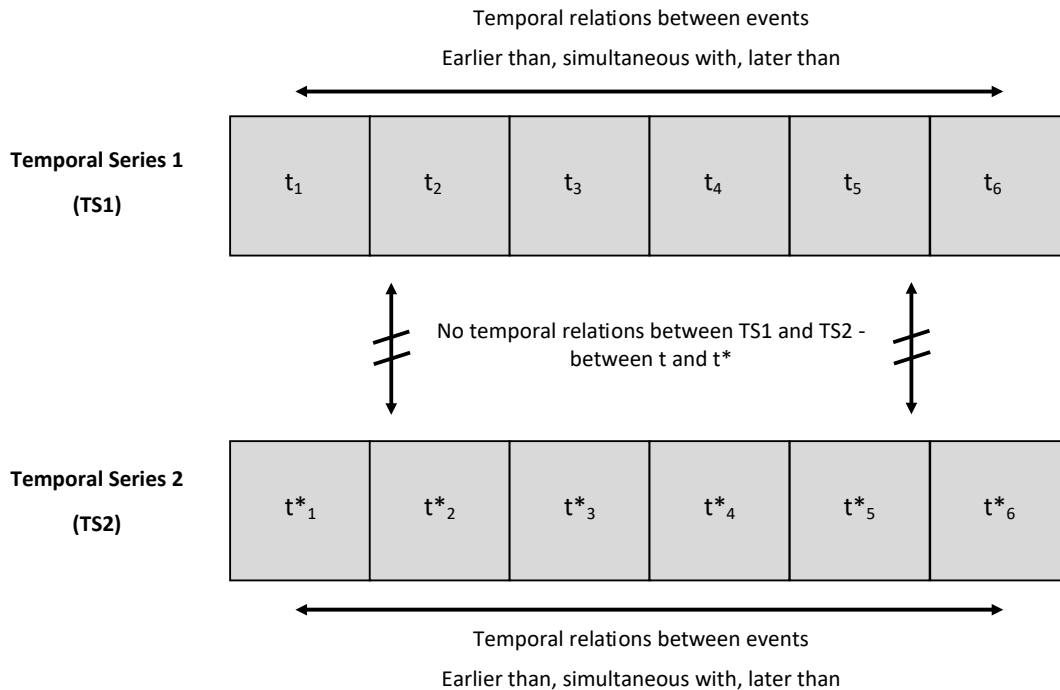
A final preliminary

- Aristotle once said, 'it is the mark of an educated person to look in each area for only that degree of accuracy that the nature of the subject permits.' (1049b 24-26, translated by Crisp, 2014, 4-5)
- I think philosophers of religion should bear this in mind – God is both transcendent and perfect, we are neither.
- The best we are likely to do when describing God is appeal to imperfect pictures and analogues.
- Given many of the things Brian says, I think he would agree.
- So much of what Brian says is normally couched in – this is an analogy, or God is something like this.

Discrete Timelines

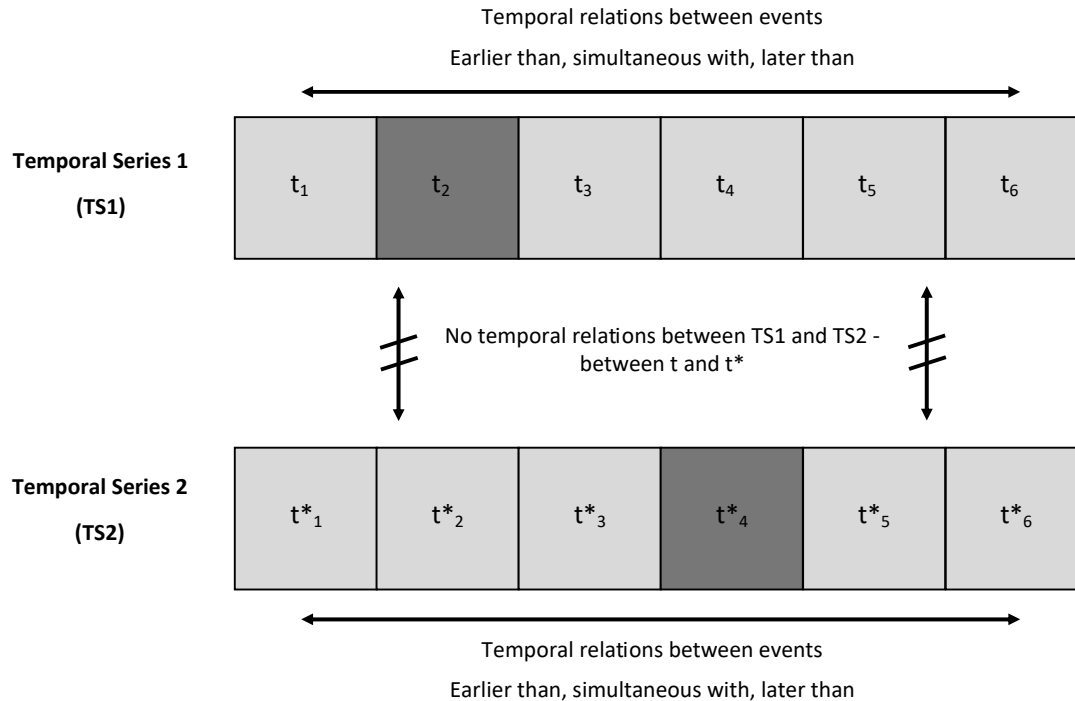
Discrete Timelines

- Brian thinks God's relationship to time is an analogue or like the relationship between discrete timelines.
- What are these?
- It is the thought that there can be multiple timelines, where each timeline can have temporal relations between each time BUT there are no temporal relations between the timelines themselves.
- If you know what Island Universes are in possible world talk (see Lewis's *On the Plurality of Worlds*, 71) they are instances of these.



Discrete Timelines

- Leftow is primarily interested in whether a timeless God and presentism are compatible.
 - Presentism is the view that only present things exist, and what is past and future do not exist.
 - He thinks it's the hardest case so most interesting
 - But he thinks other views are compatible with what he says
-
- Lets think about discrete timelines thinking about the case of two presentist timelines



Discrete Timelines

- We can say that within TS1, t_2 is present, t_1 is past and t_3 is future.
- And within TS2, t^*_4 is present, t^*_3 is past and t^*_5 is future.
- But we can't say that t^*_4 is in t_2 's future, since it isn't – this is because the timelines are discrete, and so there are no temporal relations between them.
- Nothing in TS1 is past, present, or future to anything in TS2, neither is it earlier than, simultaneous with, or later than. If it was any of these things, the timelines would not be discrete.
- This also means that saying that if something has presentness it must 'now' exist is false. In TS1 t_2 is present and so 'now' exists in TS1, but t^*_4 does not 'now' exist in TS1, even though it does 'now' exist in TS2.
- If we are in TS1 we can only say of t^*_4 that it occurs, so long as 'occurs' is used without any tense. The same goes for the use of exists, that is in TS1 we can only say t^*_4 exists if exists is used tenselessly.

Discrete Timelines

- I'll say more about these later,
- But note that TS1 and TS2 are internally temporal, with each having multiple temporal locations that are temporally related to one another.
- However they are extrinsically timeless, in that no temporal relations hold between TS1 and TS2, just as for a timeless being no temporal relations hold between it and time.
- How then should we understand something being intrinsically timeless?

Types of Timelessness

- Many discussions of God's relationship to time have it that there are two options before us;
- either God is purely temporal, and so never beginning, never ceasing and having all other temporal the properties other temporal being have,
- or He is purely timeless, and so no temporal features characterise His life.
- Brian thinks there are intermediate views and opts for intermediate timelessness
- What this means is he thinks there are some 'typically temporal properties' that apply to God, specifically that God has a present or now

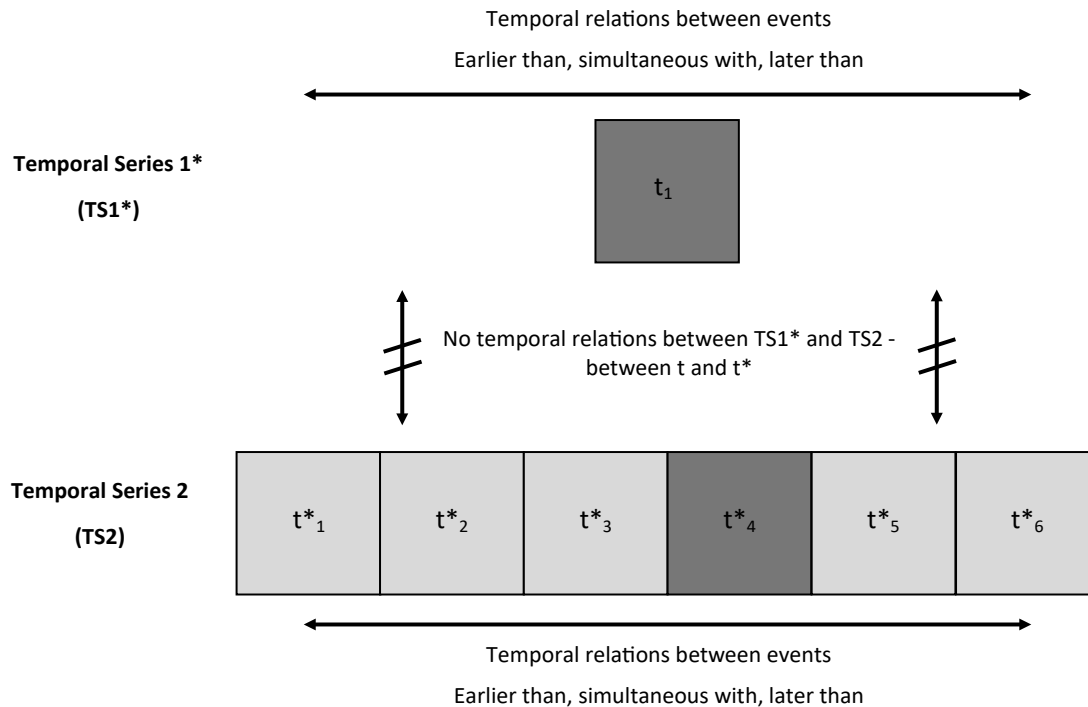
Boethius's famous definition

- 'Eternity is the whole, simultaneous, perfect possession of limitless life, which we can better understand perhaps by comparing it to temporal things. One who lives in time progresses in the present from the past and into the future. There is nothing in time that can embrace the entirety of his existence. ... What may properly be called eternal is quite different, in that it has knowledge of the whole of life, can see the future, and has lost nothing of the past. It is in an eternal present and has an understanding of the entire flow of time.' (Boethius, *Consolation of Philosophy* V.6)
- We can also find this thought in Anselm and Leftow thinks Aquinas too



What makes God timeless?

- What makes God timeless is that His life has no succession.
 - Temporal lives, by contrast, do – one temporal instant after another.
 - God's present also does not move, whereas ours does.
 - It is almost as if God lives in a world where there is just a single permanent instant
-
- We can model this on our discrete timelines



Eternity

- As God's present in TS1* will not be temporally simultaneous with any temporal slice in TS2, since there are no temporal relations between the timelines, no ordinary tense used in TS2 will be applicable in TS1*.
- Eternity requires a special tense, something Leftow, following Anselm and others, calls the eternal present tense.
- This may seem mysterious, but it shouldn't be, since it's merely a general consequence of discrete timelines.
- Since each timeline cannot have temporal relations with each other, per being discrete, they cannot share the same tense either.
- Eternity also plays another role for Leftow, namely in answering the question of when it happened. At 'eternity' is the answer, and isn't one that would make God temporal.

How should we understand t_1 ?

- Two models
- One is point-like – eternity is like a single instant
- The other says eternity has a partless duration (Leftow calls his model – Quasi-Temporal Eternality QTE)
- Leftow gives two analogies of this – first is what has become known as an extended simple. The second is of a time atom, a chronon. Both of these are said to have no parts, and indivisible, but yet be extended.
- Leftow has received many objections concerning QTE.
- BUT they do not matter, because even though people like Oppy, Padgett, and Mullins claim that Leftow holds, insists or requires a duration view, i.e. QTE they are wrong!
- Leftow: 'I do not, however, assert that God has QTE. I regard the latter as a defensible claim ... But for the present it is a needless complication.' (*Time and Eternity*, 1991, 267; 290, n.11)

How do events in time relate to eternity?

Leftow's view

- Temporal events also occur and are actual in eternity
- He finds this in Anselm
- Why would you think this?
- Bigger picture question – how does a timeless God manages to have true beliefs about events in time?
- Boethius and Aquinas, at least at times, speak about God's knowledge on the model of observation.
- All temporal events are somehow spread-out to God so that He can observe them all at once from His timeless standpoint.
- BUT if a temporal thing is *really* present to God, then God and that thing would exist simultaneously.
- BUT God cannot be simultaneous with temporal things, since if He were then He wouldn't be timeless

Leftow's view

- This is the difficulty Leftow seeks to answer, claiming that what we should say is that God isn't simultaneous with temporal events as temporal events.
- But as God can be simultaneous with eternal events, since these will not render Him temporal, he suggests we think temporal events also exist in eternity, with God being simultaneous with these.
- God can therefore know the events in time as they are in eternity as well.

- But why should we think these events are in eternity as well?

Leftow's view

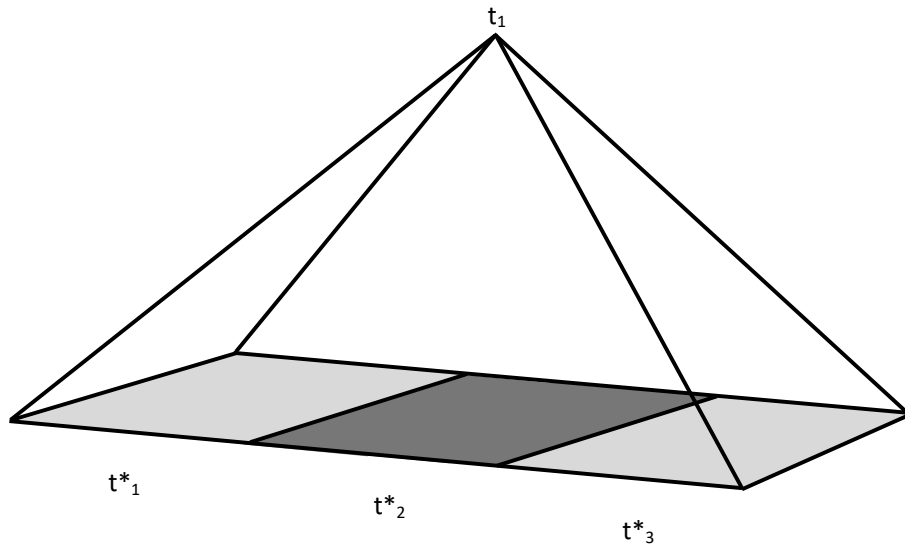
- Leftow gives an argument for this based on what he calls the zero thesis
- This again has been heavily criticised (by pretty much everyone who has commented on Leftow's work on God and Time) – BUT again Leftow doesn't need this argument.
- Leftow can give indirect arguments for this view:
 - His view exhibits the most theoretical virtues compared to other views
 - E.g. he criticises Stump and Kretzmann's view which tries to answer Leftow's question, and says his is preferable on grounds of less primitives and less species of simultaneity
- He can also use a Lewis inspired argument, namely the theoretical benefits are worth it!
- Finally, its not clear to me he has to give a positive argument here. All he is doing is supplying a possible story about how God could do know all of this and remain timeless.

Eternity as a super-temporal dimension

- Leftow, following Anselm, thinks of eternity as like a super-temporal dimension, "containing" time and temporal entities rather as time "contains" space and spatial entities.
- We can make a non-perfect visual representation of this:

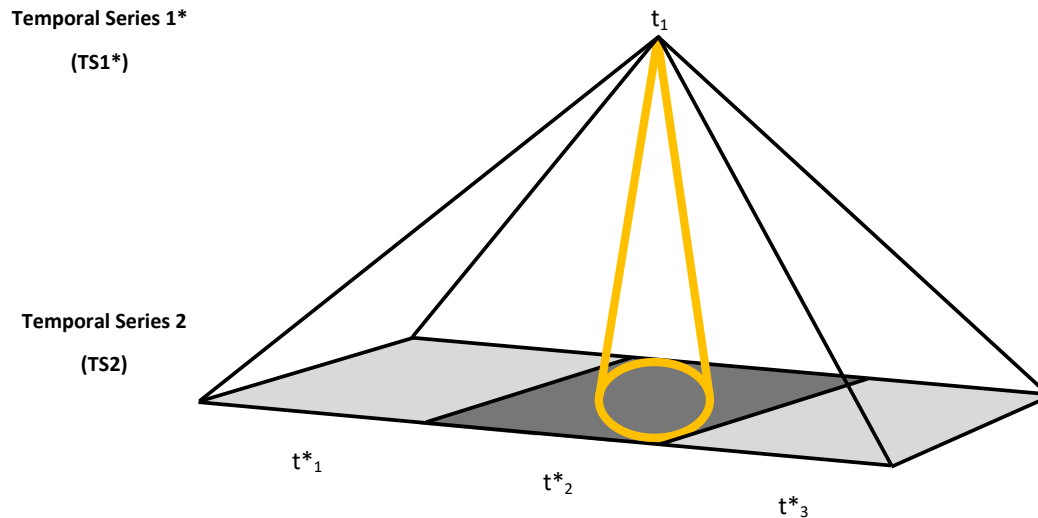
Temporal Series 1*
(TS1*)

Temporal Series 2
(TS2)



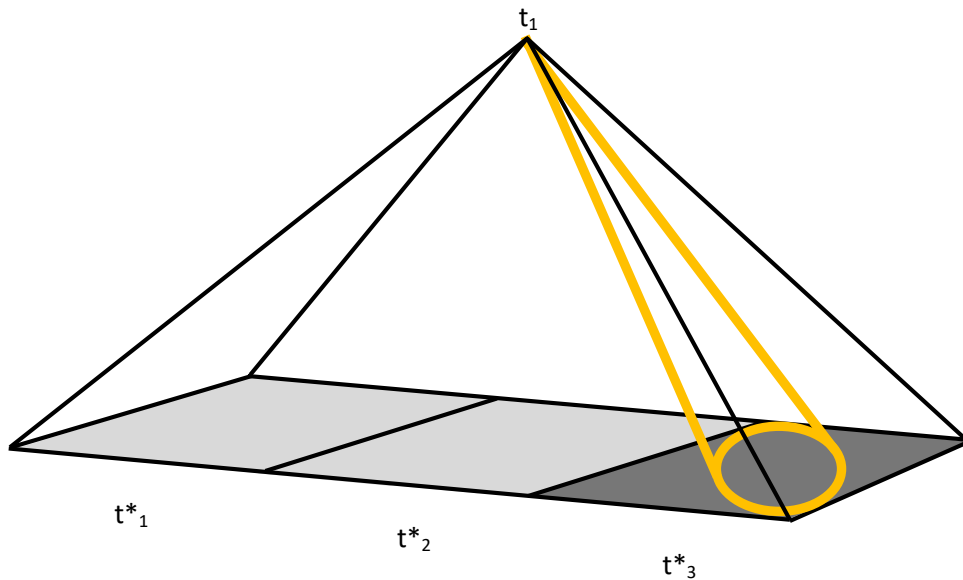
Eternity as a super-temporal dimension

- The idea is that temporal things also exist in eternity by having an eternal dimension, and as such they are simultaneous with God, since He too exists in eternity.
- Yet these temporal things also remain temporal in virtue of their temporal dimension, and given this, they are not simultaneous with God in this respect, since God is not simultaneous with any time.
- Contra Rogers, the view does not say things exist twice, once in eternity and once in time.
- They exist once, but have an eternal and temporal dimension
- Contra Rogers and Mullins, the view also doesn't require different modes of existence either, although it can be consistent with that.
- The best analogue is a dimensional coordinate system, although it is not perfect.
- The thought is that something can have different temporal coordinates but the same eternal one.



Temporal Series 1*
(TS1*)

Temporal Series 2
(TS2)



Eternity as a super-temporal dimension

- We can see that in both pictures there exists an object which exists in both TS1* and TS2.
- In the first image, the object has the TS2 coordinate t^*_2 and in the second the TS2 coordinate t^*_3 .
- However, it also has a coordinate in TS1*, which in both pictures is t_1 .
- Notice further, that since t_1 is the only coordinate in TS1*, as long as this object continues to exist, it will always have the same TS1* coordinate.
- On this picture, then, God exists at TS1*, with t_1 being His eternal present or the date of eternity, and the things that exist in time also exist in eternity, t_1 , in virtue of having an eternal dimension.
- As all things in eternity exist at t_1 everything is simultaneous with God in the eternal present, but God is not simultaneous with the temporal dimension of things, that which exists in TS2, since TS1* and TS2 are discrete timelines and therefore have no temporal relations between each other.

Two quick worries & two quick replies

- Have we made temporal things eternal like God?
- No, although they have a dimension that exists in eternity they still exist in time in virtue of their temporal dimension and so change. An eternal God cannot change.
- Temporal things also have a duration, by enjoying different temporal parts of their existence. God does not have a duration, especially on a point model, and if He did have a duration He would not have temporal parts.
- Does God become temporal?
- Why would this occur? Because of the coordinate and super-dimension analogy, since something that has a coordinate in higher dimensions has them in lower dimensions too. So as God has an eternal coordinate and eternity contains time, He should have a temporal coordinate too.
- Reply, this is where the analogy breaks down – it is an analogy after all!

Keeping the temporal temporal

- In eternity all events are simultaneous with each other, but in time they are not.
- How then do we make sense of them being at once simultaneous in eternity and not-simultaneous in time?
- Leftow makes use of the relativity of simultaneity.
- According to the special theory of relativity (STR), as standardly understood, the question as to whether two events occur at the same time does not have only one answer.
- Rather, something can be simultaneous according to one reference-frame and not simultaneous according to another.
- Yet, and this is key, both answers as to when the event occurred are correct.
- Being simultaneous is therefore intransitive

Presentism and STR

- Leftow also thinks STR should teach presentists that present-actuality is also relative to reference frames.
- So, when in my reference frame X is simultaneous with me, and therefore present to me, we should also say that X is actual, but only presently-actual relative to my frame of reference, since, in your frame of reference X is not simultaneous with you, being in your future, and therefore not presently-actual to you.

Eternal Reference Frame

- With this as background, turn back to Leftow's view of events existing both in time and eternity.
- In eternity all events exist simultaneously, with Leftow suggesting that we think of eternity *as like* another reference frame.
- There can be no temporal frame like this where all temporal events occur simultaneously and so it is only in the eternal reference frame that all events exist simultaneously.
- Additionally, since Leftow claims present-actuality is reference frame relative, we are able to say that only relative to the atemporal/eternal reference frame are all events presently-actual.

Temporal reference frames

- But the fact that events are simultaneous within the eternal reference frame, does not mean they are simultaneous in all other reference frames, given the intransitivity of simultaneity.
- Given that these events also exist in temporal reference frames, in virtue of their temporal dimension, it will also be correct to say that relative to a temporal reference frame some events are simultaneous whilst others are past and future.
- Once we add to this that present-actuality is reference frame relative, we can see that relative to the multiple temporal references frames there are, so to there will be multiple present-actualities, with none being in principle privileged over any other.

Putting it all together ...

- We can say that to God, in His atemporal reference frame, all temporal events are simultaneous to Him and so presently-actual relative to Him.
- Yet, within time, temporal events are simultaneous relative to some reference frames, and therefore presently-actual in them, and not simultaneous relative to others, and therefore not presently-actual in them.
- As such all temporal events occur and are presently-actual at once within eternity, even though it's also true to say that they don't all occur at once within time, therefore not all being presently-actual within time either, with some being past and others future.

3 Worries – Worry 1

- There is no eternal reference frame (Craig)
- I don't know that STR rules it out. Sure there is no physical reference frame, but Leftow would agree with that. It would be something 'beyond' physics.
- Maybe the beyondness is troubling?
- I don't think it should be. As I've already said, the best we can do when thinking about God is appeal to pictures and analogies, even though they are not perfect, and God will be beyond them! (Leftow even talks about reference frames as analogies, so Craig may have just misread him).
- But, Leftow doesn't need the reference frame move – if Eternity is a point, and all events exist in eternity (due to what we have previously talked about), all events exist simultaneously in eternity (they have to, since they can only exist at the one point of eternity)

3 Worries – Worry 2

- STR implying that actuality to reference frames is really odd!
- Yes, but many physical theories seem really odd to me.
- What's more, I think the views that square presentism with STR are also often rather strange. So I'm not convinced strangeness gives me a reason to reject it!
- Other philosophers of time have also proposed the view, so perhaps its not so bad after all?

3 Worries – Worry 3

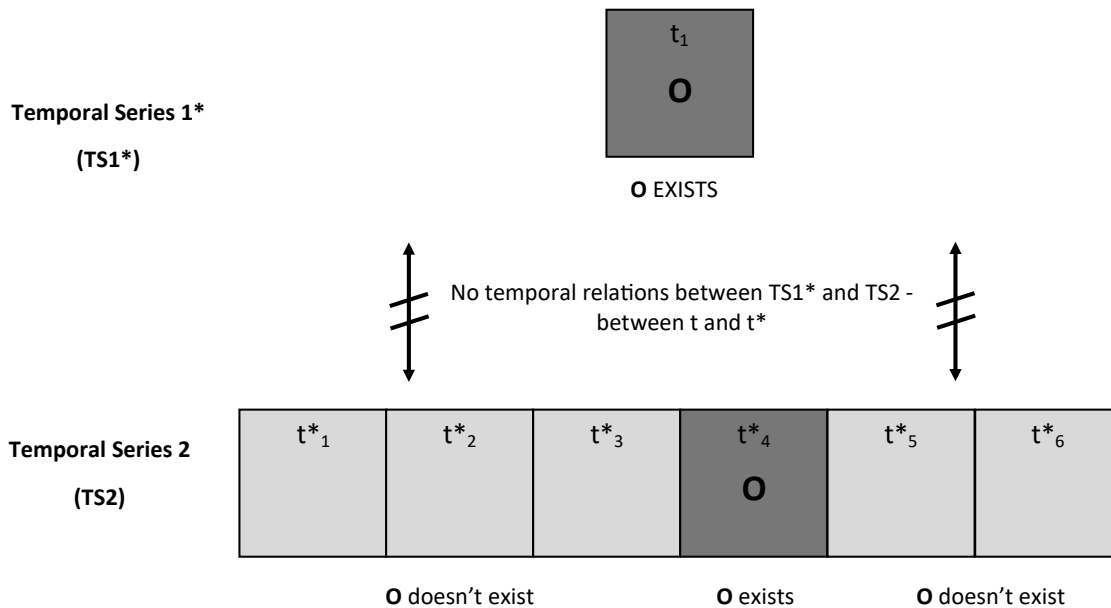
- Ordering of events in God's life
- In eternity there is no earlier or later, yet in time there is. In eternity all events are simultaneous with each other. So how does God order events in eternity?
- Craig - 'events in God's life are chaotically co-existent.'
- This is too strong, events in God's life can be ordered in many ways even if not in terms of earlier and later.
- But we do want earlier and later, so how does God get these?
- God knows the dates of the temporal dimension of the events that exist in eternity. God can then order them in reference to these dates. This then provides the atemporal analogue of earlier and later, representing these relations.
- It will be a little more complicated, but that's the idea!

Another way!

Discrete timelines once
more

Discrete timelines once more

- Recently Leftow (2018) has set out another way to think about a timeless God's relationship to time, that gets what he wants without appealing to many of the controversial views mentioned above.
- I will sketch out this picture now.



Discrete timelines once more

- In TS2, t^*_4 is the present moment – BUT as our discrete timelines both have distinct presents we must be more careful. So we will say t^*_4 is $\text{present}_{\text{TS2}}$, and that t_1 is $\text{present}_{\text{TS1}^*}$. There is thus no present simpliciter
- In t^*_4 there is an object O. In virtue of it being $\text{present}_{\text{TS2}}$ we can say that O exists. However, we also need to be more careful with our use of exists, and so we should say that O $\text{exists}_{\text{TS2}}$.
- O also appears in TS1*, but O does not ‘ $\text{exist}_{\text{TS2}}$ ’ in t_1 , since nothing will ‘ $\text{exist}_{\text{TS2}}$ ’ in TS1* as the timelines are discrete and so share no present.
- Rather, what we should say is that O ‘EXISTS’ in TS1* where this use of ‘EXISTS’ is to signify that O ‘EXISTS’, but does not ‘EXIST’ in the timeline we are currently referring to.

Discrete timelines once more

- By contrast, my lowercase subscripted use of ‘exists’ should therefore understood as referring to ‘existing within a timeline’.
- O therefore ‘exists’ within timeline TS2, and so more precisely ‘ $\text{exists}_{\text{TS2}}$ ’, but also ‘EXISTS’ in TS1*, since whilst it doesn’t ‘exist’ within TS1* as it ‘exists’ in TS2, it can nonetheless be said to ‘EXIST’ in a non-timeline relative way in TS1*.

Discrete timelines once more

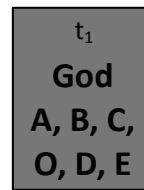
- Now ask yourself whether O can begin or cease to 'EXIST' in TS1*? Leftow claims it can't, and very briefly, here's why.
- One reason we might say that O ceased to 'EXIST' in TS1* is because O ceased to 'exist_{TS2}' in TS2.
- But if O ceased to 'EXIST' in TS1* when O ceased to 'exist_{TS2}' in TS2, it would look, for all intents and purpose, like the timelines aren't discrete after all.
- But they are discrete, and so O cannot cease to 'EXIST' in TS1* for this reason.
- The alternative thing to say is that O's ceasing to 'exist_{TS2}' in TS2 doesn't in any way explain why O no longer 'EXISTS' in TS1*.
- But then seems we would have to say that there's no reason why O would cease to 'EXIST' at one time rather than another in TS1*.

Discrete timelines once more

- Leftow concludes that what we should say in this case is that O never begins or ceases to 'EXIST' in TS1*.
- O always 'EXISTS' in TS1*, no matter if O is past, present or future in TS2. O therefore tenselessly 'EXISTS' in TS1*.

- Now consider another image which more accurately represents God's relationship to time.

Temporal Series 1*
(TS1*)



God 'exists_{TS1*}'

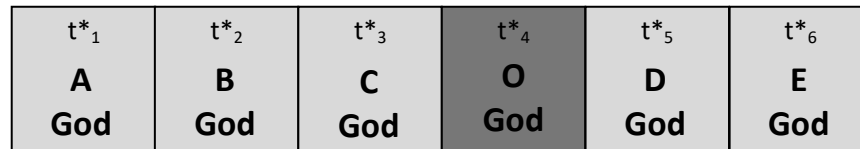
A, B, C, O, D, E 'EXISTS'



No temporal relations between TS1* and TS2 -
between t and t^*



Temporal Series 2
(TS2)



A 'existed_{TS2}' B 'existed_{TS2}' C 'existed_{TS2}' O 'exists_{TS2}' D will 'exist_{TS2}' E will 'exist_{TS2}'

God 'EXISTS' God 'EXISTS' God 'EXISTS' God 'EXISTS' God 'EXISTS' God 'EXISTS'

Discrete timelines once more

- Here we can see that in TS1* t_1 is 'present_{TS1*}' and so God 'exists_{TS1*}'.
- Note also that God never begins or ceases to 'exist_{TS1*}' in TS1*, since in TS1* there is only one time slice, t_1 .
- God can also be found in TS2, but God doesn't 'exist' in TS2 since He is not present in TS2, being only 'present_{TS1*}'.
- God also has never 'existed_{TS2}' or will 'exist_{TS2}', and neither does He 'exist_{TS1*}' within TS2, with the reason for all of this being due to the discreteness of the timelines. Instead we must say that in TS2 God 'EXISTS', and so tenselessly 'EXISTS' in TS2.
- God also 'EXISTS' in all of TS2's time slices, with this being for the same reason as given above, namely, to avoid mystery and preserve the discreteness of the timelines.

Discrete timelines once more

- Yet whilst God 'EXISTS' at every time in TS2, objects within timeline TS2 only 'exist_{TS2}' when they are 'present_{TS2}'.
- For instance, A 'existed_{TS2}' when t^*_1 was 'present_{TS2}', but since t^*_1 is no longer 'present_{TS2}', A no longer 'exists_{TS2}'. The same can be said of B in t^*_2 and C in t^*_3 .
- t^*_4 , however, is 'present_{TS2}', and so in virtue of that we can say that O 'exists_{TS2}'.
- Turning to TS2's future time slices, when t^*_5 is 'present_{TS2}' D will 'exist_{TS2}', and when t^*_6 is 'present_{TS2}', E will 'exist_{TS2}'. Yet in TS2 they do not yet 'exist_{TS2}' because their temporal slice is not yet 'present_{TS2}'.
- However, within TS1* A, B, C, O, D, and E all 'EXIST' in t_1 . What's more they always 'EXIST' and will never fail to 'EXIST' for the reasons we have already set out. They tenselessly 'EXIST' with God in His eternal present, even though they may 'have existed_{TS2}' or 'not yet exist_{TS2}' in TS2.

Discrete timelines once more

- If all this is correct, then we have another way to picture God's relationship to time.
- Notice that in describing this way of thinking of things I haven't talked about the zero thesis, events having both temporal and eternal dimensions, the relativity of simultaneity, reference frames, or the relativity of actuality. This way of modelling God's relationship to time may therefore have all of the benefits without some of the contentious metaphysics.
- However, what is most important for my purposes, is to note that even if one thought that the former way of thinking about God's relationship to time was mistaken, Leftow can still get his view of a timeless God off the ground in virtue of this way of thinking of things.
- As such, if Leftow's picture of a timeless God *really is* unsuccessful, it will have to be shown unsuccessful in both ways (the way mentioned previously and this way too!).

Conclusion

Temporalism

- Graham Oppy, concludes his remarks on Leftow's view of God and time writing,

If it is really true that an understanding of God's timelessness requires so many bizarre doctrines – degrees of existence, partless extension, the Zero Thesis, ... and so on – then the upshot is likely to be a *reductio* of the claim that God is timeless, For this reason, it seems to me that theists ought to look favourably on attempts to explain how God could be timeless which do not invest in these doctrines. (2014, 121)

- Oppy, however, is just wrong in thinking Leftow requires any of these.
- Hopefully, you now have a better understanding of Leftow's view than Oppy, Craig, Padgett, etc. and won't make the mistakes they do about it.
- Perhaps devastating criticisms will be levelled against Leftow's view in the future, but given what I've said here, I'm sceptical that it has been achieved at present.

No divine Power Lefto'ver

Ben Page

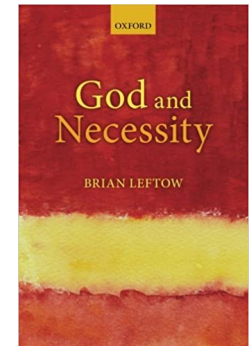
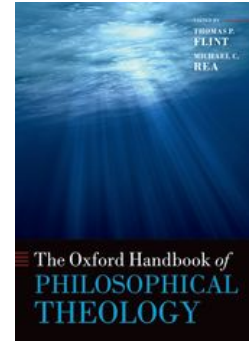
Pembroke College and Oriel College
University of Oxford

A few preliminaries

- Today, once again, I'm going to be taking on the role, at least for the most part, of the great Brian Leftow!
- Warning: Brian has written much less on the topic of omnipotence than on what I spoke about previously, God and Time.
- This means that whilst I've a fairly good idea as to what Brian wants to say on the topic, given what he has written, in virtue of him having written less on this area I feel less able to inhabit a Brian mode of thinking.
- If this is to appear anywhere it will likely be in the Q & A section, since in virtue of feeling less overall immersed in Brian's view here, I may well be able to say less about how he would respond than I'd like!
- I guess we will have to wait and see, but I've got my excuses in early!
- In any case, by the end of this talk, it will hopefully be clear, in the main, as to what Brian's account is!

Brian's work

- The main place where Brian has written specifically about his views on omnipotence is:
- (2009) 'Omnipotence', in T. Flint, M. Rea, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*. Oxford University Press.
- It's a fairly complicated piece, but what I say here should break it down nicely.
- Brian also talks a little about omnipotence here and there throughout his writings.
- I think he has a habit of putting little gems about other topics in his work which you can only find with some searching!
- One place which has some relevant content is in his big and difficult book, *God and Necessity*.
- This book has lots of very interesting content in it, BUT it is very difficult, and I wouldn't want to claim even I properly understand it at present ...
- But as ever with Brian's work, it is mind expanding and novel in lots of way, so always repays effort in understanding it!



Theories of Omnipotence

- Kenny Pearce in his article on Omnipotence in the Internet Encyclopaedia of Philosophy makes a nice distinction between two different types of theories one might give about omnipotence.
- The first is an **act** based theory:
 - S is omnipotent = S can perform any **action** A such that A is possible
- The second is a **result** based theory:
 - S is omnipotent = S can **bring about any possible state of affairs**
- *Note these are simple forms of these types of theories*

Can God make ...

- To see the difference between these two types of theories, let's think about two things that people often ask if God can do:

- Can God make a square circle?



- Can God create a stone to heavy He cannot lift?



Can God make ...

- You might have thought God couldn't make a square circle, because such an object is impossible ...
- BUT, and if you take anything away from this talk this is it, ...
- for the first time ever, I'm going to draw one for you in order to show its possible ...
- So here it is ...

A square-circle!



- There it is ... it's just side on!

Can God make ... a square circle

- Joking aside, act theories can deal with the question as to whether God can make a square circle.
- It says that making a square circle is not a possible action.
- We might then ask what is it to be a possible action?
- Usually, its claimed that it needs to be something that is consistent, and so not self-contradictory.
- *Note that not everyone thought this, Descartes for instance seemed to think that God could make contradictions true.*
- *But the vast majority of philosophers have not followed him in thinking this.*

Can God make ... a stone so heavy He can't lift?

- Act theories work less well with this question.
- This is because 'making a stone so heavy one cannot lift' is a possible action.
- We can see it's possible as you or I could potentially perform it.
- But if it is a possible action, then according to an act theory, it must be something God is able to do.
- However, then the trouble is that there is another possible action this God cannot perform ...
- Namely the action of, 'lifting the stone one has just made'.
- This is another possible action, for we could make a stone and then lift it.
- The act theory I gave earlier says that God should be able to perform *any possible action*.
- But as God wouldn't be able to lift the stone, and so couldn't perform some possible action, then according to this definition He would not be omnipotent.

Can God make ... a stone so heavy He can't lift?

- You might think you can solve the problem by saying that 'creating a stone an omnipotent being cannot lift' is an impossible action.
- The act theorist can agree with this
- But we can still get difficulty going in virtue of other possible actions – e.g. 'creating a stone one cannot lift', and 'creating a stone its creator cannot lift'.
- These both seem like possible actions, one's we can probably also bring about, and so we can get the problem previously raised going again!

Can God make ... a stone so heavy He can't lift?

- Here's another way to keep the action based view. We could say God is contingently omnipotent. This would mean He can perform the first action, creating a stone that its creator cannot lift and remain omnipotent whilst He does so.
- However, once He has created the stone, He ceases to be omnipotent for He cannot perform the other possible action, namely lifting a stone that one has just created.
- So in order for the difficulty we need God to be omnipotent at all times.

Can God make ... a stone so heavy He can't lift?

- Perhaps from this we should learn that it is more than 'mere omnipotence' we will ultimately be interested in when thinking about God.
- Leftow - 'It seems possible to cease to be omnipotent. (Why not? – Wouldn't a contingent, not necessarily eternal omnipotent being be able to kill itself?)'
- Leftow, however, doesn't think God is contingently omnipotent, and neither do theists more generally. God is necessarily omnipotent, since it is part of His nature. And so if He ceased to be omnipotent He would cease to be God.
- (But note that thinking this is an addition to 'mere omnipotence', which says nothing about the contingency or necessity of having such a property)

Can God make ... a stone so heavy He can't lift?

- As the route out of this problem just sketched is not one most people will take, most theories of omnipotence these days are what Pearce calls, results based theories.
- S is omnipotent = S can **bring about any possible state of affairs**
- Leftow is one of these who opts for this way of thinking about omnipotence.
- On this view of the stone, there 'being a stone an omnipotent being cannot lift' is not a possible state of affairs.
- For when we survey the possible worlds we see that there is no possible world where this is the case.
- What about, 'there being a stone its creator cannot lift'?
- This is clearly a possible state of affairs, but it is only possible if the 'creator' does not name God. Rather God can bring this state of affairs about in virtue of creating another being who creates a stone they cannot lift.

Omnipotence and other attributes ...

- Omnipotence, then, is about God's ability to bring about states of affairs.
- This means, as Leftow writes, that omnipotence alone 'doesn't preclude irrational or ignorant willing. An irrational or ignorant omnipotent being might will to have the power to make a contradiction true. ... Again, an irrational or ignorant omnipotent being could will to have the power to change the past. Plausibly there is no such power; again, if it willed to have the power, it would not get it.'
- The point I want to take from this is that we might have thought omnipotence is tied to success in bringing about states of affairs.
- BUT perhaps on its own it isn't. If it is *just* to do with God's power, then it just says God can bring about all possible states of affairs.
- And an omnipotent being can have this property even if they try to bring about things that are not possible.
- Rather, what we need in order to rule these out, are God's perfect knowledge and rationality.

Omnipotence and other attributes ...

- What about God bringing about evil things, or sinning?
- Here Leftow speaks about Augustine, who he suggests thought:
 - “*ceteris paribus* [other things being equal], no one wants to err. No one perfectly rational and informed whose existence would on balance be worth continuing would want to die. No one all-good would want to sin or deceive. The only question for someone with God’s other attributes, then, is whether he has strength enough to have what he wants and not get what he does not want. Given God’s other traits, only a lack of power could explain his sinning, erring, etc., and so these are ‘in such a way impossible to Him, that if (they) were possible for Him, he would be of less power’.”
- Given God’s nature then, it is impossible for Him to bring about a state of affairs where He sins or does evil. It is just ruled out by His other essential attributes.
- However, this isn’t because God is not strong enough to sin, but rather, to reiterate again, it is just not a possible state of affairs for someone with His nature to bring about given His other essential attributes, such as divine goodness, rationality, etc.

Strength

Strength and Range

- God is said to be able to bring about all possible states of affairs
- This is to do with the range of God's power
- But it is also said that nothing is too hard or difficult for God
- This is to do with how strong God is
- Most contemporary accounts focus explicitly on God's range of action – I will say more about range soon
- *Although I've already implicitly talked about it a little - E.g. does God have the power to sin, create a stone too heavy he can't lift, etc.*
- Leftow thinks an adequate account of omnipotence needs to talk about both God's strength and range
- He doesn't think pure strength (e.g. Wielenberg's) or pure range account (most contemporary views) will do the job.

God and Schmod

- Consider two deities, God and Schmod.
- God can bring about all possible states of affairs, and finds none of it hard to do either.
- Schmod can do the same as God, but finds doing some of them hard.
- Perhaps Schmod simply has to concentrate harder to make a decision, or exercise any of his powers.
- Perhaps, unless Schmod concentrates very hard, he occasionally wills slightly the wrong thing, or his power does not accomplish quite what he wants it to.
- Perhaps when Schmod wills to do certain things, he feels just what we feel phenomenologically when we exert effort and accomplish something with difficulty.
- Perhaps Schmod tires: gradually, as he wills first one and then another effect, it takes more effort to concentrate, painful fatigue sensations increase, his attempts become gradually more inaccurate, etc.
- Both beings therefore have the same range of action, and so we can say that they differ in strength, with God being stronger.
- But if someone is stronger than Schmod, Schmod is not omnipotent, even if Schmod 'can do all things'.

Maximal strength

- God then will have maximal strength, where everything He does He does with ease.
- We can also perhaps make another distinction here.
- Think about Arnie and me lifting weights. Arnie is stronger than me since he can lift them far easier than I can.
- But note that Arnie can only do this because of the considerable effort he has put in at the gym for many many years.
- God's strength, however is not like that.
- It takes Him no effort to get into the situation in which He can bring about all possible states of affairs with ease.
- God's strength then covers both His doing X with ease, and His not needing to exert any effort in order to be in a situation so as to do X.
- Notice that on this account there will be no possible state of affairs which God brings about with difficulty.
- This will not be in the range of God's action, for any action which falls under omnipotence is not difficult for an omnipotent being.

Range of Power

Problems to avoid

- Swinburne writes:
 - ‘God is omnipotent in that whatever he chooses to do, he succeeds in doing.’
 - As Leftow notes, on this type of account, even a weak being can count as omnipotent.
 - E.g. I could be omnipotent, so long as all I ever chose to do were things I knew I would succeed at.
 - But I definitely should not count as omnipotent!
-
- As I’ve previously said, this alone would also seem to rule out an ill-informed omnipotent being, but it doesn’t seem that omnipotence alone rules this out.

Problems to avoid

- Another problem to avoid is McEar.
- McEar issues come from saying things like:
- S is omnipotent = S can bring about any state of affairs p such that it is logically possible that S brings about p
- The worry here stems from the thought that McEar is essentially able to only scratch his left ear.
- Being essential is not an ability McEar can lose, and McEar can do nothing other than scratch his left ear. It is his only possible action.
- McEar then counts as omnipotent, because he can bring about all states of affairs that it is logically possible for him to bring about.
- All he can possibly do is scratch his left ear, and he can do that.
- But it seems wrong to say that he’s omnipotent!

Problems to avoid

- The way to avoid McEar problems, Leftow contends, is to avoid relativising power to a things nature.
- The difficulty arises due to - it is logically possible that S brings about p
- If instead we say that omnipotence is the ability to bring about states of affairs more generally, without reference to a specific being with a specific nature then McEar problems are avoided.
- So as Leftow says, we should simply speak of states of affairs being actualised in some possible world, as the content here.
- How though should we understand what is meant by ‘actualisation’?

Strong and weak actualisation

- There is a distinction made in the literature between strong and weak actualisation
- Strong actualisation:
 - S strongly actualizes it that P , causally determines it that P
 - Or to say that S strongly actualises P is to say that S directly brings it about that P
- Weak actualisation:
 - S weakly actualizes it that P just if S strongly actualizes it that some S^* is in a circumstance C such that S^* freely strongly actualizes it that P
 - *Note that those who think this, think God knows the counterfactuals of creaturely freedom – so God knows what the agent would freely do in the particular circumstances they are in.*
- Some people think that an account of omnipotence should include both the power to strongly and weakly actualise a state of affairs.
- Leftow thinks not – he understands actualisation as only strong actualisation.

Power to persuade

- To see why, let's start with the power to persuade and ask whether this be included in our definition of what it means to be omnipotent.
- Leftow says not - 'Persuade' is a success term: I persuade you only if I succeed in my attempt to do so. How much persuading I can do depends on how hard the hearts are around me. So power to persuade is not intrinsic: having it depends on what is the case outside the agent.'
- BUT, says Leftow, omnipotence is an intrinsic attribute.
- 'William of Auxerre held that an omnipotent agent needs no help to do what its omnipotence gives it power to do. This became part of the consensus medieval account, and is plausible.'
- Persuaders need help from the outside in order to bring about that which they are trying to persuade you of. So the power to persuade is not one of those powers.

God and Zed

- Think about this case:
- Suppose that Zed and God offer the same cajoling/coaxing/flattery to Smith in the same way on two occasions, with Smith being in the same relevant internal state in both situations.
- Smith is libertarianly free and he agrees to Zed but not to God.
- It seems unintuitive to say that Zed has more power than God. Zed has just done exactly the same thing that God has.
- It seems wrong to say that for God to count as omnipotent, He must rely on the lucky break of having easily persuadable people around him, or more generally on circumstances being favourable.
- The moral of the story, says Leftow, is that if omnipotence is intrinsic, it is not even partly constituted by non-intrinsic powers, such as the power to persuade.

Zod

- What of the power to weakly actualise?
- Those think God has these powers think that persuasion is one instance of this.
- Now think of Zod offering Smith the same cajoling/coaxing/flattery in two possible worlds featuring different true CFs, and due to the differences in these CFs, Smith does as Zod asks in one world and not in the other.
- Leftow thinks it's unintuitive that this shows that Zod has more power of any relevant sort in that world where Smith does as Zod asks.
- He thinks out intuitions about the persuasion case shouldn't change if we learn that it sometimes takes advantage (as it were) of CFs.
- Power to weakly actualize is power to accomplish certain things only by means of extrinsic helps (the contingent presence of propitious CFs).
- So it can't help constitute an intrinsic attribute. Omnipotence, then, is power simply to strongly actualize, or cause to be the case.

Range

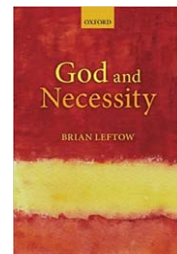
- Leftow claims, then, that God has the ability to bring about whatever it is metaphysically possible to bring about at t .
- This leaves space for for the possibility that some states of affairs cannot be brought about at t .
- This doesn't mean God has anything less than the maximal range, since if a state of affairs can't be brought about, it is not in any possible range of action.
- Nor does it follow that S lacks some ability: there is no such thing as ability to do what metaphysically cannot be done.
- Given what we've said, Leftow also wants it to be the case that we restrict omnipotence so that it is only based on what is within a being's intrinsic power.

Range

- Another thing Leftow claims isn't within God's range of power is bringing about incompatibilistically free actions in other agents.
- Only the free agent themselves can bring these actions about.
- He thinks no one else can causally determine me to do an action I do with incompatibilist freedom.
- 'It would amount to bringing it about that someone is causally determined to do an act he is not causally determined to do.'
- He writes, 'If possibly I exist, there is a power to bring it about that I initiate a certain action with libertarian freedom. I have this, I believe, but an omnipotent God cannot: if He brings it about that I initiate the action, I do not do it with that sort of freedom.'
- If it would imply a contradiction to causally determine me to do an act with incompatibilist freedom, an omnipotent being can't do this
- But we should think this an acceptable limitation on an omnipotent being's power, assuming the principle of non-contradiction itself is an acceptable limit.
- *Note – Matthews Grant has recently provided a proposal which tries to argue that God can bring about such actions in agents and that these actions they remain libertarianly free. See his Free Will and God's Universal Causality.*

Modality

- There is a final thing Leftow wants to say about omnipotence, but this will have to be brief, for the fuller story see *God and Necessity*.
- Leftow notes that intuitively, if God is omnipotent then His power is unlimited.
- Yet philosophers will immediately qualify this by saying, 'well its only unlimited with respect to what is absolutely possible.'
- Yet when philosophers introduce such claims to (say) first-year university students, they tend to reply, 'doesn't that "only" limit God's power? If God is omnipotent, how can there be things he can't do?'
- The idea of acts an omnipotent being can't do may not be what disturbs the frosh; many are after all content to say both that God is omnipotent and that God cannot do evil.



Modality

- What Leftow thinks they are asking, is how anything can truly be impossible if an omnipotent being exists.
- They wonder how an unlimited power can face limits set by the bounds of metaphysical possibility.
- The limits of the possible seem wholly independent of God. So if they are the boundaries of his power, these boundaries seem imposed on him from without.
- So it seems that what God can and cannot do is determined from without—and this, I submit, may be the real root of the frosh unease.
- For what determines this from without places an extrinsic limit on God's power: it is something outside him to which even an omnipotent power must bow. This does not seem to comport with omnipotence. The Frosh Intuition, then, is that
 - if x is omnipotent, nothing independent of x determines what x can do.

Modality

- One reply here is to say that modal space is what it is because God's powers are what they are.
- Given this, what states of affairs are possible *is not* independent of an omnipotent God.
- The extent of the possible just expresses God's own nature.
- These powers never 'originated', rather they are part of God's very nature.
- They are simply there as He and His nature are.
- On this view we can say that:
 - if x is omnipotent, every possible state of affairs is possible and every impossible state of affairs is impossible due to x
- Leftow, however, has a slightly different view

Modality

- He says :
- if x is omnipotent, every possible state of affairs is possible and every impossible state of affairs is impossible due to x , x 's being in some intrinsic state or items x brings to be.
- Note here, that the addition of the 'items x brings to be', makes it the case that Leftow thinks that God's nature alone doesn't determine all of the modal landscape.
- Rather God does something to determine it – the 'intrinsic state clause can do the same'.
- *How God brings about the modal landscape is what God and Necessity is all about.*
- Note that Leftow doesn't think God determines all the modal landscape by bringing it to be. Some is set by His nature – e.g. logic and mathematics.
- As he says, 'God's nature is the first *locus* of logical truth and necessity. God's powers and lacks of power are the primary truth- and necessity-maker for e.g. the principle of non-contradiction. It is necessary because God cannot for any P bring it about that P and not- P . Explanation here grounds out in the divine nature. I think the same about truths about the morally good, insofar as these aren't specified to creatures.'

Modality

- But he thinks that – 'modal truths about or involving the natures of creatures seem to me to call for a different story.'
- The typical theist story writes all creaturely natures into God's nature. It may say, for instance, that God's nature made Him conceive hippopotami, and hence He has by nature the power to make them. (These theories are what Leftow calls 'deity theories')
- On this view, God's nature is the ultimate zoo: if we could just see far enough in, we'd see every possible animal in there.
- But Leftow thinks God could've been God if there were no such thing as hippopotamus-nature.
- What Leftow says is that the natures of creatures are free, creative inventions of God. He did not have to think up hippos. Nothing in Him constrains Him to do so. What was to be necessary—hippo nature or schmippo nature—was entirely up to Him.
- Leftow's theory is more complicated since, he thinks given what God has thought up 'there would have been the same secular states of affairs no matter what.'
- YET it was and is "in Him" to have things come out differently.

Modality

- Given all this, what it means to be ‘in Him’ therefore has to be spelled out more fully and Leftow does so in some detail.
- For a brief intro to this see his papers ‘The Origins of Logical Space’ and ‘Omnipotence, Evil, and What is in God’ – or look at *God and Necessity*
- Sadly I don’t think I could do it justice in the time I have here
- So ultimately what Leftow wants to say is that in some way God determines what the space of what is possible, with this not being something external and constraining on God.
- Omnipotence then is the power to bring what is possible about.
- As Leftow writes, ‘As naturally omnipotent, He has the power to make whatever He permits Himself to make.’ So
- And again, ‘If He is to be omnipotent, then once dogs are possible, He must be able to make them.’


Putting Everything
Together

Leftow's final account

- There are 3 conditions for omnipotence:
 - (1) it is not the case at t that there is some state of affairs X is unable to bring about at least partially due to lack of power
 - So lack of power never prevents God from bringing something about
 - (2) all truthmakers of modal truths are either X , X 's being in some intrinsic state or items X brings to be
 - God, in some way, determines the range of what is possible
 - (3) at t , $(P)(\Diamond(\text{something(s) at some time(s) or timelessly cause(s) it to be the case that } P \text{ and } P \text{ is not the doing of an action with incompatibilist freedom by someone distinct from } x) \supset (x \text{ is intrinsically such as to strongly actualize it that } P))$.
 - Whatever it is metaphysically possible to bring about at t , so long as it is not the bringing about an act of incompatibilist freedom by someone distinct from X , X is intrinsically able as to strongly actualize it.
- Leftow thinks all three conditions are necessary
- (1) is to do with strength, (3) is to do with range, and (2) is needed for what Leftow thinks is the best account of an omnipotent being's relation to modal truth.

The final account

- (1) guarantees that an omnipotent being has all power—that its strength is without defect.
- If (1) is true, there is no state of affairs, even an impossible one, such that X cannot bring it about due to not being strong enough.
- This implies that an omnipotent being has enough raw power to do even what is in fact absolutely impossible.
- Those states of affairs that are impossible, cannot be possibly brought about by God—but per (2), the reason for this will be due to God in some way.
- A greater degree of power over the states of affairs there are is inconceivable.
- And (3) is what Leftow takes to be the late-medieval consensus account, a purely ranged based account, that avoids difficulties and adds the needed qualification about libertarian freedom.



**THE DARWINIAN
REVOLUTION: THE DEATH
OF GOD?**

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Charles Darwin
(1809-1882)

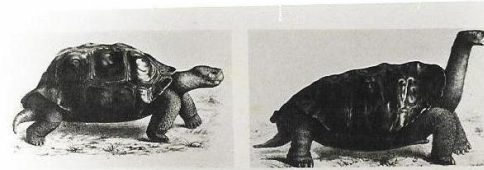
Charles Darwin the basic facts

- Born 1809
- *Beagle* Voyage 1831-1836
- Becomes evolutionist March 1837
- Discovers natural selection September 1838
- *Origin of Species* 1859
- *Descent of Man* 1871
- Dies 1882

H M S *Beagle*

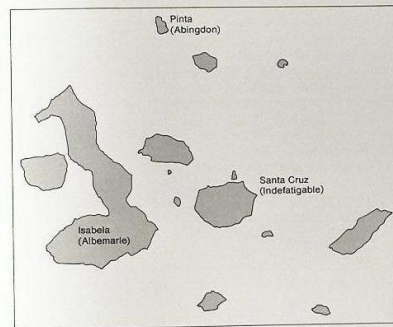


Galapagos tortoises



Testudo microphyes, Isabela I.

Testudo abingdoni, Pinta I.





Darwin Notebook (1837)

Then between A & B. various
 sort of relation. C + B. The
 first predation, B + D
 rather greater distance
 than former would be
 formed. - the long relation

Artificial Selection



Natural
selection (reads
Malthus, end of
September
1838)

Struggle for existence

Natural variation

Only a few get to reproduce

Reproduction a function of adaptive
characteristics

Natural selection

Galapagos finches – note the beaks



ON
THE ORIGIN OF SPECIES
BY MEANS OF NATURAL SELECTION,

OR THE
PRESERVATION OF FAVOURED RACES IN THE STRUGGLE
FOR LIFE.

By CHARLES DARWIN, M.A.,

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL GEOLOGICAL SURVEY, F.R.S., AND FELLOW
AUTHOR OF "JOURNAL OF RESEARCHES INTO THE GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF PLANTS AND ANIMALS DURING HIS VOYAGE
ROUND THE WORLD."

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.
1859.

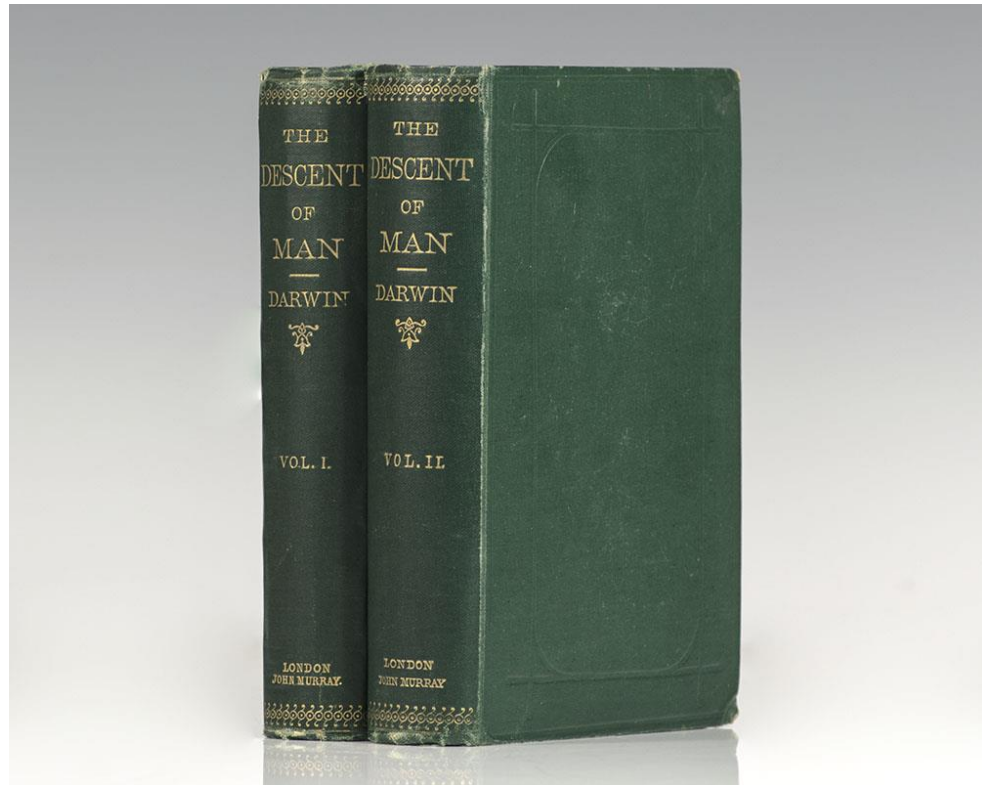
The right of Translation is reserved.

"But with regard to the material world, we can at least go so far as this—we can perceive that events are brought about not by insulated interpositions of Divine power, exerted in each particular case, but by the establishment of general laws."
W. Whewell: *Bridgewater Treatise*.

"To conclude, therefore, let no man out of a weak conceit of sobriety, or an ill-applied moderation, think or maintain, that a man can search too far or be too well studied in the book of God's word, or in the book of God's works; divinity or philosophy; but rather let men endeavour an endless progress or proficience in both."
Bacon: *Advancement of Learning*.

Dover, Printing, Kent.
October 1st, 1859.

*The Descent
of Man*
(1871)



Charles Darwin – religious life

Darwin family Anglican; Wedgwood family Unitarian

Intends to be Anglican clergyman

Becomes a deist – on the *Beagle* voyage

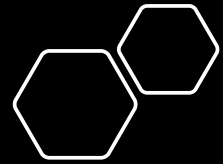
Origin 1859 – still believes in God

Becomes an agnostic – mid 1860s

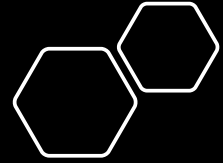
Buried in Westminster Abbey 1882



THE CHURCH
OF ENGLAND



I ❤️ Deism



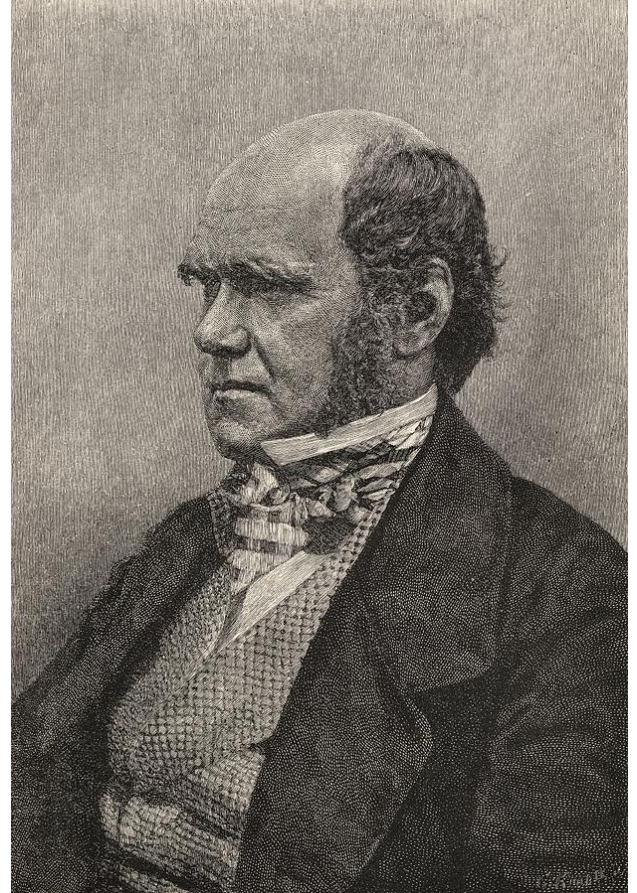
Thomas
Henry
Huxley





CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN
BORN 12 FEBRUARY 1809
DIED 19 APRIL 1882

Charles
Darwin (at
the time of
the *Origin*)



Charles Darwin
– effect on
religious belief

Can no longer take Genesis literally

Adam and Eve?

Problem of Pain?

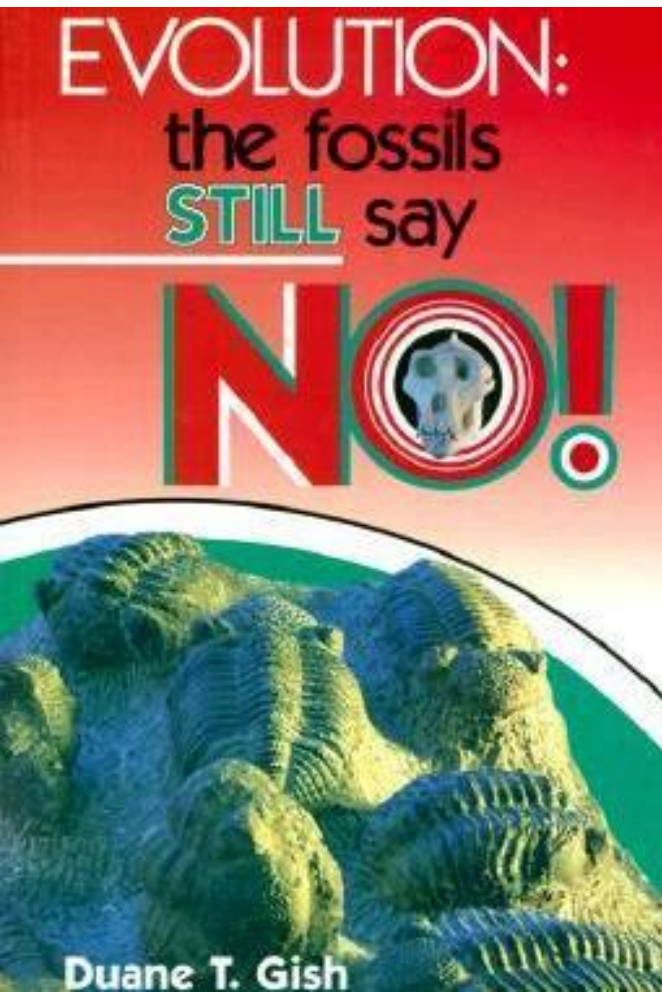
Directed evolution? Are humans
necessary?

John Henry
Newman



Richard
Dawkins





Duane T. Gish

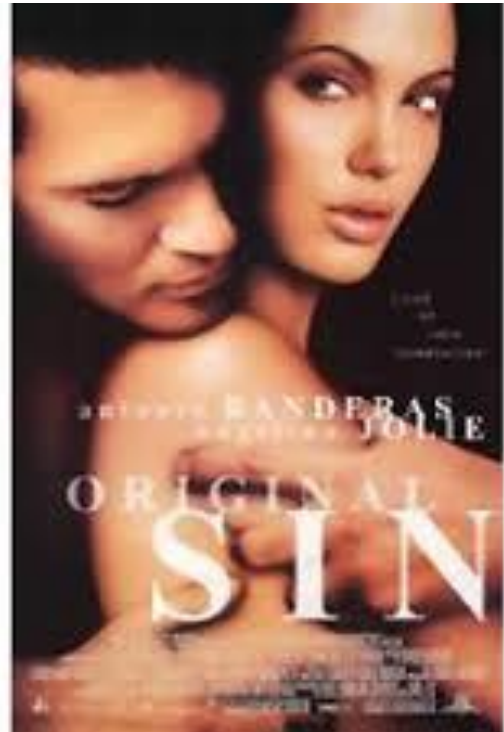


The Creation

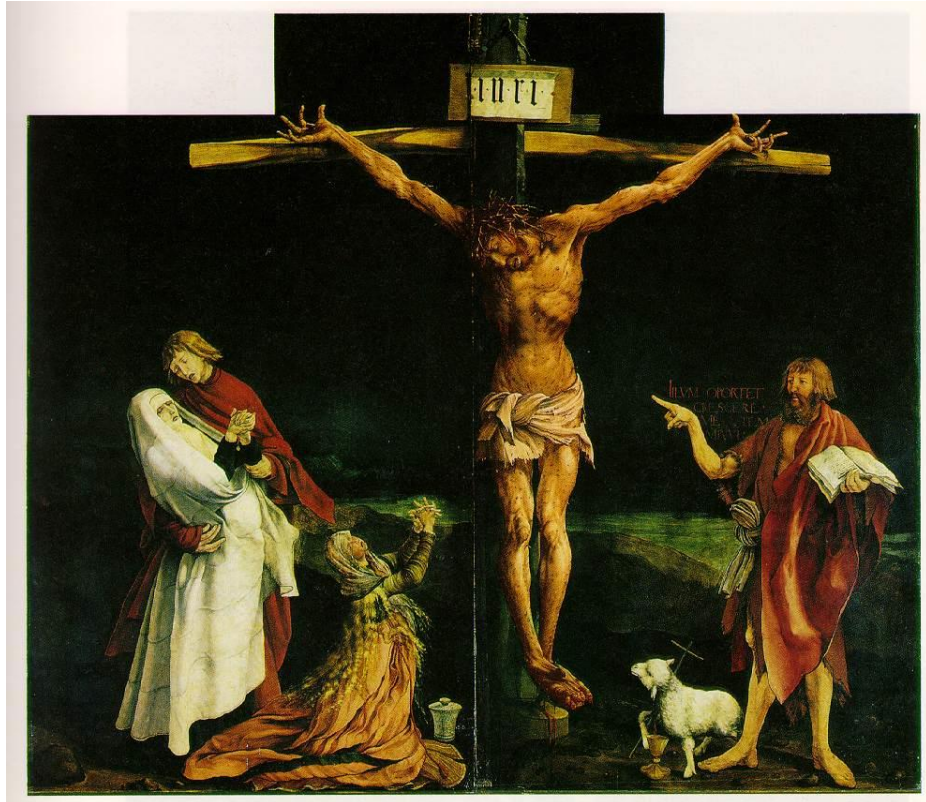




Original sin

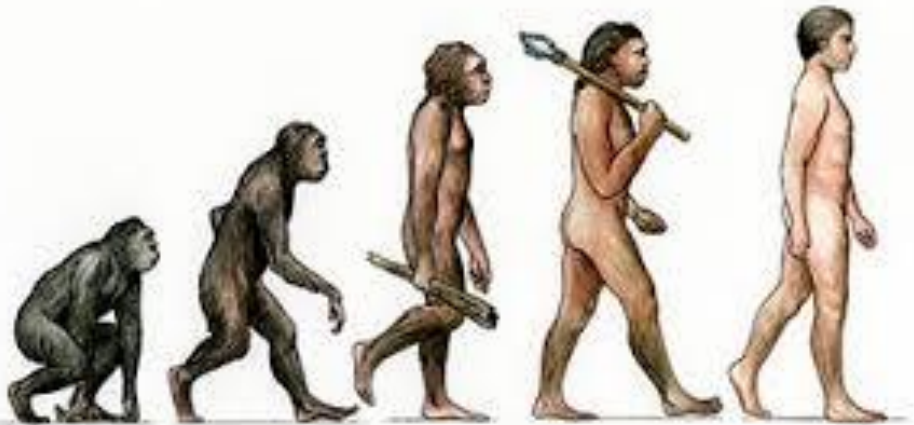


Crucifixion –
substitutionary
atonement

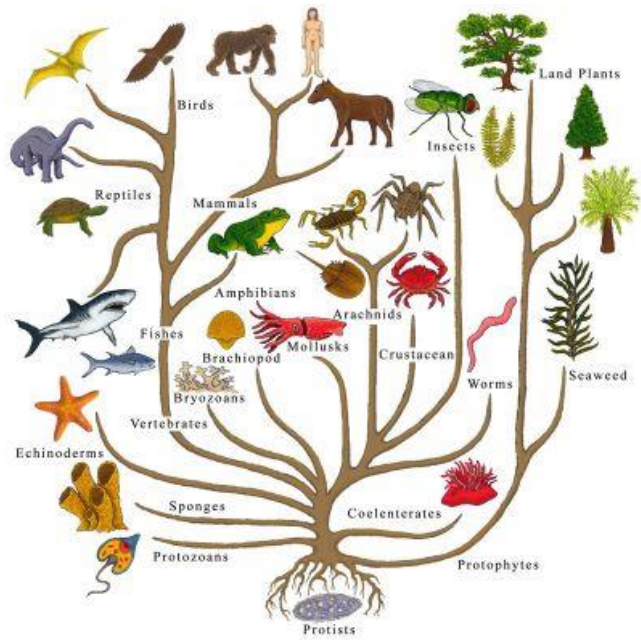




Evolution
progressive?

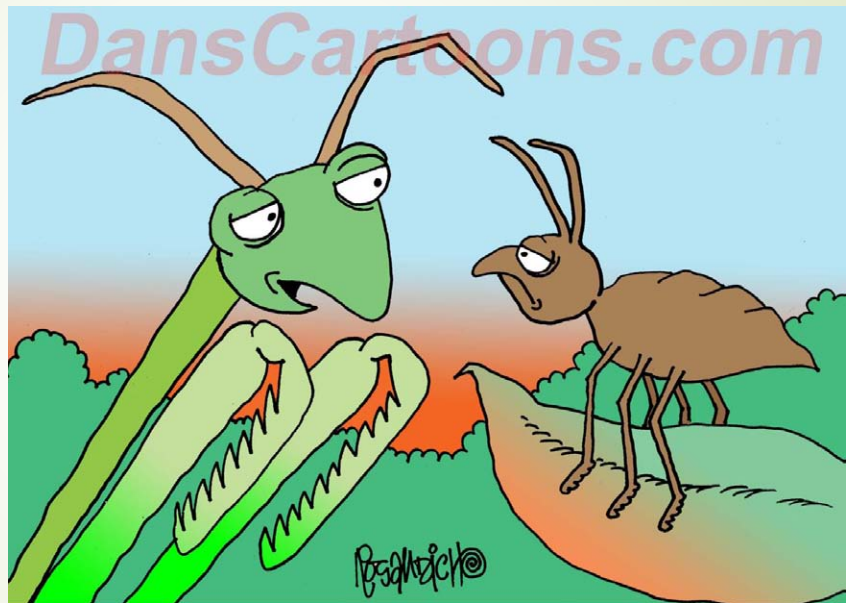


Tree of life





Challenges to Atheism



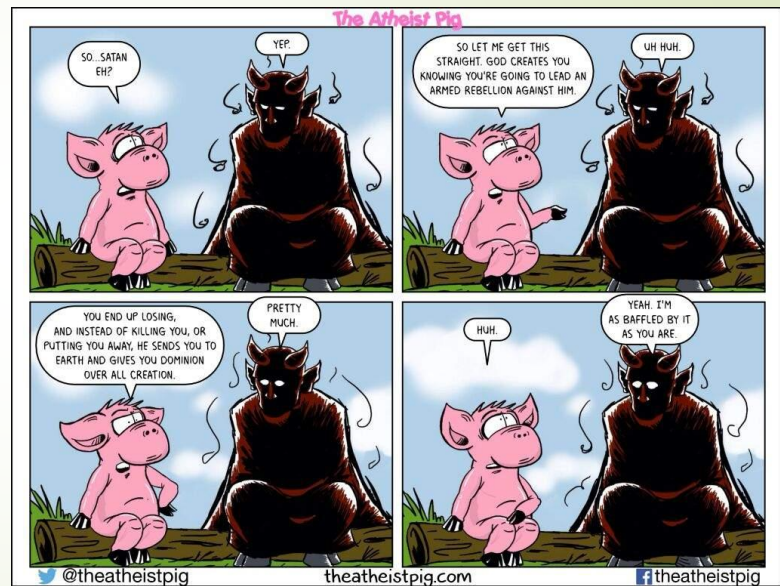
"It may look that way . . . but actually I'm an atheist."

Graham Oppy

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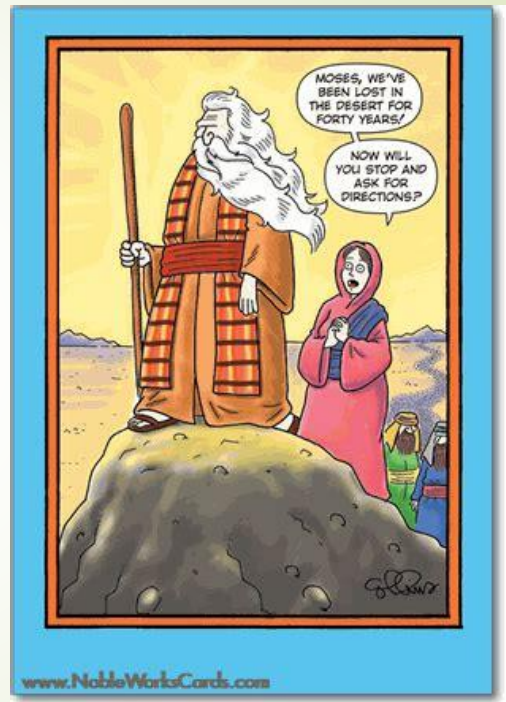
Overview

- 1. What is Atheism?
- 2. What is an Atheistic Worldview?
- 3. Ten Challenges to Atheism
 - 3.1 Atheism is incoherent
 - 3.2 Atheism is inconsistent
 - 3.3 Atheism is impossible
 - 3.4 Atheism is false
 - 3.5 Atheism is very unlikely
 - 3.6 Atheism is less likely
 - 3.7 Atheism is irrational
 - 3.8 Atheism is imprudent
 - 3.9 Atheism is immoral
 - 3.10 Atheism is dangerous



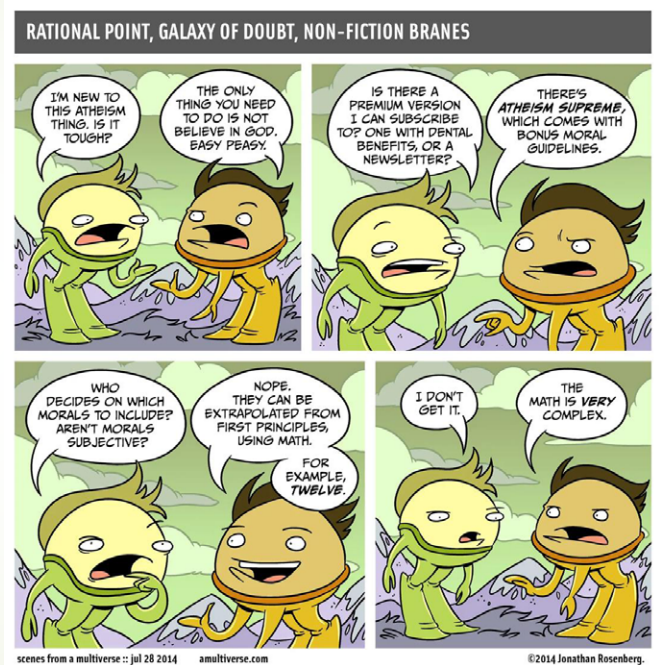
1. What is Atheism?

- Atheism: There are no gods.
- Theism: There is at least one god.
- Monotheism: There is exactly one god: God.
- Atheist: Believes atheism.
- Theist: Believes theism.
- Agnostic: Suspends judgment between atheism and theism.
- Innocent: Has never considered atheism or theism.



2. What is an Atheistic Worldview?

- An atheistic worldview is one that includes the claim that there are no gods.
- Challenges to atheism are best interpreted as challenges to atheistic worldviews.
- Atheism is one thing: a single claim.
- Atheistic worldviews are many and extremely diverse. The only claims common to all atheistic worldviews are the logical consequences of the claim that there are no gods.




3. Ten Challenges to Atheism

- 1. Atheism is incoherent.
- 2. Atheism is formally inconsistent.
- 3. Atheism is impossible.
- 4. Atheism is not actual.
- 5. Atheism is very unlikely.
- 6. Atheism is less likely than theism.
- 7. Atheism is irrational.
- 8. Atheism is imprudent.
- 9. Atheism is immoral.
- 10. Atheism is dangerous.

Spiritual Safety Tip

What should you do if you find an **Atheist**?



Bah! I don't believe in anything! I'm staying home on Sunday!

Atheists such as crotchety old Mr. Gruff think they've got it all figured out...
...but then why are they always so sad?

If you find an Atheist in your neighborhood,
TELL A PARENT OR PASTOR RIGHT AWAY!

You may be moved to try and witness to these poor lost souls yourself, however
AVOID TALKING TO THEM!

Atheists are often very grumpy and bitter and will lash out at children or they may even try to trick you into neglecting God's Word.

Very advanced witnessing techniques are needed for these grouches. Let the adults handle them.

3.1 Atheism is Incoherent

- ▶ 'Not T' is meaningless only if 'T' is meaningless.
- ▶ Arguably: 'Not T' is incoherent only if 'T' is incoherent.
- ▶ It is no more plausible to insist that other claims in atheistic worldviews are incoherent.
- ▶ It is also no more plausible to claim that atheistic worldviews are incoherent.

"PRAY ALL YOU WANT - HEAVEN CAN'T HEAR YOU. IT'S NOT GOING TO STOP THE WINTER BECAUSE YOU ARE GOLD, AND IT'S NOT GOING TO MAKE THE EARTH SMALLER BECAUSE YOU DON'T WANT TO WALK SO FAR. YOU PRAY FOR RAIN AND IT RAINS, BUT YOUR PRAYER HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. SOMETIMES YOU DON'T PRAY AND IT RAINS ANYWAY. WHAT DO YOU SAY THEN? IF YOU ACT WISELY, GOOD THINGS TEND TO HAPPEN. DON'T THANK OR CURSE HEAVEN - IT'S JUST THE NATURAL RESULT OF YOUR OWN ACTIONS. IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A BETTER LIFE, EDUCATE YOURSELF AND THINK CAREFULLY ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF YOUR ACTIONS."

-XUN ZI

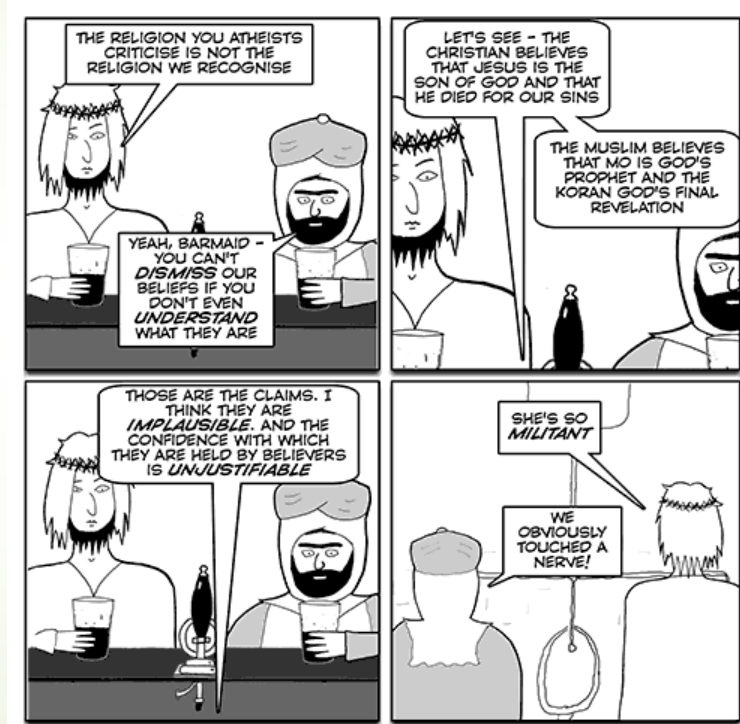
(c. 313 - c. 238 BCE)

@AmericaDreaming
AmericaDreaming.deviantart.com



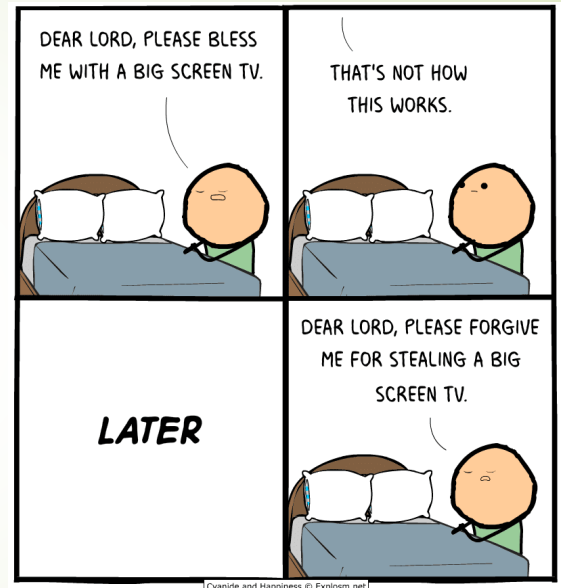
3.2 Atheism is (formally) inconsistent

- It is a theorem of classical logic that $\exists x: x=g$.
- Of course, this is true no matter what 'g' denotes.
- All that this point shows is that classical logic is ill-suited to discussions when at least some participants suppose that some terms are non-denoting.
- There is no prospect of showing that all A-worldviews—or all T-worldviews—are formally inconsistent.



3.3 Atheism is Impossible

- ▶ If it is necessary that there is at least one god, then it is impossible that atheism is true.
- ▶ Many—but not all—theists think that it is necessary that there is at least one god.
- ▶ But, equally, many—but not all—atheists think that it is necessary that there are no gods.
- ▶ At best, this criticism of atheism leads to deadlock.
- ▶ Consider, for example, the dispute about possibility premises in modal ontological arguments.



3.4 Atheism is False

- What matters here is whether the most theoretically virtuous worldviews on total evidence are atheistic worldviews.
- I think that we decide this by asking whether best theistic worldviews or best atheistic worldviews do better in managing the trade-off between minimising theoretical commitments and maximising explanation of data.
- I think that, for the foreseeable future, it will be a matter for judgment whether one thinks that best atheistic worldviews are the most theoretically virtuous worldviews.



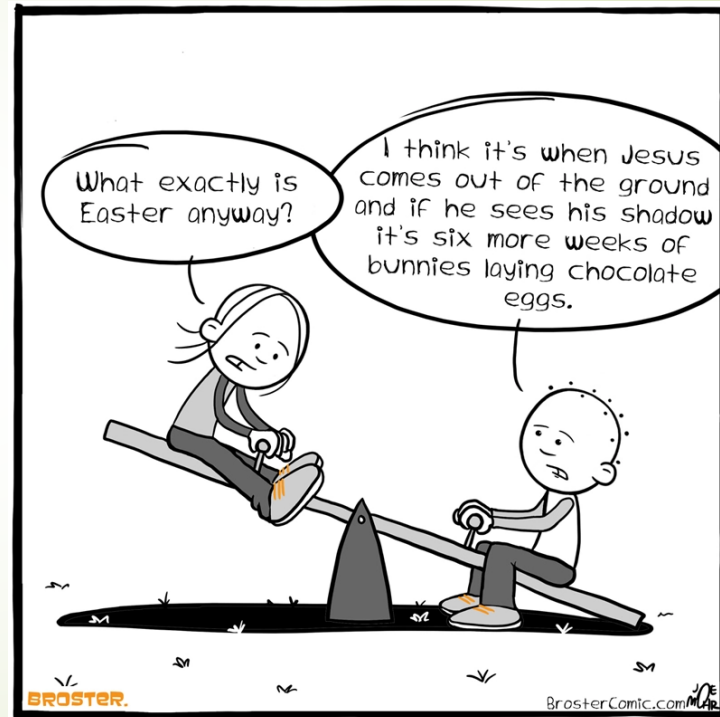
3.5 Atheism is Highly Improbable

- ▶ There is no known theory of *objective* probability on which atheism (or theism) is assigned a probability.
- ▶ On any account of *subjective* probabilities, there is no good argument to the *required* assignment of a probability to atheism (or theism).
- ▶ Subjective Bayesian arguments for the probability of atheism (and theism) invariably turn on claims about what are *reasonable* prior probabilities to assign. These claims are always, themselves, utterly subjective.
- ▶ There is no objective standard for 'small probability'. Many atheists suppose that it is way more likely they'll win the lottery every week for ten years than it is that there is at least one god.



3.6 Atheism is Less Probable

- ▶ Perhaps you might think that you can appeal to a principle of indifference: there are many different ways in which there can be at least one god, but there is only one way in which there can be no gods.
- ▶ Apart from anything else, there is no reason to think that this partition is obligatory. Why not argue that atheism and theism are 50/50?
- ▶ Why not also note that, given that there are billions of different theistic hypotheses, each gets a truly miniscule probability?



3.7 Atheism is Irrational

- ▶ If we set the standards high enough, then we are all irrational much of the time.
- ▶ If we set the standards lower, then it is plausible that, for many, their atheism—or their theism, or their agnosticism—is rational.
- ▶ It is important to remember how much we all rely on testimony in the formation of our beliefs.
- ▶ It is also important to remember how challenging it is to be able to reliably identify trustworthy informants across a wide range of different contexts and subject matters.



3.8 Atheism is Imprudent

- There are many objections to the suggestion that it is prudent to 'wager on gods'
 - Claims about what the gods want from us are a wash
 - Claims about what the gods can do for us are a wash
 - It is often completely opaque to us what would be our best bet were we to try to act on particular proposals about what the gods want from us
 - It seems fine—rationally permissible—that we think that it is impossible that there are gods, or afterlives, or infinite goods



3.9 Atheism is Immoral

- It is an empirical question whether people with religion flourish to a greater extent than people without religion.
- We have a massive amount of relevant data (from national censuses, international data banks, etc.)
- This data reveals no decisive differences between the flourishing of those with religion and those without religion.
- There are many stereotypes about atheists that are undermined by recent research in human and medical sciences.



3.10 Atheism is Dangerous

- Perhaps 1% of people are atheists; perhaps less.
- In most places, at most times, atheists have had no social or political significance.
- It is not plausible that the big challenges we face have been caused by atheism, or by modest recent rises in the prevalence of atheism.
- It is also not plausible that the big challenges we face have been caused by irreligion, or by modest recent rises in the prevalence of irreligion.



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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

Is God a Person?

HAJJ MUHAMMAD LEGENHAUSEN



Sharif International School
on Theism: East and West
23 August - 2 September
2021



Sharif University
of Technology



2021-2023
Sharif International School
on Theism: East and West



theismschool@sharif.ir



www.theismschool.philsci.sharif.ir

25 August

Muhammad
Legenhausen

Is God a
person?

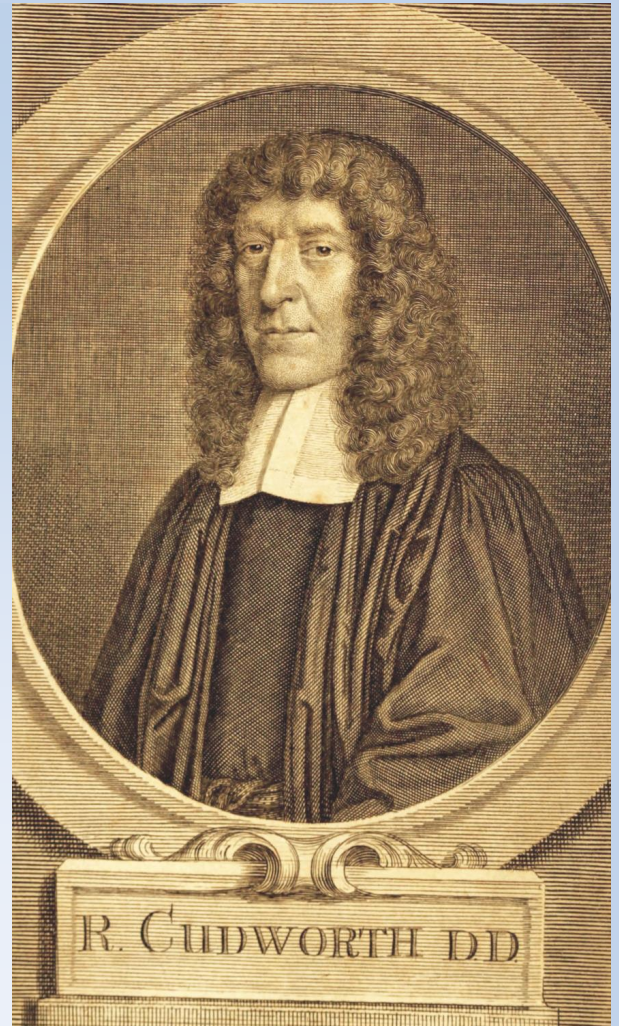
Why think of God as a person?

Answer 1: It is required by theism.

Theism is often defined by philosophers of religion who work in the Christian tradition in such a manner as to require the belief that God is a person. Thus, the Macmillan *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* has it that, 'THEISM signifies belief in one God (*theos*) who is (a) personal, (b) worthy of adoration, and (c) separate from the world but (d) continuously active in it'; John H. Hick admits that, '*Theism* ... is strictly belief in a deity, but is generally used to mean belief in a personal deity;' Richard Swinburne states that a theist is one who believes that there is a God who is a 'person without a body (i.e. a spirit) who is eternal, free, able to do anything, knows everything, is perfectly good, is the proper object of human worship and obedience, the creator and sustainer of the universe', and J. L. Mackie, while arguing the case of atheism, endorses Swinburne's definition of theism.

The English term *theism* was first used by Ralph Cudworth (1617–1688). In Cudworth's definition, they are "strictly and properly called Theists, who affirm, that a perfectly conscious understanding being, or mind, existing of itself from eternity, was the cause of all other things."

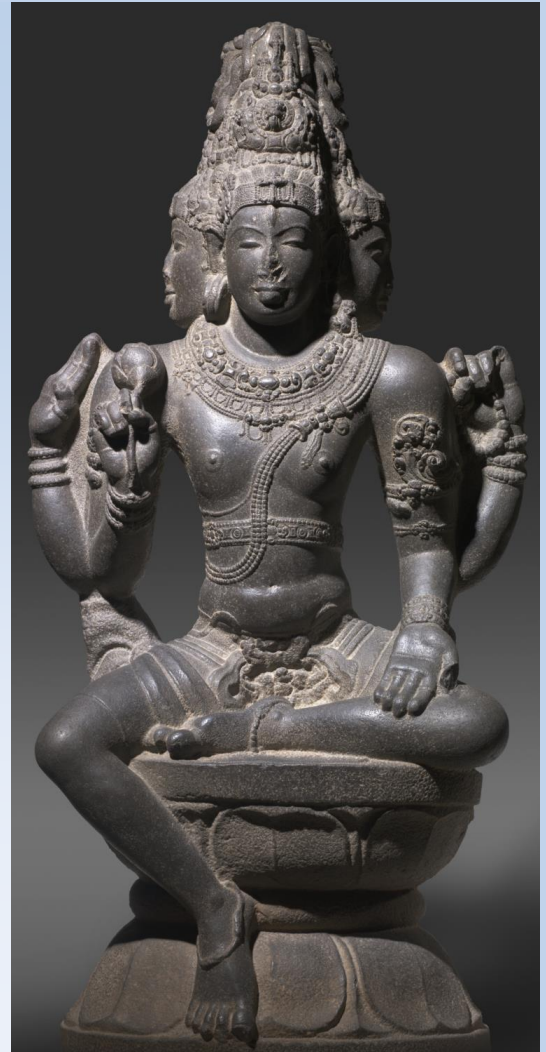
The word *theism*, like *theology*, *theocracy*, and *theosophy*, is derived from the Greek, θεός, *theos*, meaning god, and was translated into Latin as *deus*, which, despite its similarity to *theos*, has a different root. From *deus*, come *divinity*, *deity*, and *deism*. It is etymologically related to *Zeus*, Ζεύς.



First Rebuttal to Answer 1: Belief in God does not require belief that God is a person, regardless of how one defines *theism*.

Aside from philosophers of religion, who put being a person into their definitions of *theism*, more common dictionary definitions take theism to be belief in the existence of a god (or gods), especially belief in one god as creator of the universe. Ordinary usage of “theism” is ambiguous as to whether it excludes polytheism.

Brahma, Hindu creator god, 10th - 11th century, Tamil temple art.



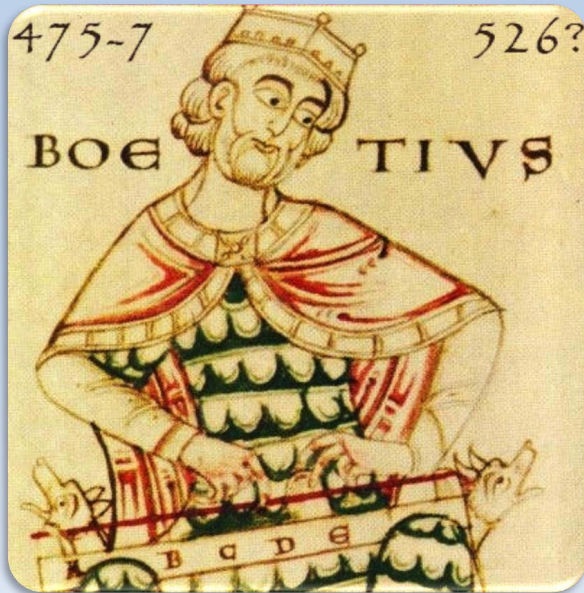
Second Rebuttal to Answer 1: If the term *theist* were only correctly applied to those who believe that God is a person, then *theist* would not be correctly applied to many of the most famous theologians in history, such as:

- Avicenna
- Thomas Aquinas
- Maimonides



In fact, philosopher of religion Daniel Howard-Snyder “bites the bullet” on this and has publicly (at the University of Qom) declared that philosophers such as these should really be considered as atheists. Leo Strauss has suggested a similar line.





What is a person?

The definition given by Boethius still remains widely accepted:

Persona est naturae rationalis
individua substantia.

Person is an individual substance that is by nature rational.

By this definition, humans and angels are persons. But Boethius

was more interested in solving problems about how to understand the Trinity. According to Christian doctrine God is one substance with three **hypostases**, or persons. The Latin word *persona* was used for the mask worn by actors in the theater. The suggestion of Boethius was that in God there are three rational natures in one individual substance. So, Boethius implies that God is not *a* person, but three!

Is God an individual substance with a rational nature?

Avicenna: No! Because

1. God is not a substance.

The categories of substance and accident only apply to quiddities consisting of a thing's defining features. God is indefinable and has no quiddity other than His existence.



2. God does not have a rational nature, intellect, or mind.

God knows without thinking, and is wise without reasoning. All intellects are creatures emanated from God. The doctrine of the three persons of the Trinity is incompatible with divine unity, *tawhid*.

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Is God an individual substance with a rational nature?

Aquinas: Yes! Because



1. Although God is not a substance, like a substance,

God has a unique nature not shared with anything else, and exists independently.

2. Although God does not have mental faculties, and does not engage in discursive reasoning, He does have an intellectual nature, in a general sense.

The standard Christology of the Holy Apostolic Catholic Assyrian Church of the East was written by **Babai the Great (551–628)** ܒܒܝ ܪܒܝܐ *bābay rabbā*. He used the Greek terms *hypostasis* and *prosopon* to explain the doctrine of the Incarnation of God in Christ, as well as to explain the Trinity.

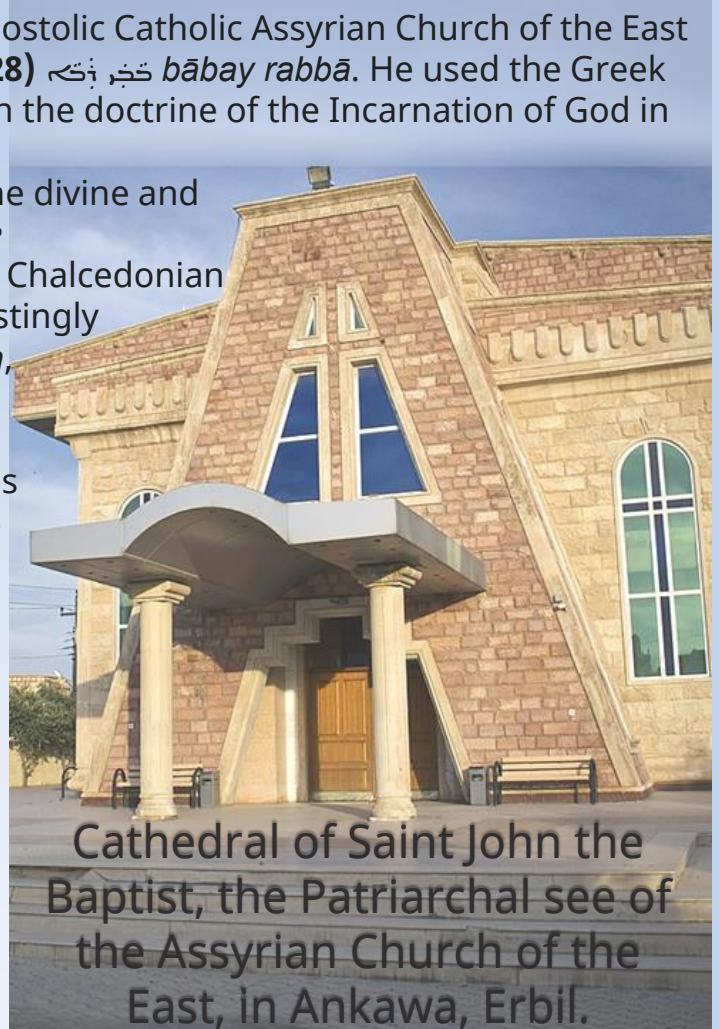
Babai, in the *Book of Union*, holds that the divine and human natures of Christ are two **qnome** (*hypostases*— but not understood in the Chalcedonian sense), which are unmingled but everlastingly united in one *parsopa* (person, *prosopon*, in the sense of *hypostasis* in the Chalcedonian sense.)

It is through the Assyrians that the Arabs adopted the term *uqnūm* (pl. *aqānīm*) to translate the Greek *hypostasis*.

ὑπόστασις

ܩܢܘܡܐ

الأقنوم



Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist, the Patriarchal see of the Assyrian Church of the East, in Ankawa, Erbil.

Atemporal, beyond
time and motion

The One

Nous, Intellect

Logos

The Trinity

Temporal, moving

Psyche, Soul

Nature

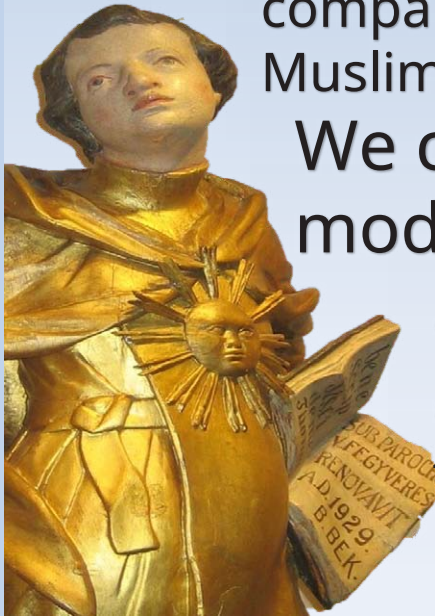
The Muslim philosophers removed the persons from the Trinity, except for the One, identified with Allah. They also increased the intellects and the souls, and associated the souls with the celestial spheres.



God is no longer a person, since the rational nature, *nous*, the intellect, was considered a creature, multiplied, and placed outside the divine essence. In this transformation, the active intellect drops from the divine position to which Aristotle had assigned it. Fārābī turns the active intellect into the tenth of a series of intellects, and Avicenna explicitly condemns the identification of the active intellect with God by Alexander of Aphrodisias.

So, who cares about the Neoplatonists and the debates about the Trinity in late antiquity any more? 🤔

It's important, because these are some of the main factors that led to the modern Western concept of the *person*, and it helps us to understand why no comparable concept emerged in the Muslim world.



We can take a step closer to modernity by considering another reason Aquinas, the *Doctor Angelicus*, gave for taking God to be a person: dignity.

“Although this name "person" may not belong to God as regards the origin of the term, nevertheless it excellently belongs to God in its objective meaning. For as famous men were represented in comedies and tragedies [as wearing masks], the name "person" [meaning *mask*] was given to signify those who held high dignity. Hence, those who held high rank in the Church came to be called "persons." Thence by some the definition of person is given as "hypostasis distinct by reason of dignity."

Persona est hypostasis proprietate distincta ad dignitatem pertinente.

And because subsistence in a rational nature is of high dignity, therefore every individual of the rational nature is called a "person." Now the dignity of the divine nature excels every other dignity; and thus the name "person" pre-eminently belongs to God." I^a q. 29 a. 3 ad 2.



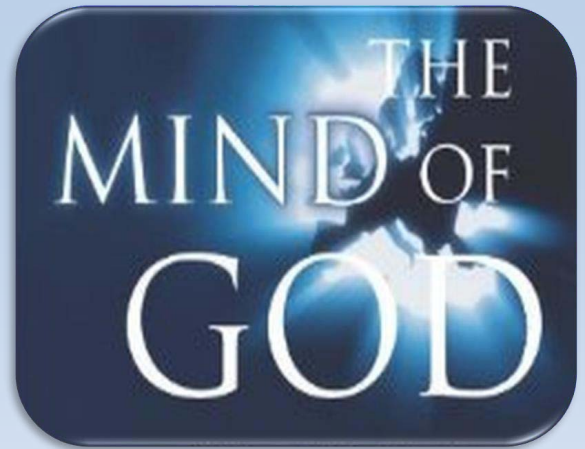
St. Thomas Aquinas
Born – 1. 28 1225 in Roccasecca
Died – 7. 3 1274 in Fossanova

So, is God a person because he has such a high status, because of His dignity? 🤔

Should we consider God to have a high status in the way that kings and aristocrats do? Of course not! God is dignified by His noble attributes, like His perfect wisdom. For the Muslims, divine wisdom does not imply having an intellect. Aquinas continues to link the concept of a person to a rational nature, even when he focuses on dignity. So, we should consider whether it is proper to say that God has a mind, or is a mind.



What distinguishes individual substances that are persons from those that are not is a mental life. Christian philosophers of religion from Descartes to Swinburne describe God as “a mind without a body,” and as a *person* because He has His own mind.



In the Shi'ite philosophical tradition, it would make little or no sense to say that God has a mind. God is the creator of all intellects, and is beyond intellect. God does not think, but knows and wills without need of thought.

To be a person, in a modern sense, one should either have a mind, or be the kind thing that has a mind. In addition to a mind or intellect, every healthy living human is said to have a *spirit* and a *soul*. The differences among these and the *self* are often disputed and unclear.

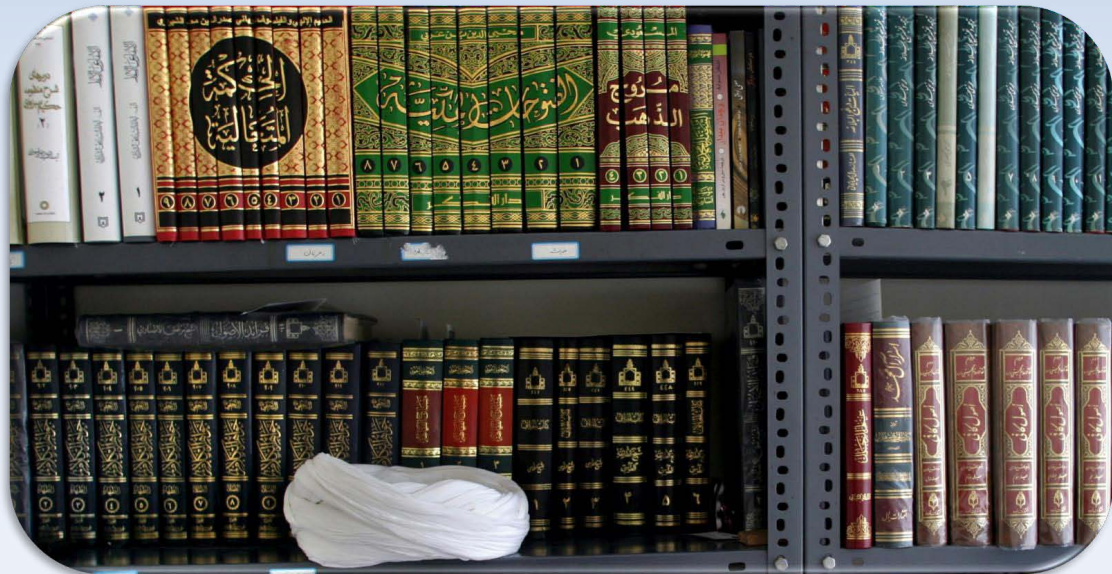
Arabic	<i>rūḥ</i>	<i>nafs</i>	<i>‘aql</i>
Greek	<i>pneuma</i>	<i>psyche</i>	<i>nous, dianoia</i>
Latin	<i>spiritus</i>	<i>anima</i>	<i>mens, animus, intelligentia</i>
English	spirit	soul	mind, intellect

It is clear that in the scriptural sources, the Bible and the Qur'an, the terms associated with spirit are used with reference to both humans and God, while terms used for soul are most frequently applied to humans, but less so for God, and terms for mind are generally used for humans but not for God.

The philosophers allowed that all living creatures have a soul, the principle of life.



According to the Muslim philosophers and theologians, God is living, but does not have a soul. With respect to spirit, too, the interpreters of the Qur'an generally hold that God created spirit, not that He is spirit. In short, the philosophical-theological tradition of Shi'ite Islam denies that God is soul, mind, or spirit. So, we have some theological grounds for denying that God has a mind, and, therefore, for denying that God is a person.



A philosophical argument that God is not a person.

1. God is atemporal.
2. What is atemporal cannot have a mind.
3. Hence, God cannot have a mind.
4. Whatever cannot have a mind is not a person.
5. Therefore, God is not a person.



The first two premises are disputable. The Muslim philosophers and Aquinas would agree that God has knowledge in an atemporal manner; and they would agree that the intellect of Plotinus is atemporal. Nevertheless, in the modern sense, having a mind implies thinking and deciding, with a temporal succession of mental states. To have a mind in this sense is to undergo change, and thus, to be temporal.

Is God in time? Is God temporal?

This is one of the most crucial issues of philosophical theology today. In traditional theology, Christians and Muslims agreed that God does not change, does not move, and is not limited by temporal bounds. God has no past or future. He needs no memory, since to



Him, all is present. Some theologians today find the idea of the atemporality of God unacceptable. Some argue that since God is a person, He must be temporal.

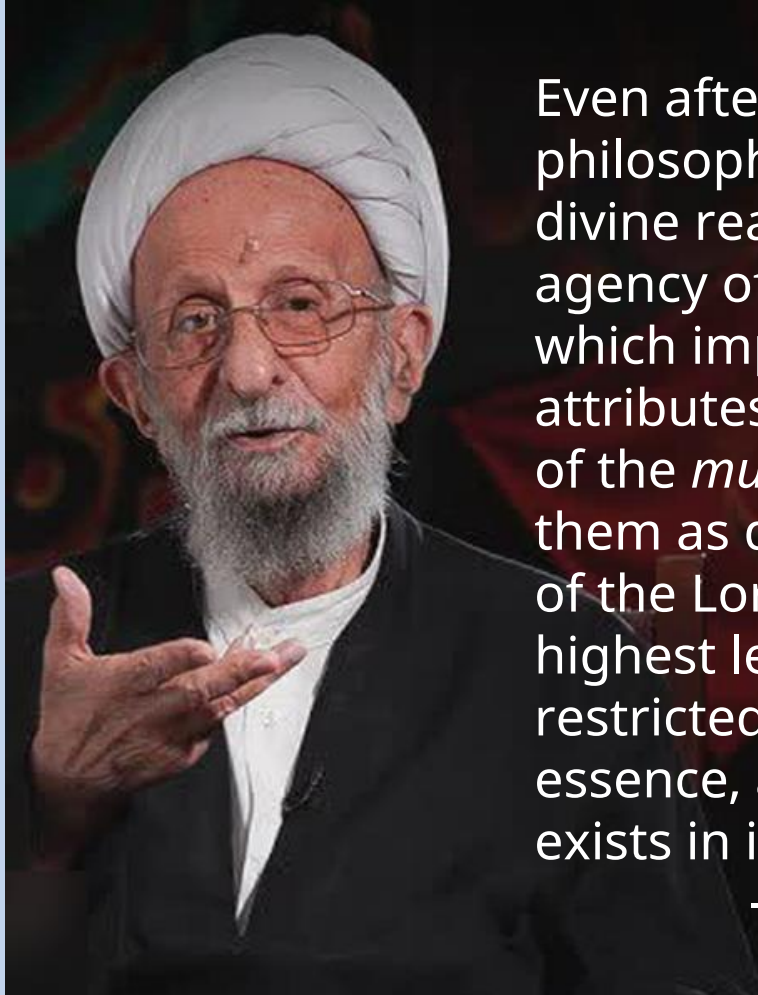


1. God is an agent.
2. All agents act in time.
3. Whatever acts in time is temporal.
4. All agents act according to their intentions.
5. Whatever acts according to intentions has a mind.
6. God is temporal and has a mind.
7. Therefore, God is a person.

Divine Agency

According to the Shi`i philosophers:

1. God is an agent.
2. But not all agents act in time. The effects of divine actions are in time; not their agent.
3. God is atemporal, but the results of divine action are temporal.
4. Not all agents act according to intentions. The later Muslim philosophers introduced types of non-intentional yet voluntary agency: agency by agreement (*bil-riḍā*, Sohrawardi) and agency by self-disclosure (*bil-tajallī*, Ibn al-'Arabi, Mulla Sadra).
5. Whatever acts according to intentions has a mind.
6. But God does not act intentionally, for God is atemporal and has no mind.
7. God is not a person.



Even after the Islamic philosophers came to view the divine realm as being free of agency of this kind [intentional], which implies deficiency and attributes of contingency, some of the *mutakallimīn* condemned them as deniers of the freedom of the Lord. The truth is that the highest level of freedom is restricted to the sacred divine essence, and its lowest level exists in intentional agents.

–Allamah Misbah Yazdi

Divine Knowledge



1. God knows changing facts.
2. For example, God knows what time it is.
3. God's knowledge changes.
4. God changes.
5. Therefore, God is temporal.
6. Whatever knows, thinks.
7. God thinks.
8. Whatever thinks has a mind.
9. God has a mind.
10. God is temporal and has a mind.
11. Therefore, God is a person.

Divine Knowledge in Islamic Philosophy

Knowledge is divided into:

knowledge by presence (علم الحضورى) and
representational knowledge (علم الحصولى).

Representational knowledge includes knowledge of
concepts and knowledge of propositions.

Divine knowledge is exclusively knowledge by
presence. He does not know by representing things
correctly in His mind. He knows
the current time by imparting to
it whatever existence it has, not
by representing it as a
proposition. God is not limited in
time to what we experience as
the present.





Divine Knowledge in Islamic Philosophy

1. God knows changing facts by presence.
2. What time it is depends on one's position in time. God is not limited to a position in time. He is atemporal.
3. God's knowledge does not increase or decrease; but the objects of His knowledge change.
4. God is unchangeable.
5. God is atemporal.
6. God knows by presence, without thinking or reflecting.
7. God does not think.
8. Whatever thinks has a mind.
9. But God neither thinks nor does He have a mind.
10. God is atemporal and has no mind or soul.
11. Therefore, God is not a person.

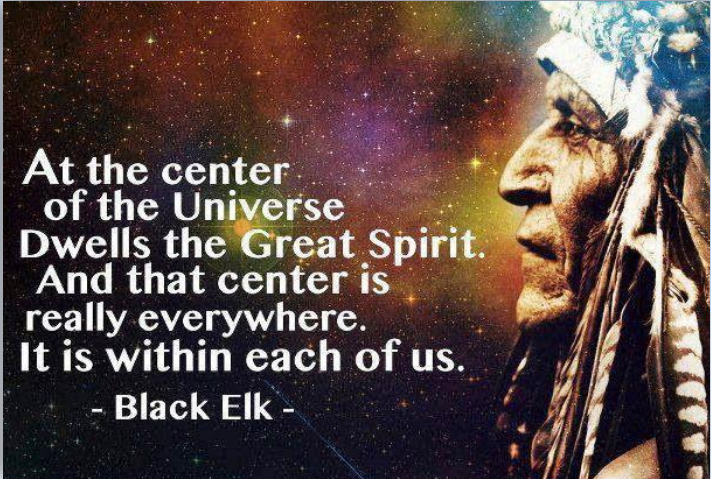
The argument from worship

A popular argument for God's being a person is what I call the argument from worship. People say that if God were not a person, they would not be able to feel a connection with Him in worship. Sometimes it is said that it would not be proper to worship anything less than a person; and a non-personal God is just too hard to understand to meaningfully worship.



Responses to the argument from worship

It would not be proper to worship anything less than a person, but that doesn't mean that we cannot think of God as too great to be a person. There are various ways to feel a connection with God in worship when one knows that He is not a person. We can speak to God *as if* He were a person, even though we know He is something much greater. Meaningful worship is ultimately of the essence of God although it is generally recognized that this is beyond our comprehension. Would Black Elk consider the Great Spirit to be a person?



**At the center
of the Universe
Dwells the Great Spirit.
And that center is
really everywhere.
It is within each of us.**

- Black Elk -

The point of the question about Black Elk is that such questions cannot be meaningfully posed unless we have a context in which the concepts of *person* and *God* (or *Great Spirit*) have developed and in doing so acquired their meanings. So, the answer to the question, "Is God a person?" is that it depends both on what sort of theology we accept, and how we are to understand *person*.

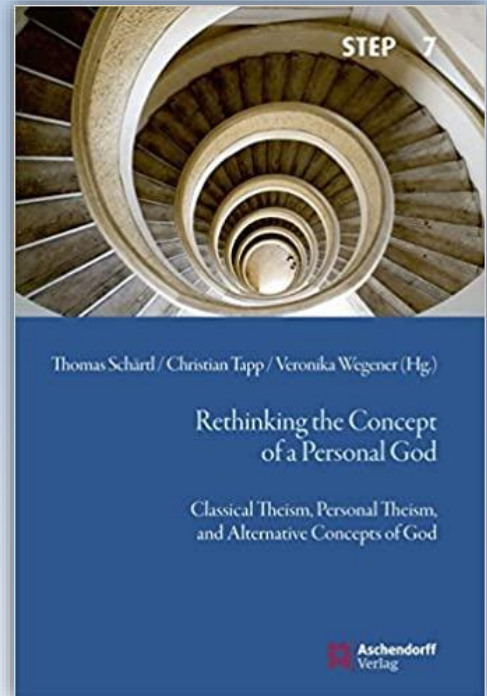
Nevertheless, in the Islamic philosophical tradition, we do find what we might call a kind of *conceptual*

iconoclasm that rejects the application of anthropomorphic concepts for the deity.



As Prof. Thomas Schärtl writes in the Introduction to the volume pictured here: “...[W]e can view the difference between traditionally Christian and traditionally Muslim concepts of God as [an] embodiment of rivalling theistic options within a monotheistic framework [i.e., *personalist* and *nonpersonalist*], although we would have to add that within the history of each religion the opposite option always remained present in one way or the other – despite certain tendencies to marginalize its legacy or impact.”

Thank you for your attention.



Sharif International School on Theism: East and West 2021

*Theism and Metaphysical Naturalism
as Philosophical Research Programs*

Timothy O'Connor
Indiana University

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Introduction

Metaphysical Naturalism and Theism
as *explanatory* frameworks that offer rival
comprehensive understandings of reality

Introduction

Tuesday

Naturalist Arguments

from the success of science

and

from evil

Introduction

Thursday

Theist Arguments

from consciousness

and

from normativity (& value)

Introduction

Progress in metaphysics?

Introduction

Progress in metaphysics?

significant consensus on...

- implausibility of certain once-popular ideas
- superiority of modern elaborations or re-configurations of older ideas
- the better ways to argue for contending modern positions

Introduction

Can it be rational to commit to certain metaphysical theories despite awareness of pervasive disagreement?

– a philosophical (not scientific) question

Metaphysical Naturalism

The cosmos we inhabit constitutes all of reality, *and* its fundamental defining features are those ascribed to it in the mature physical sciences.

Metaphysical Naturalism

The cosmos we inhabit constitutes all of reality, *and* its fundamental defining features, while currently unknown, are all 'continuous with' those mature physical science now postulates, undergirding known structures (subatomic particles and fields interacting in space and time) through quantifiable physical laws, in much the way that particle physics undergirds chemical structures .

Metaphysical Naturalism

The sciences are silent concerning...

- any possible realities transcending the natural order
- the possibility of very infrequent, non-regular natural effects of purely supernatural causes
- whether there is a human destiny beyond the grave

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

unity

Is the universe simply many little things (grouped into perhaps 20 basic particle types) occupying the arena of spacetime? (collection)

Or are neither the elementary parts nor the whole universe more fundamental? (system)

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

modality

('contingent'/'necessary'/'possible' as *modes* of truth)

Is the universe as a whole contingent or is it necessary? Might there have been a different universe, no universe, or even nothing at all? Or is there something about our universe that renders it strictly necessary that it exists, such that it could not possibly have failed to be?

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

value and normativity

The sciences are silent on questions regarding the **value** of any physical configurations and whether there **ought** to be any such things.

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

value and normativity

moral and aesthetic values and norms
and

epistemic norms: norms governing good reasoning and theorizing, such as deductive and inductive inference from evidence, and preferring theories (other things being equal) of greater explanatory scope and simplicity.

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

*value and normativity:
three options for the naturalist*

- eliminate
- reduce
- accept as fundamental, alongside physical

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

'abstract' objects:

entities that seem not to have S-T location

- numbers and other mathematical objects
- propositions
- properties
- mere possibilities

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

'abstract' objects

- play important roles in the ways we think and talk about reality
- do not appear to be material or even spatiotemporal
- are characterizable solely in terms of what role they serve in our thinking, perhaps supplemented by how they interrelate

Metaphysical Naturalism

Issues and Options

*abstract objects:
three options for the naturalist*

- eliminate
- reduce
- accept as fundamental, alongside physical

Theism

In addition to the cosmos, there is a transcendent, immaterial, maximally excellent or perfect, and personal reality, God, who is the universe's source.

Theism

God *transforms* the naturalist's ontology.

Material reality becomes ontologically derivative and dependent, sustained in existence moment-to-moment by God, who alone is fundamental reality.

Moreover, God is a sustaining co-cause of every material causal transaction.

(God is both transcendent and immanent.)

Theism

Issues and Options

the logic of perfection

God has all and only those features that it would be better to have than not to have.

- *possibility*
- *better than*

Theism

Issues and Options

the logic of perfection

possibility:

can we be confident in our judgments concerning the scope of ways it is possible to be?

Theism

Issues and Options

the logic of perfection

better than:

- are certain features good not just for a kind of being, but *absolutely*?
- what is the overall hierarchical structure of good things?
- is it possible for all 'perfections' to be co-exemplified?

Theism

Issues and Options

unity

- independence/aseity → absolute simplicity?
(God's power = God's goodness = God)
- Simplicity renders God incomprehensible.
Does this undercut the possibility of explanatory arguments for theism?
- Might God's aseity be consistent with a less radical kind of unity?

Theism

Issues and Options

(im)mutability & knowledge of changing creation

- simplicity —> timeless —> immutable
- Is immutability compatible with perfect knowledge of an ever-changing creation?
- Or might God be temporal but in a perfected way that does not compromise his aseity?

Theism

Issues and Options

rational willing of creation

- Is contingency in creation consistent with the perfect rationality of God's will?

Arguing for Naturalism or Theism

- historically: 'proofs' – deductive arguments from putatively certain premises
- science:
 - evidence renders an explanation or theory *more likely* to be true than any known rival.
 - strength of evidence comes in degrees, and there can be conflicting evidence
 - need to assess the 'balance of the evidence'

Arguing for Naturalism or Theism

- explanatory unification:
bringing a variety of phenomena previously seen as wholly independent into a single unified framework of understanding.
- Dobzhansky:
“nothing in biology makes sense except in the light of evolution.”

Arguing for Naturalism or Theism

complication

most philosophical theists are Abrahamic
religious theists

Arguing for Naturalism or Theism

religious commitments

- add distinctive claims regarding human purpose and possibly moral value
- have the potential to bring in resources for addressing the problem of evil or suffering
- but also pose additional challenges concerning historical evidence, internal coherence, and potential tension with the purely philosophical conception of God

Arguing for Naturalism or Theism

Pascal

'the God of the philosophers'

VS

'the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'?

Arguing for Naturalism or Theism

Consequence: Fragmentation in the Program

Jewish, Christian, and Muslim philosophers are engaged in partly overlapping but partly distinct 'research programs'

Sharif International School on Theism: East and West 2021

*Naturalist Arguments from the
Success of Science and from Evil*

Timothy O'Connor
Indiana University

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Success of Science

History

Invoking God or other supernatural beings to explain certain natural phenomena, such as violent storms, lightning, mental illness, or plagues

Success of Science

History

Such explanations have been displaced by modern scientific explanations

Success of Science

History

Such explanations have been displaced by modern scientific explanations

“I have no need of that hypothesis.”



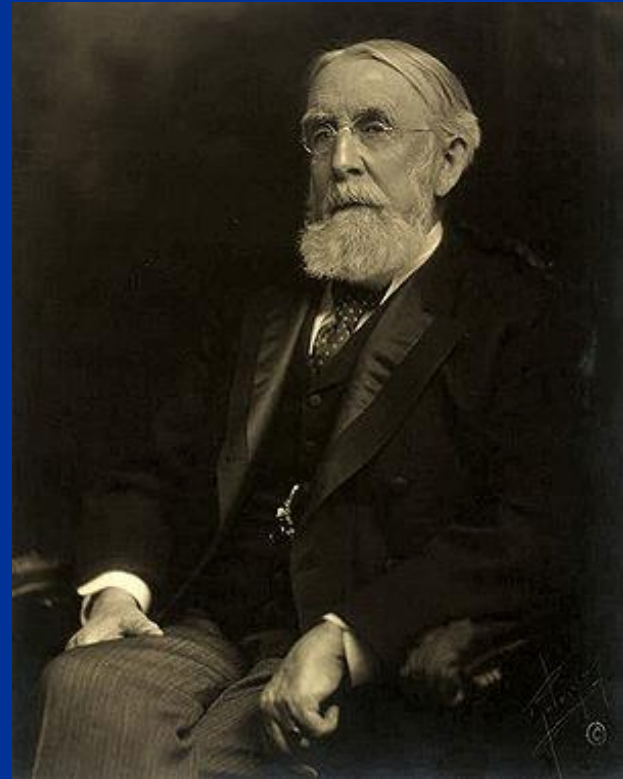
Pierre-Simone Laplace
1749-1827

Success of Science

“...a conflict between two epochs in the evolution of human thought—the theological and the scientific.”

Andrew Dickson White

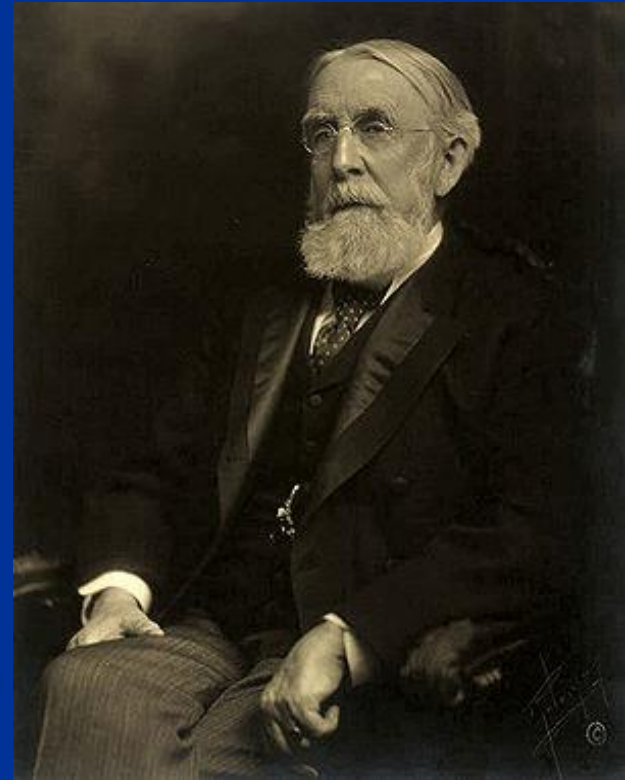
*A History of the Warfare
of Science with Theology
in Christendom* 1896



Success of Science

“...a war continued longer—
with battles fiercer, with
sieges more persistent, with
strategy more vigorous than
in any of the comparatively
petty warfares of Alexander,
or Caesar, or Napoleon.”

- Andrew Dickson White,
“The Battle-Fields of Science”
1869



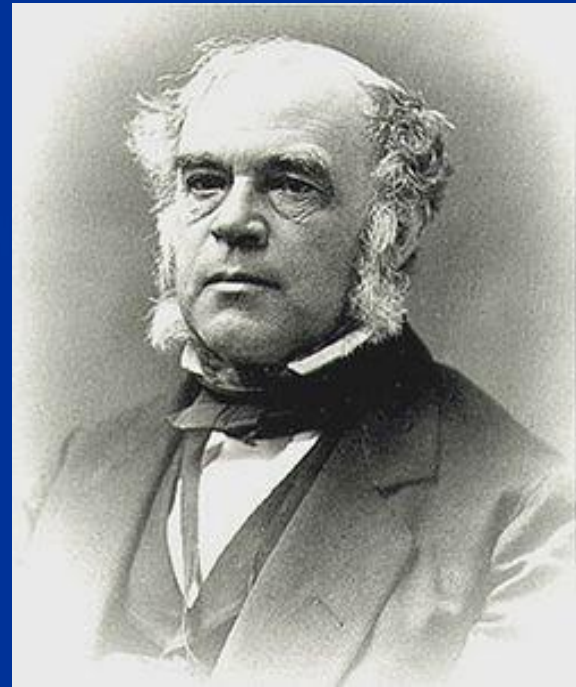
Success of Science

“The history of science is the narrative of the conflict of two contending powers.”

The “mortal animosity” of the Church toward science has left its hands “steeped in blood.”

John William Draper (1874)

*History of the Conflict
Between Religion and Science*



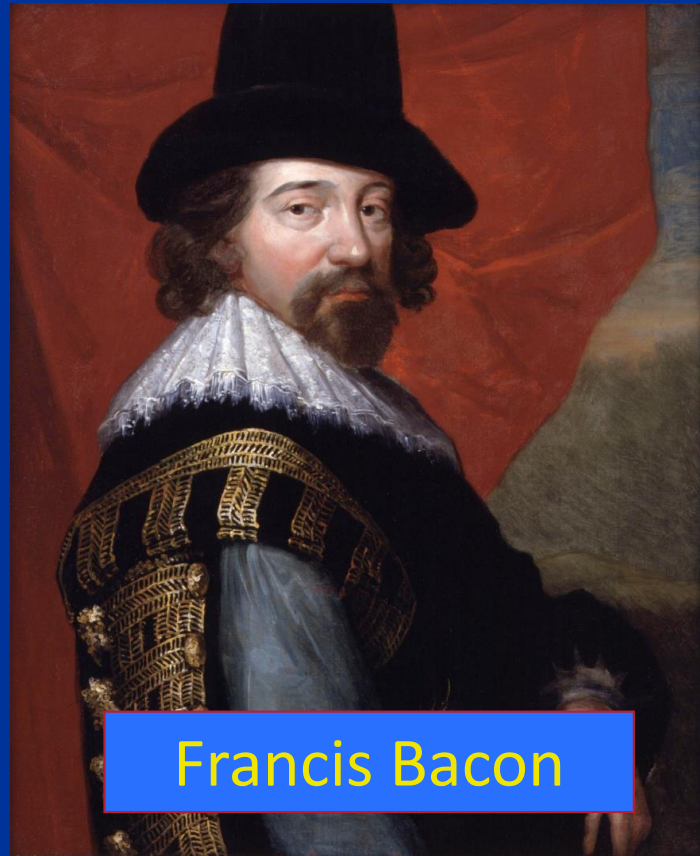
Success of Science

Actual History

Through the early modern era, systematic, experimental study of the natural world was substantially motivated by reflective theology and funded by religious authorities.

Success of Science

“God has, in fact,
written two books,
not just one.”



Francis Bacon

Introduction

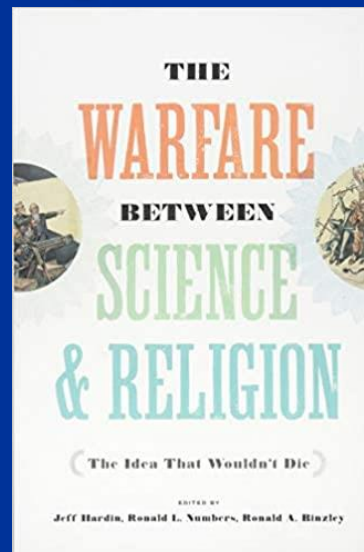
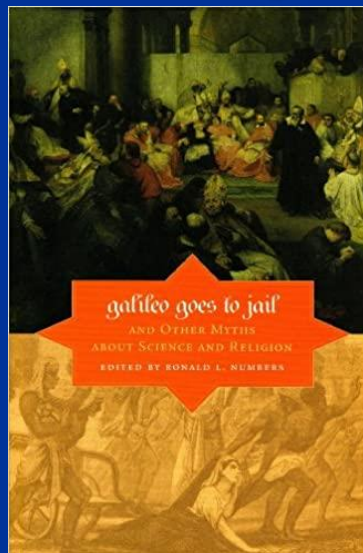
Actual Science-Religion Conflicts

- Galileo and astronomy
- Darwin and biological origins

Introduction

Actual Science-Religion Conflicts

- Galileo and astronomy
- Darwin and biological origins



Success of Science

Argument from the success of science

Key Premise:

science's success is *more to be expected*
on naturalism than on theism

$$\text{Pr} (\text{SS}/\text{N}) > \text{Pr} (\text{SS}/\text{T})$$

SS: success of science

N: naturalism

T: theism

Success of Science

Reply

Theism —> (probably) our world has deep and elegant 'lawlike' regularities (so, success of science is to be expected)

Success of Science

Argument from the success of science

Alternate Premise:

$$\text{Pr (N/SS)} > \text{Pr (N/not-SS)} (?)$$

Success of Science

Argument from the success of science

$$\Pr(SS/N) > \Pr(SS/T)$$

Success of Science

R. Dawkins: From the Necessary Complexity of Intelligent Designers

- modern biology and neuroscience teach that natural 'intelligent designers' – namely, human beings – are very complex
- evolutionary biology teaches us that complex living things arise over time from causes that are much simpler

Success of Science

R. Dawkins: From the Necessary Complexity of
Intelligent Designers

Conclusion:

any *possible* intelligent designer must be quite complex and, absent an explanation that shows how the complexity arose from simpler origins, is extremely improbable

Success of Science

R. Dawkins: From the Necessary Complexity of
Intelligent Designers

Were there a God, "...the one thing we can be
sure of is that he would have to be very very
complex and presumably irreducibly so!"
(125)

Success of Science

Dawkins: From the Necessary Complexity of Intelligent Designers

- “God may not have neurons, or a [central processing unit] made of silicon, but if he has the powers attributed to him he must have something far more elaborately and non-randomly constructed than the largest brain or the largest computer we know.” (154)

Success of Science

Dawkins: From the Necessary Complexity of
Intelligent Designers

So a God who has no causes “has got to be at least as improbable” as a tornado tearing through a metal scrapyard and happening, by sheer chance, to re-arrange the parts into the form of a modern jet airplane. (114)

Success of Science

Assessment

Why suppose that what we find to be the case in the realm of biology would apply to the transcendent source and sustainer of biological reality and its governing principles?

Success of Science

Assessment

In what sense could the high degree of complexity Dawkins envisions characterize a transcendent, immaterial being that necessarily lacks parts?

Success of Science

Assessment

Even supposing that a full specification of God's nature would necessarily be very complex, it might be analogous to complexity in certain logical-mathematical structures – complexity mainly in the *implications* of a small number of simple axioms.

Success of Science

Assessment

Principal ways that God explains contingent reality are at the *boundaries* of that reality: its very existence, or the elegance of its most fundamental character and its suitability for intelligent life.

Success of Science

A challenge to naturalism from success of sci.
It can seem implausible that – absent divine guidance – we creatures should have naturally evolved capacities capable of reliably plumbing the deep workings of the vast cosmos we inhabit.

Success of Science

A challenge to naturalism from success of sci.

- 'Theoretical' faculties used in science extend far beyond the basic sensory perception and cognition that our distant ancestors needed to survive and reproduce.
- Therefore, there seems to be no 'selective advantage' in evolutionary terms for their being reliable means of uncovering truth (as opposed to being akin to idle imagination).

Success of Science

A challenge to naturalism from success of sci.

Therefore (?), evolution gives us reason to doubt the reliability of the very faculties used to argue for the truth of evolutionary theory!

– Alvin Plantinga, 'evolutionary argument against naturalism'

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Key Premise: there exist either

- many *instances* of intense suffering that serve no good purpose (since God could have prevented them without any negative effect that outweighs the suffering itself).

or

- horrific *kinds* of suffering that make the sufferer's entire life to be on balance of negative value for her (calling into question God's goodness to them).

Argument from Evil/Suffering

An Inference (often implicit)
from

- *we have not been able to discern* a morally good reason for an omnipotent being to permit certain instances or certain horrific kinds of evil

to

- *probably there is no* morally good reason to do so.

Argument from Evil/Suffering

More General Form of Inference
from

I/we can't see/discern X

to

probably X is not there

Q: When is this form of inference reasonable?

Argument from Evil/Suffering

More General Form of Inference
from

I/we can't see/discern X

to

probably X is not there

Q: When is this form of inference reasonable?

A: only when it is likely that we would see X if X were there

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Q: When is this form of inference reasonable?

A: only when it is likely that we would see X if X were there

'skeptical theist': this condition is not satisfied when it comes to God and possible reasons for permitting suffering.

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Our ability to discern moral goods is reliable
only within sharp limits

No reason to think that we could imagine:

- the full extent of possible goods
- all the complex connections that may exist even among goods that we know

Argument from Evil/Suffering

A worry for skeptical theists:
perhaps this 'proves too much'!

(that is, has implausibly extreme implications)

No reason to think that we could imagine:

- the full extent of possible goods
- all the complex connections that may exist even among goods that we know

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Really Bad World:

Endless vista of cold and desolate mountain peaks, one mile apart. On each, there is a human-like person covered in open sores, wracked in pain, and shrieking in agony, their voices carrying to others nearby.

This scenario has persisted, unchanged, for many hundreds of millenia, and it is all that the sufferers have ever known. *The end.*

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Really **Good** World:

Many human persons, all of whom regularly flourish, going 'from strength to strength', individually and communally.

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Skeptical Theist's Challenge:

Either

Persuade us that, contrary to initial appearance, even such extreme scenarios are actually no evidence at all concerning God's existence.

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Skeptical Theist's Challenge:

Or

Articulate and defend a framework on which our world belongs to a non-extreme middle category of possible worlds such that our cognitive limits with respect to the kinds of and connections among moral goods are crucial in evaluating *them*.

(Those limits make it inscrutable whether 'middle' worlds are consistent with beneficent providence even though they do *not* prevent us from evaluating the extreme cases.)

Argument from Evil/Suffering

Naturalist's Challenge from evil/suffering:
How is it possible to maintain a reasonable
moral hope?

And how may we maintain a sense of the
urgency of moral action to alleviate suffering,
given that such actions can seem to be mere
drops in an ocean of suffering?

(Is naturalism consistent with a livable, morally
serious outlook?)

Sharif International School on Theism: East and West 2021

*Theist Arguments from
Consciousness and Normativity*

Timothy O'Connor
Indiana University



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Argument from Consciousness

R. Swinburne (1979) and R. Adams (1987)

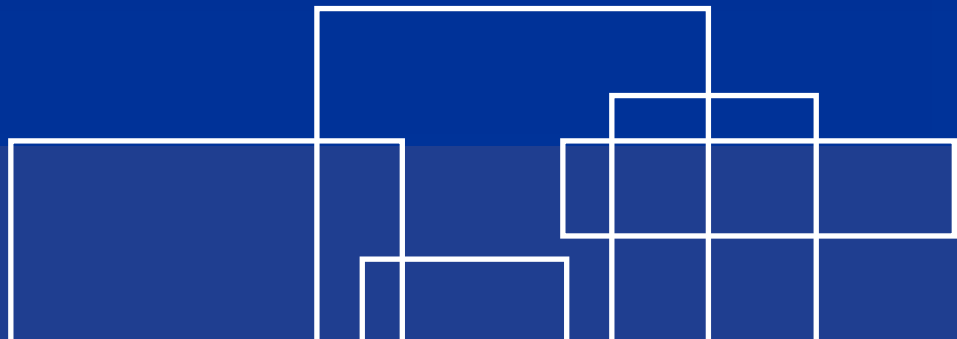
1. There are systematic correlations between the brain states and conscious states of persons
2. the correlations can be explained either through more basic scientific laws or by reference to the intentions and actions of a powerful personal agent



Argument from Consciousness

R. Swinburne (1979) and R. Adams (1987)

3. The correlations cannot be given an adequate scientific explanation.
4. So, they were established in some way by a purposeful agent.
5. Not a natural agent
6. So, most plausibly God.



Argument from Consciousness

Comments on the argument

- the peculiarly subjective, qualitative character of conscious states poses a significant challenge to *materialism*
- *materialism*: all the fundamental features of our world are material/physical, and all non-fundamental features are wholly constituted by those fundamental physical features.



Argument from Consciousness

Comments on the argument

- neuroscience gives us reason to believe that the conscious states of creatures causally depend upon the neural states of their functioning brains and nervous systems.
- But correlation is not identity, and thought experiments suggest that conscious states cannot be identical to physical states.

Mary...

Mary & 'the Knowledge Arg'



Mary, the neuroscientist in the b&w room, knows all the physical facts underlying color experience.

Leaves room, sees a red rose, and learns something about world: *what it's like* to see red.

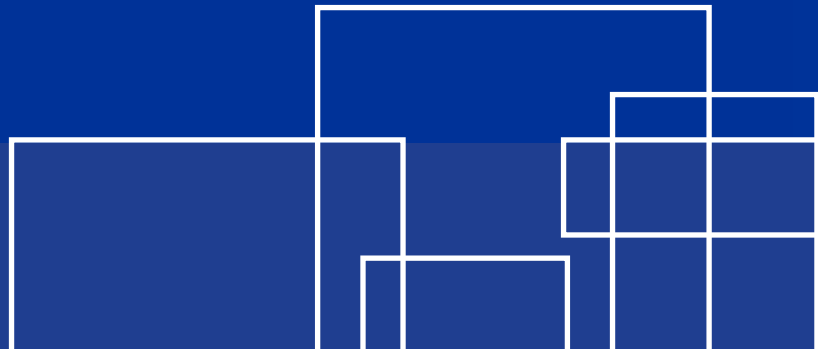
1. While in the black-and-white room, Mary knows all of the physical facts about color experience.
2. Mary learns something about color experience upon her release.
3. If Mary learns something about color experience upon her release, she does not know all of the facts about color experience while in the room.
4. Mary does not know all of the facts about color experience while in the room. (2, 3)
5. There are facts about color experience that are not physical facts. (1, 4)
6. If materialism is true, all facts are physical facts.
- **Therefore, Materialism is false.** (5, 6)



Argument from Consciousness

Comments on the argument

- Naturalism does not entail materialism.
- Key premise: There can be no systematic connection between physical properties and conscious qualities ("qualia") that would *explain why they are correlated* in the patterns that they are.





Argument from Consciousness

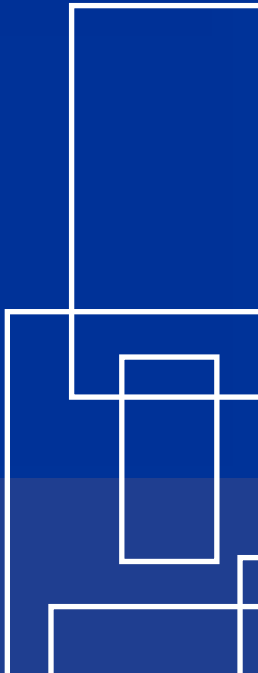
Reply to the argument

- perhaps a mature scientific classification of *phenomenal* qualities (“qualia”) of consciousness would identify *fundamental* phenomenal properties and relations and specify a corresponding combinatorial algorithm.
- then general laws of neural-phenomenal co-variation would be possible.

Argument from Consciousness

Swinburne

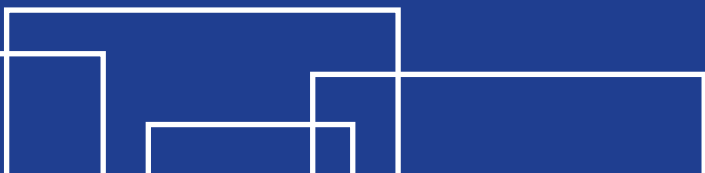
- phenomenal qualities are not quantifiable, which is a central characteristic of scientific laws (2004, 204)



Argument from Consciousness

Swinburne

- phenomenal qualities are not quantifiable, which is a central characteristic of scientific laws (2004, 204)
- A reply to Swinburne: qualia seem to have geometrical relations and variations of degree (in similarity and difference), intensity, and extent (of a visual field).



Argument from Consciousness

Adams

Qualia may admit quantifiable descriptions, but

- laws would at most chart relations between *basic* phenomenal qualities and certain physically-*complex* kinds, rather than similarly *basic* physical kinds.
(so not deeply explanatory)
- no explanation of *particular* physical-qualia *kind* mappings...

Argument from Consciousness

Adams

“...even if we had, from a purely phenomenal point of view, a single uniquely valid spectrum for each sensory modality, we would still face the mind-boggling problem of finding a mathematical relationship between the qualia of the different modalities. And without such a relationship, our law of nature will not explain **why certain brain states produce phenomenal qualia such as red, yellow, and blue, and others produce qualia such as sweet, sour, and salty.**” (1987, 257).

Argument from Consciousness

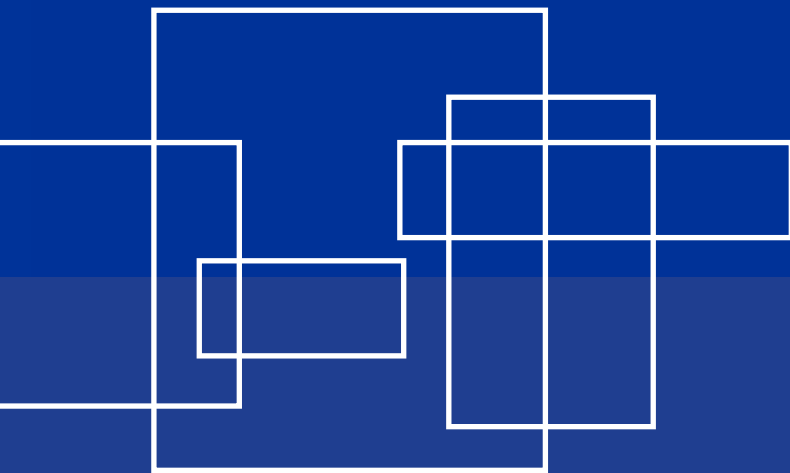
Possible Reply to Adams

Admitting primitive phenomenal qualities that causally interact with certain kinds of structured physical states is consistent with basic, general laws that (i) connect neural state types and families of emergent phenomenal state types (corresponding to distinct sensory modalities), and (ii) describe the contributions the emergent states make to the dynamical evolution of physical systems.

Argument from Consciousness

Possible Reply to Adams

...that is explanation, even if not maximally unified explanation.





Argument from Consciousness

The Argument Re-conceived

1. many possible ways for the fundamental constituents of the world to be.
2. It is *a priori* rather unlikely that fundamental physical entities should have any 'emergent dispositions' towards phenomenal qualities.
3. The emergence of consciousness is *more* likely conditional on *theism*
4. *So, emergence is some evidence for theism.*

Argument from Consciousness

Core Assumption

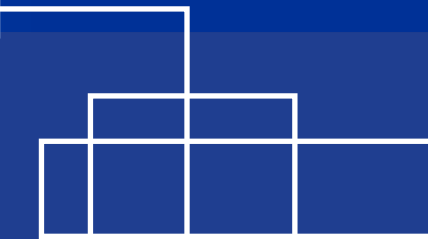
Theism predicts the creation of creaturely persons capable of learning about the world through perception and gradual accumulation of knowledge; having an ability to make a difference to many aspects of their lives and the lives of others; and having free will to choose which differences, good or bad, to make.





Argument from Consciousness

Modern Fine-Tuning Design Arg.

- Many fundamental respects in which our universe, according to present theory, is exquisitely 'fine-tuned' for the eventual appearance of biological life.
 - "fine-tuned": apparently contingent precise features of the universe such that had any one of them differed appreciably, the universe would not have supported life.
- 

Argument from Consciousness

Modern Fine-Tuning Design Arg. Stated:

1. All possible variations on the fine-tuned constants specify a space of possibilities.
2. Those possibilities which are life-sustaining occupy an incredibly tiny portion of this space.
3. That the one realized possibility happens to fall into this tiny, yet highly significant portion is 'suspicious' enough as to warrant an explanation.

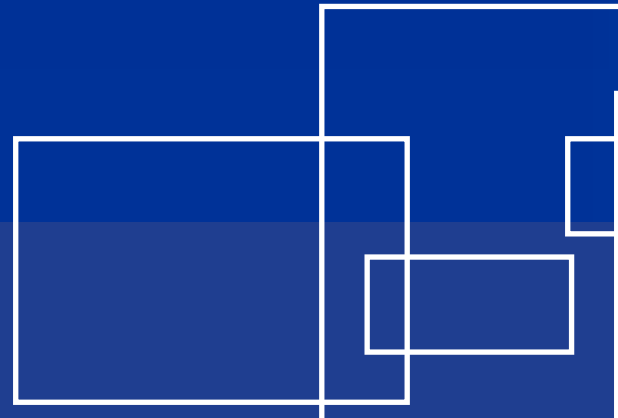
Argument from Consciousness

Modern Fine-Tuning Design Arg. Stated:

4. Were God to exist, we would expect Him to create a universe that is set up just as needed to give rise to such a valuable outcome.

5. So the fine-tuning data are more to be expected on theism than on naturalism.

$$\Pr(\text{FT}/\text{T}) > \Pr(\text{FT}/\text{N})$$





Argument from Consciousness

Modern Fine-Tuning Design Arg. Stated:

5. The fine-tuning data are more to be expected on theism than on naturalism.

$$\Pr(\text{FT}/\text{T}) > \Pr(\text{FT}/\text{N})$$

6. The existence of God is not as improbable a priori as the existence of the universe itself on a pure chance hypothesis

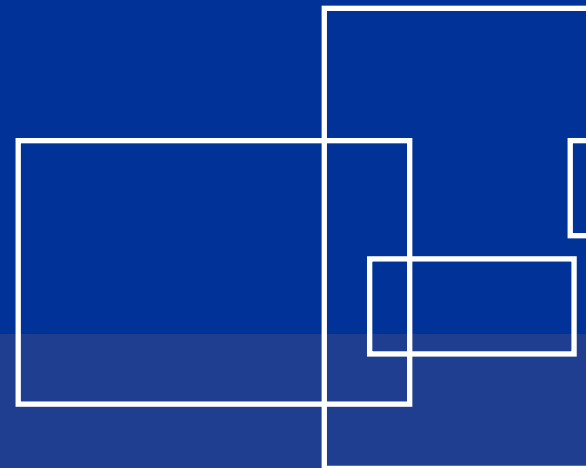
7. So, theism more likely than naturalism on FT

$$\Pr(\text{T}/\text{FT}) > \Pr(\text{N}/\text{FT})$$

Argument from Consciousness

emergence of persons also an explanatory challenge to theism?

Humans appear just 'five seconds before midnight' – why so long?

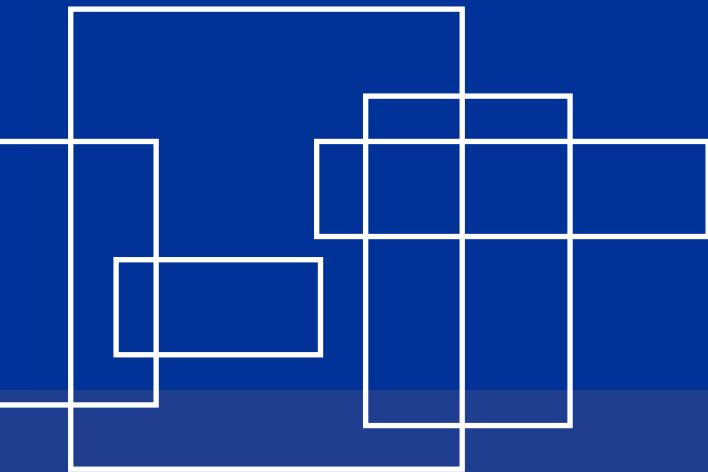


Argument from Normativity

F. Dostoevsky, *Brothers Karamazov*

atheist character Ivan:

“If God does not exist, everything is permitted.”

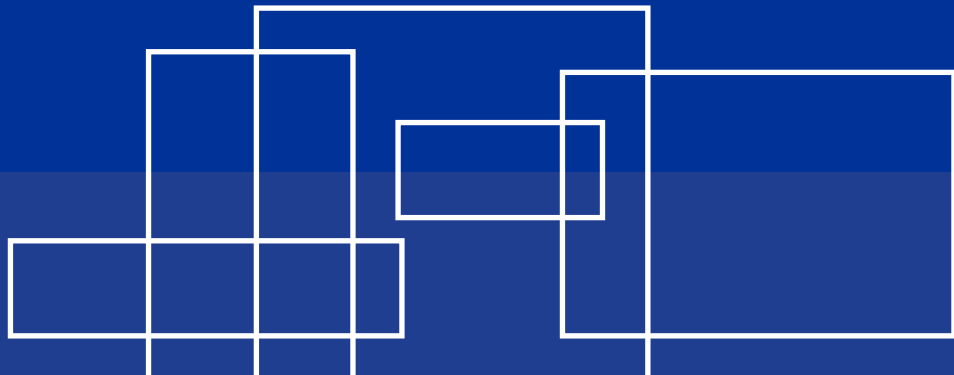


Argument from Normativity

Plato, *Euthyphro*

Socrates' question to Euthyphro:

“Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?”





Argument from Normativity

Plato, *Euthyphro*

Socrates' question: "Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved by the gods?"

Dilemma (?) for theist:

"Is what is morally good commanded by God because it is morally good, or is it morally good because it is commanded by God?"

Argument from Normativity

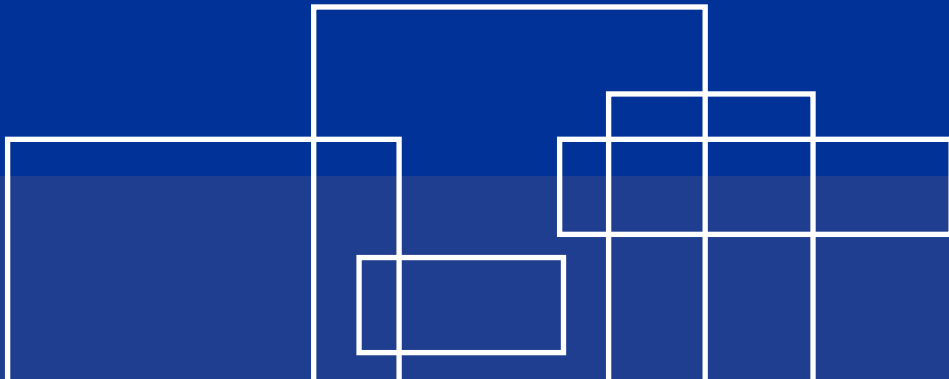
- Plato's 'Form of the Good': transcends all worldly standards such as human social conventions or the conflicting decrees of the Greek gods.
- Theism: the Form of the Good is a *personal* reality that is the creative source of all things. Moral norms and obligations: constituted by the *commands* of God. (Robert Adams, *Finite and Infinite Goods*, Oxford U. Press, 1999)



Argument from Normativity

Naturalistic Basis of Morality?

- *not* from basic physics

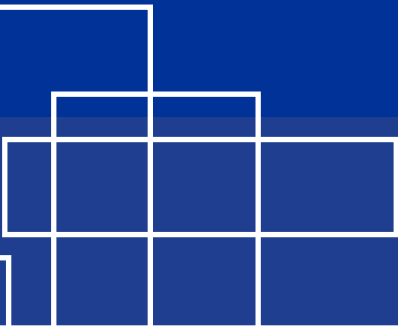




Argument from Normativity

Naturalistic Basis of Morality?

- *not* from basic physics
- perhaps *socially* grounded



Argument from Normativity

Naturalistic Basis of Morality?

- *not* from basic physics
- perhaps *socially* grounded
- however, the flaws we find in every set of societal demands seem to push us towards a more transcendental and stable source of moral demand

Argument from Normativity

*value and normativity:
options for the naturalist*

- eliminate
- reduce
- accept as fundamental, alongside physical



Argument from Normativity

*value and normativity:
options for the naturalist*

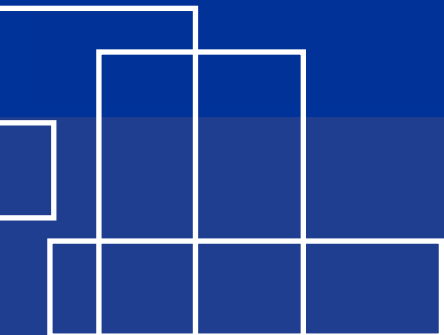
- eliminate
- reduce
- accept as fundamental, alongside physical
- non-cognitivism: meaning of moral statements is not to *represent* the 'objective moral facts', but to *express* distinctive attitudes or commitments of the speaker.



Argument from Normativity

*value and normativity:
epistemic norms*

governing good reasoning and theorizing, such as deductive and inductive inference from evidence, and preferring theories (other things being equal) of greater explanatory scope and simplicity.



Argument from Normativity

epistemic norms

governing good reasoning and theorizing, such as deductive and inductive inference from evidence, and preferring theories of greater explanatory scope and simplicity.

→ eliminativism or non-cognitivism with respect to *these* norms threatens to undermine any worldview built on science, including metaphysical naturalism itself.

Argument from Normativity

*value and normativity:
options for the naturalist*

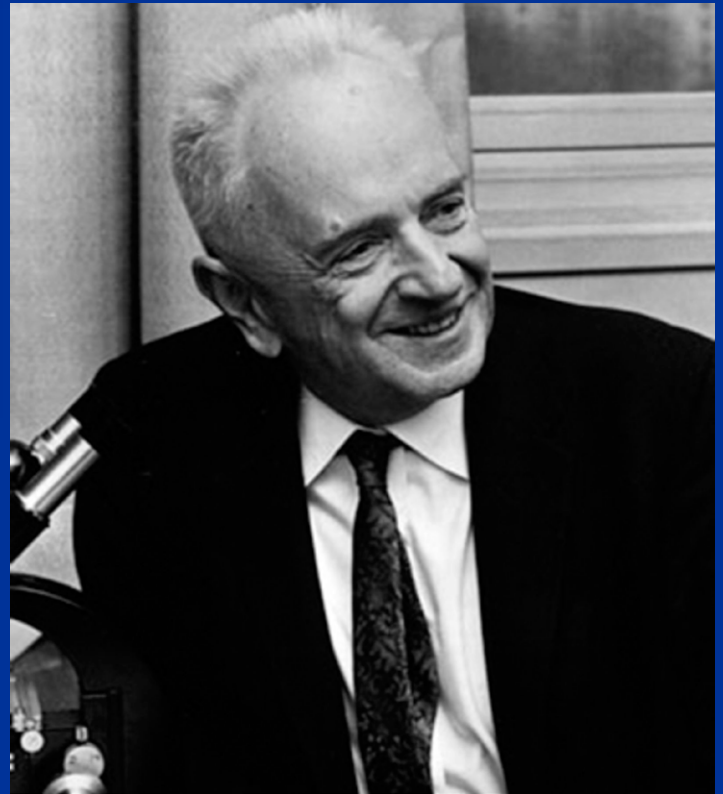
- eliminate
- reduce
- accept as fundamental, alongside physical
— plurality of kinds of fundamental truth



Evidence and Theoretical *Unification*

“Nothing in biology
makes sense
except in the light
of evolution.”

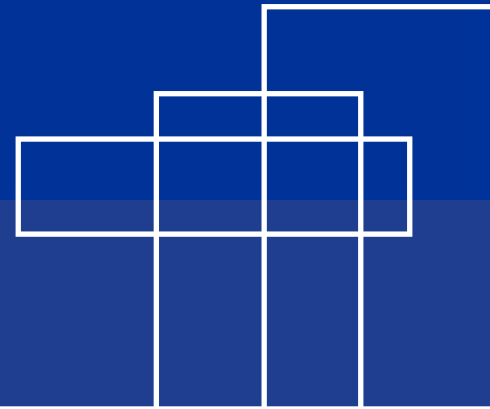
Theodosius Dobzhansky
(1900-1975)
Evolutionary biologist
and
Orthodox Christian



Argument from Normativity

Theoretical Unification and Theism

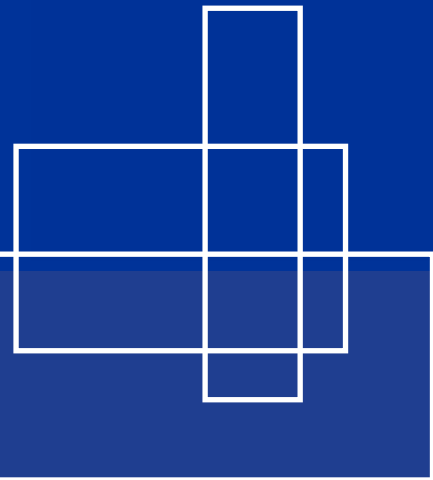
- single ground of physical reality and value and norms



Argument from Normativity

*How We Come to **Know God's Commands***

- human social norms
- prophetic utterance
- individual conscience
- scriptural injunctions (?)



Argument from Normativity

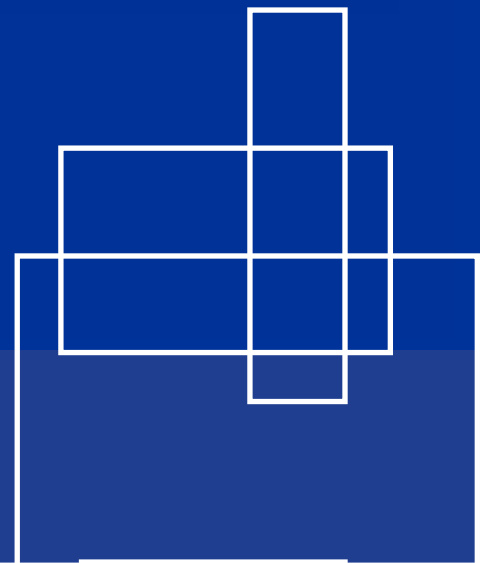
How We Come to Know God's Commands

- individuals have a responsibility for enacting and interpreting God's commands
- moral competence is required to judge particular cases
- one may take a thoughtfully critical stance towards *putative* divine commands
- one may care about moral goods independent of God's commands

Argument from Normativity

Theoretical Unification and Theism

- single ground of physical reality and value and norms
- also ground of the 'eternal truths' of mathematics and logic

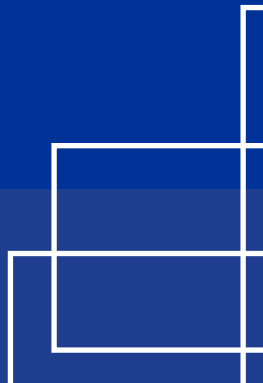


Argument from Normativity

Theoretical Unification and Theism

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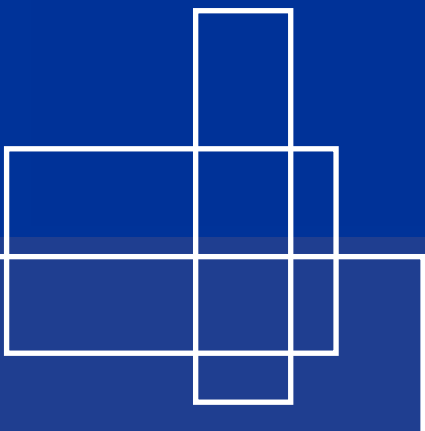
one *unified* foundation for a fine-tuned cosmos ordered by beauty, goodness, and truth



Argument from Normativity

Normativity also a Challenge for Theism?

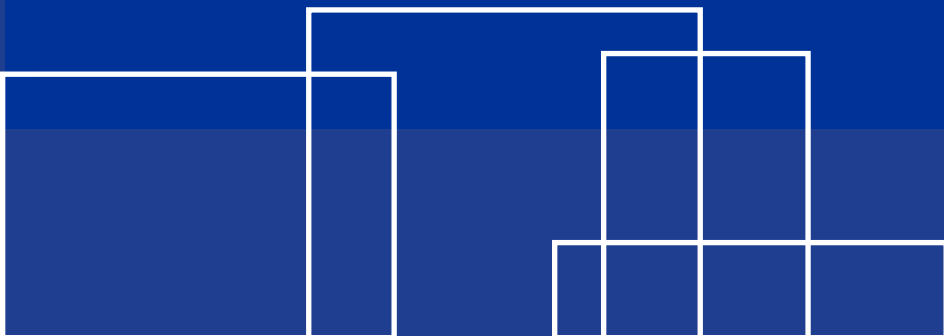
- Why would God have intended human *understanding* of norms to be so error-prone and to require so slow and difficult a process of improvement?



Argument from Normativity

Normativity also a Challenge for Theism?

- Why would God have intended human *understanding* of norms to be so error-prone and to require so slow and difficult a process of improvement?
- Connected to the general problem of evil.



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Avicenna's/Ibn Sina's Theology

Sharif International Summer School on Theism: East and West

Wed. August 25th, 16:00-17:00 (Tehran Time,
+4:30 GMT)/ 14:30-15:30 (Istanbul Time, +3 GMT)

Rahim Acar

Nature and Limits of Theology

- ❖ Whether theology is possible in the strict sense
- ❖ God is not the subject-matter of any branch of science
- ❖ God and His properties are investigated in metaphysics.
- ❖ In our attempt to explain the existent, we come to know the existence of God inasmuch as he is the origin, or the principle, of the *existent qua existent*

- ❖ The investigation in metaphysics concerning God, inasmuch as He is the origin of the existent that needs an origin, results in knowing that God exists and predication of negations and affirmation of relations to things, of which God is the origin
- ❖ That God's existence may be established as a being giving existence, making other existents exist
- ❖ It implicitly closes the door to arguments for the existence of God based on movement.

Primary concept

- ❖ Two components of his arguments: (1) primary concepts: “existent,” “thing,” “necessary,” “possible” and “impossible.” necessity → existence
- ❖ (2) the division of being into that which is necessary by itself and that which is necessary by another.
- ❖ Existents can be divided into two kinds in the mind: (1) self-necessary and (2) possible in itself but necessary by another
- ❖ The distinction between essence and existence is not applicable to the self-necessary being because necessity and existence mutually imply each other

Argument in the *Metaphysics* part of *The Healing*

- ❖ Avicenna argues for the existence of a first uncaused cause
- ❖ God is the metaphysical efficient cause of the universe
- ❖ Avicenna argues for the finiteness of causes.
- ❖ In order to explain the existence of the last member of the causal chain, there must be a first cause.
- ❖ If the series of causes go infinitely, then there would not be an actually existing cause that necessitates the actually existing effect.

Avicenna's argument in the *Ishârât* and the *Najât*

- ❖ (1) there are existents, which are presumably contingent;
- ❖ (2) contingent beings, which are possible in themselves but necessary on account of their causes, need a cause necessary by itself;
- ❖ (3) infinite linear causal regress does not help in explaining the existence of the actually existing contingent being;
- ❖ (4) circular causal regress does not help in explaining the existence of the actually existing contingent being;
- ❖ (5) therefore there is a necessary being, the uncaused cause of contingent beings.

How is our thinking and talking about God related to what God is?

- ❖ What properties can we predicate of God? “If you truly ponder upon, (*ḥaqqaḡta*) [you will see that] the first property (*ṣifa*) of the necessary of existence is that he is something subsistent (*innun*) and an existent (*mawjūd*). Then comes other properties, in some of these properties this existence [i.e., necessary of existence] is identified (*muta‘ayyin*) by relation (*iḡāfa*); and in some of these, this existence [i.e., the necessary of existence] is identified by negation. None of them is or can be (*wa laysa wa la*) necessitating in himself (*dātiḡi*) multiplicity or differentiation (*mugāyara*).” (Avcienna, Najāt, p.287).

Two situations: (1) God in Himself and (2) God as we know and predicate properties of Him

- ❖ Moreover, every being (*mawjūd*) has a relation (*iḍāfa*) and certain connection (*nisba*) to other beings. This is especially true in the case of the one from whom all being (*wujūd*) emanates. However, when we say that he is unique in himself (*ḍāt*), and he does not multiply, we mean that he is as such [i.e., unique] in himself (*fi ḍātihī*). In addition, if this [i.e., the statement about the unity of God] is followed by many positive (*ijābiyya*) and negative (*salbiyya*) relations (*iḍāfāt*) these are the necessary concomitants (*lawāzim*) of the being/essence (*ḍāt*) [i.e., God's being] and its (*ḍāt*) effects. They follow the existence of the being (*ḍāt*). They are neither constituents (*muqawwimatun*) of the being (*ḍāt*), nor are they parts of it."

- ❖ (1) The way God exists, or has the perfections He has, and the way we can understand and talk about God.
- ❖ (2) The properties predicated of God *in relation to* creation.
- ❖ God is absolutely one and simple, but we cannot comprehend and express that which is absolutely simple in a simple manner.
- ❖ God's formal properties-"how God is" necessity, simplicity and eternity
- ❖ Perfection properties: knowledge, will and power
- ❖ Perfection properties are found in God, in the way God exists, i.e. necessarily, simply and eternally.
- ❖ But we predicate them in accordance what we have and know them.

- ❖ Creation is a metaphysical account of things, in the sense that it concerns the universe *qua* existent
- ❖ Avicenna prefers the term '*ibdā*' over the term '*iḥdāth*'
- ❖ Elimination of absolute non-existence.
- ❖ Creation is out of nothing, different from generation

That causes and effects must co-exist

- ❖ The cause that gives being to its effect is prior to it with regard to being
- ❖ Since causes necessitate their effects, when the cause exists, the effect must exist.
- ❖ 'If anything is essentially [*li dhātihi*] always [*dā'iman*] the cause for the being of some other thing, it is always the cause for it [i.e., this other being] as long as it [*dhātuhu*] [i.e., the cause] is an existent [*mawjūda*]. If it exists always [*dā'iman*], then its effect exists always [*dā'iman*].' (Avicenna, *Metaphysics* VI.2, p.266.9–12.)
- ❖ Since God is the essential cause of the universe and God exists always, the universe must exist always.

Whether divine creative action is a natural action, or a voluntary one

- ❖ An objection to the validity of the principle of co-existence between God and the universe
- ❖ That creation is a voluntary act,
- ❖ That creation cannot be similar to actions stemming from nature, where 'nature' is taken to mean the principle of action in inanimate things.
- ❖ **God is a free creator:**
 - ❖ (1) nothing external compels God to create, God gives being to other things out of generosity.
 - ❖ (2) nothing internal requires God to create in order to be what He is.

The universe as a whole is sempiternal (sarmadî)

- ❖ Division of being into three categories with regard to duration:
- ❖ Temporal (zamânî) things in time,
- ❖ Perpetual (dahrî) things that exist with time but not in time,
- ❖ Sempiternal (sarmadî), the permanent with the permanent
- ❖ The universe as a whole is sempiternal. This is because the realm of temporal beings is encompassed by the realm of perpetual beings, and it is, in turn, encompassed by the realm of sempiternal (*sarmadî*) beings.

God is the essential cause of everything

- ❖ Conception of essential cause functions to explain the existence of each and everything within the existing universe
- ❖ God knows things “insofar as they are necessary in the order (*al-tartīb*) of the series (*silsila*) proceeding down from Him (*min ‘indihi*) vertically and horizontally.”
- ❖ Vertical order: the series of essential causes of things beginning from God down to prime matter.
- ❖ The horizontal order: the order of things, not only with reference to God, the essential cause of everything, but also with reference to the auxiliary and accidental causes which precede and prepare the ground for (and accidentally contribute to) the existence of any given thing.