

Can You Prove That God Exists?

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Introduction:

Questioning the existence of God is fundamental in order to answer other important questions regarding the reason and purpose of our own existence, such as what was our beginning and what will be our end. However, before dealing with this question, it is essential to clear our minds of any existing biases because if we already believe that nothing exists outside the domain of nature, no matter how much evidence is given, it will not change our minds. No supernatural event could be provided as evidence to prove God's existence because then, for every event, there will be a natural reason because we will not allow ourselves to think otherwise. As Dr Lewontin says, we are "forced by our priori adherence to material causes" (Johnson, 1997), which restrains us from accepting any explanation that lies beyond the natural.

In today's age, religion is attributed to primitive societies. The theories of James Frazer and Edward Tyler about religion associate the progression of societies with a movement towards science and away from religion. This makes one assume that as people became enlightened, they realized that there is no such thing as religion and stopped believing in the existence of gods and supernatural beings. Aristotle's understanding of religion is completely different from that of Tyler and Frazer. Where Tyler and Frazer associate religion with irrationality and absurdity, Aristotle shows that the concept of the existence of God didn't just come out of nowhere. In fact, people base their beliefs on the existence of God only on empirical evidence that they have encountered during their lifetimes through experience. Thus, belief in God is not irrational or absurd at all. Rather, it comes from a detailed understanding of the workings of the world, something which is not only evident from Aristotle's theories but from Avicenna's, Maimonides', Averroes' and Aquinas' understandings as well.

Body:

The existence of God was one of the many issues of interest for the philosophers of medieval times. They claimed that although the idea that God does exist can be believed solely on the basis of faith, it can also be proved rationally by the causal argument. According to the causal argument, there is always a relationship between two events, and one event is always the effect of the other. Therefore there must be a first cause, which is 'independent, eternal and self-explanatory' meaning there is no other cause that supports it or causes it. For the medieval philosophers, this first cause had to be God. If there is no first cause, there will not be any long-term explanation of the universe or its events.

Aristotle:

Aristotle explains the concept of God using the idea of the 'unmoved mover.' According to him, there is no denying the fact that everything changes. In one moment, we experience a certain phenomenon, and then in another moment, we experience some other phenomenon. This continuous change cannot possibly occur without an 'unmoved mover.' This first mover itself always remains unmoved and then somehow causes other things to move. Since God is the only one that exists on its own and is not controlled or being led by anything else, Aristotle claimed God to be this 'unmoved mover.'

Another argument of Aristotle's is that the change that he claims to be coming from an entity, which is the first mover, cannot be coming from nothing. For example, the tea itself could never become cold, although it does have the potential to become cold. However, for that, it requires a colder temperature. Therefore, Aristotle called change 'the actualization of a potential.' (Feser, 2017)

The Big Bang theory portrays Aristotle's ideas to be wrong, and so does science because, according to the Big Bang theory, the world came to exist from nothing, which is the idea that Aristotle denies. Moreover, scientists claim that even the Big Bang might not have been the starting point of the universe and that a parallel universe might have already existed, which may have led to the Big Bang. However, according to Aristotle's philosophy, even if a parallel world existed, that too may have also had a first member. It could not have existed and caused change on its own. In the same manner, the Big Bang itself could not have occurred on its own. There must have been some otherworldly force that must have caused it to happen, and this otherworldly force can only be God.

Maimonides:

Maimonides argues that the universe consists of the things that we perceive to be existing. We could perceive them in three different ways, which are:

A) Existent as eternal and necessary. According to Avicenna, however, this is incorrect because everything is not eternal.

B) Not eternal and not necessary. This is also wrong because if nothing is eternal, that means that everything will end and will not be replaced, which is also illogical.

C) Some things are eternal and necessary. This means that at least someone's existence is necessary, and this should be the one whose existence is not dependent on anyone else because otherwise, it will not be necessary, and since God is the only such being, his existence is confirmed. This is because, without the existence of God, the universe would also not be able to exist.

Theories Of Other Philosophers:

Many other philosophers have thought along the same lines as Aristotle and Maimonides. As Aristotle has based his theories on the cause of motion and Maimonides has used the understanding of the necessity of the existence of things in the same way, other philosophers have picked up on various aspects of the universe to come to the conclusion that God, in fact, does exist. For them, God is just a force that causes every single thing to happen. The name that they give to this “force” is God. This is a conclusion that not just one but many philosophers as well as scientists have arrived at through very different trajectories. Thus, this completely rules out Tyler and Frazer’s association of religion with primitive cultures. For them, people attribute those things to God, which they cannot explain to themselves. However, the fact that Aristotle and Maimonides came up with such well-thought-out and elaborate theories and conclusions based on empirical evidence through experimentation proves them wrong.

Philosophers like Aristotle and Maimonides give one substantial grounds to believe that God, in fact, does exist. They remove all doubt that may arise in a person’s mind about the existence of God and facilitate the people becoming stronger in their faith.

Conclusion:

All of these philosophers had a few ideas in common around which their faith in the existence of God and the supernatural revolved. These common ideas included the fact that everything that existed in the universe was caused by something else. There was a need of a supreme being to run how the universe worked, that supreme being had to be one, it had to exist till eternity otherwise the universe will also stop existing. What is important to note here is the fact that these philosophers questioned the existence of God, wondered about their faiths, searched for answers and came up with some through empirical evidence. They based these answers on rational ideas, something which is proof of the fact that the followers of religion are rational.

These ideas are still relevant in the contemporary world as they have survived to date. Those who follow monotheistic religions like Islam and Christianity believe in the concept of one God who has control over everything but who himself cannot be controlled by anything. Even the faiths that allow the concept of multiple Gods, like Hinduism, have the concept of a main God who has authority over all the other Gods as well as the whole universe. The theories and arguments of all of the philosophers that have been mentioned are very significant in today’s day and age because they strengthen people’s faith in their religions and help answer philosophical questions that arise in their minds, which makes them question the existence of God.

Bibliography

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