

Proving the Existence of God

1

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Proving the Existence of God

2

- Why do we need to prove the existence of God?
 - One: It is part of our Fitrah (Innate Nature) to be curious
 - ✦ This is an important step in the maturity of faith - where we ask ourselves why we do what we do and why we believe what we believe...
 - Two: To thank the provider شكر المنعم
 - Three: To defend your beliefs/debate with others

Proving the Existence of God

3

- What are the benefits of knowing God and having faith in Him?
 - One: It brings about a sense of peace and hope
 - Two: It creates within human beings a sense of responsibility
 - Three: According to A. Nasir Makarim Shirazi in “Fifty Lessons on Principles of Belief for Youth” – knowing God helps with the progress of Science:
 - ✦ He states: “The world of creation is like a great book in which every creature forms a word or sentence in that. From the point of view of a person who worships God, every atom of this universe is worthy of study...”

Proving the Existence of God

4

- How can we prove the existence of God?
 - First: An inward way (the closest way) - The knowledge by presence فطري
 - ✦ A. N M Shirazi states: “Scholars say that every human being who thinks, from whatever class or race one be, if left alone, receives no special training, not even hears the words of people who worship God nor the words of materialists, that person will naturally become aware of a force or power which is above nature and which rules all of the world.”
 - Even if one is occupied and run over with material pleasures – when difficulties or disaster strikes their life – this inner sound gains strength
 - *“When they board the ship, they invoke Allah putting exclusive faith in Him, but when He delivers them to land, behold, they ascribe partners[to Him]” (29:65)*

Proving the Existence of God

5

- How can we prove the existence of God (cont)?
 - Second: The Outward Way (The clearest way) - برهان النظم – Proof based on organization/ system
 - ✦ A. N M Shirazi states: “With a quick glance at the world that we live in, we realize that the world is not in chaos and disorder. Rather, all phenomena are in motion moving towards a clear and determined direction. The facilities of the world are like a great army which has been divided into well-organized units which move in a determined direction.”
 - He describes that when a human being pays attention to the world around them, they will see Order and Intellect in everything:
 - One: Every creature, in order to remain and survive, must be part of a series of laws and special conditions
 - Two: Every creature has a special effect that is particular to it which they constantly follow
 - All of the members (organs) of living creatures work and are coordinated with each other

Proving the Existence of God

6

- Second Way: The Outward Way (Cont)...
 - He states: “This truth is clear for everyone’s conscience that whenever order exists in a facility, this shows intellect, thought, a plan and a goal.”
 - “Thus, wherever there is a sense of order, beside that, there has been an intellect and however much larger that system be, it is more accurate and more interesting, the knowledge which brings that into being in the same proportion is greater.”
 - ✦ *“Soon We shall show them Our signs in the horizons and in their own souls until it becomes clear to them that He is the Real. Is it not sufficient that your Lord is witness to all things?” (41:53)*

Proving the Existence of God

7

- How can we prove the existence of God (cont)?
 - Third: A Philosophical/Intellectual Proof - Proof of a Necessary Existent واجب الوجود
 - ✦ Necessary existent (واجب الوجود), i.e. an existent which does not need, require or depend upon any other existent for coming into being
 - ✦ Why is it necessary for there to be an existent which does not require or depend upon any other existent for coming into being?
 - Because if every existent required another existent for it to come into being; each one of them in turn requiring a cause, no existent would ever come into being, because an infinite series (*tasalsul*) of causes is impossible
 - Therefore an infinite series of causes is compelled to terminate in an existent (*mawjūd*), which is not a caused thing (*ma'lūl*) of any other existent, i.e. the necessary existent.

Proving the Existence of God

8

- Third proof (in more detail):
 - In English Grammar, a sentence has two fundamental parts -subject and predicate
 - ✦ The establishment of a predicate for the subject can only have three states:
 - It is either impossible (ممتنع) – ex: the number 3 is greater than the number 4
 - It is necessary (واجب) – ex: the number 2 is half of 4
 - It is neither impossible nor necessary (ممکن)– ex: the sun is above our head
 - ✦ In philosophy only existence is discussed;
 - Therefore those things which are impossible for being in existence (ممتنع) are ignored and not discussed

Proving the Existence of God

9

- Third proof (in more detail):
 - Necessary existence (واجب) is known as an existent, which exists in-itself and does not depend upon another existent.
 - Possible existence (ممکن) is known as an existent, which does not exist in-itself and depends on another existent in order for it to be realized.
 - ✦ Therefore, existence through intellectual perception can be conceptualized in three essential possibilities:
 - 1) Every existent is a necessary existent.
 - 2) Every existent is a possible existent.
 - 3) Some existents are necessary existents and some are possible existents.

Proving the Existence of God

10

- Third proof (in more detail):
 - #1 is impossible
 - ✦ For this statement to be true this would mean that all things in existence are independent and do not depend on anything else...
 - #2 is impossible
 - ✦ Because possible existences are those which do not exist in-itself and depends on another existent in order for it to be realized - In other words, they requires a cause (علة) for their existence.
 - The impossibility of #2 – (Every existent is a possible existent) – can be proved through 2 means:
 - First: If all existents were possible existents, this would mean each one of them requires a cause of its existence
 - This would lead to an infinite regression of causes (التسلسل) which is impossible!
 - Second: What if we said, A caused B and B caused C and C caused A
 - This is known as a Vicious Circle (الدور) – which is also impossible
 - By disproving #1 and #2 – we are left with only #3 - Some existents are necessary existents and some are possible existents

Proving the Existence of God

11

- How to prove the Oneness of the Necessary Existent?
(Let us suppose there are 2 Necessary Existents)
 - If there were 2 NE; we can only have a few possibilities of their Causal Prowess
 - ✦ First: Each existent is created by both the NE's together.
 - ✦ Second: Some existents are created by one NE while others are created by the other NE
 - ✦ Third: One NE runs the show while the second NE agrees with everything

Proving the Existence of God

12

- First: Each existent is created by both the NE's together.
 - When each NE would give existence to the same existent; it would mean that each NE would provide an independent existence for that one existent i.e. they would have 2 existences
 - ✦ However since each existent only has one existence, this would negate the possibility of its existence coming from more than one necessary existent
- Second: Some existents are created by one NE while others are created by the other NE
 - This means that each existent is in existence because of its particular NE, consequently it is fully dependent on their specific NE
 - ✦ Therefore, they are governed and ruled by their NE's specific system and order.
 - Which would mean that there are two different systems and orders in this world
 - However the clear harmony and organization in our world is running in one harmonious and organized order
- Third: One NE runs the show while the second NE agrees with everything
 - This defeats the purpose of the second NE
- **THEREFORE:** We are left with it that there can truly just be one NE!!

Proving the Existence of God

13

- After proving the Oneness of the Necessary Existent; the task is now to prove the qualities and attributes of this existent
 - Why is this important?
 - ✦ So we can recognize the Creator distinctly from His Creation
 - ✦ Because it is not sufficient to merely know Him as the necessary existent, because some may conceive of energy or matter (like the big bang) as being the example for this necessary existent
 - By defining the NE (واجب الوجود) as an existent that does not require any cause for its existence and it is the primary cause for all PE; we have proved 2 of its attributes
 - ✦ Independent – not dependent on any other existent
 - ✦ First Cause of all possible existences

Proving the Existence of God

14

- Because the NE is Independent and not needy of any other existence NOR does it require a cause to continue its existence, we can confidently say it has always existed and will always exist – Therefore:
 - NE is without beginning, meaning that He never was preceded by nonexistence.
 - NE is without end, meaning that He will never be non-existent
 - ✦ These two attributes are called in Arabic سرمدی – everlasting or eternal

Proving the Existence of God

15

- Another essential part of the NE is that must be simple **بسيط** and non-compound **غير مركب**
 - i.e. not made up of physical parts or intellectual parts
 - ✦ Question: Why can't the NE be made up of Physical Parts?
 - Answer: Anything made up of physical parts is compound and is dependent upon those parts
 - NE is independent of everything; therefore we can positively conclude then that NE cannot be a physical organism.
 - ✦ By nullifying any Physical or Tangible existence for the NE – we can then prove further qualities of the NE
 - NE cannot be limited to or subjected to time and space because time and space can be divided and anything which can be divided has a beginning or an end
 - Therefore; what we have done so far is prove certain **NEGATIVE QUALITIES** **الصفات السلبية** which do not exist in the NE:
 - Body **جسم** - ; Space – **مكان**; Time – **زمان**

Proving the Existence of God

16

- Question: Why can't the NE be made up of Intellectual Parts?
 - Answer: When we describe or define a physical existent; we can give an intellectual definition to it
 - ✦ Ex: Human beings = Talking Animal
 - ✦ Ex: Lion = Roaring Animal
 - Anything which can be given an intellectual definition, can thus be intellectually annihilated. – HOW?
 - ✦ By splitting up the definition
 - However since the NE is not made up of any physical parts – does not have a ماهية (as we have described), we cannot intellectually give it a definition, therefore, it is impossible for it to be annihilated.
 - Which is why we said earlier that the NE must be simple بسيط and not compound

Proving the Existence of God

17

- So far we have proven the following Characteristics/ Attributes for the NE
 - NE must be Independent – i.e. not dependent on any other existent
 - NE is the First Cause of all possible existences
 - NE is without beginning, meaning that He never was preceded by nonexistence.
 - NE is without end, meaning that He will never be non-existent.
 - NE cannot be made up of any Physical or Intellectual parts
 - NE does not have Body جسم - ; Space – مکان; Time – زمان
 - ✦ Looking at the above the above Characteristics from a Divine (Religious) Worldview as opposed to a Material Worldview – we would (based on the distinguishing/unique attributes) call the NE – God

Proving the Existence of God

18

- One of the points to realize when we discuss the attributes of Allah SWT – no matter how we describe Him – these descriptions are limited due to the limitations that exist within ourselves
 - Sayyid Mujtaba Lari and “God and His Attributes” says: “In our efforts to describe the Creator and gain knowledge of His attributes, we ideally need concepts and expressions that are beyond our reach. Those terms we do employ are unable to help us in reaching our goal, a true description of God, for our limited understandings cannot accommodate a perception of the nature of God's infinite attributes. He is exalted above all concepts coined and fashioned by the human mind.
 - Man, who is created and limited in every respect, should not expect to be able to assess and describe a non-material being by means of material attributes and characteristics.”
 - ✦ Allah SWT says: Nothing is like Him, and He is the All-hearing, the All-seeing (42:11)

Proving the Existence of God

- S. Lari says: “The fact that God's attributes are utterly separate from ours and cannot be examined through a comparison with our attributes is because the attributes of that fountainhead of being are different from the attributes of all other beings.
 - For example, we have the ability to perform certain tasks, but this is not the same as the power of God; in our case, the attribute is one thing and the entity it describes is another. When we boast of our knowledge, we are not one and identical with our knowledge.
 - ✦ The attributes are accidents and our essence is a substance; each is independent of the other
 - But the case of the divine attributes is fundamentally different. When we say that God is all-knowing and all-powerful, what we mean is that He is the source of knowledge and power: the attribute is not something other than the entity it describes although it is conceptually distinct.”
 - And this is what is known as Tawheed Fi Dhaat – Oneness (Unity) of Essence

Proving the Existence of God

- Then S. Lari continues: “When the question of divine unity is raised in religious discourse, it is taken to include many topics including belief in the oneness of the essence, so, too, the compounding of the attributes and the distinction between essence and attributes is totally excluded with respect to unity of the attributes. Distinctness and differentiation derive from limitation.”
 - “...the different attributes which appear to resemble the properties of our limited beings, we attempt to separate them from His infinite essence.
 - “Objectively, however, all the concepts conveyed by the different attributes have a single existence and convey a single reality, a reality that is free of all defect and deficiency, that possesses all perfection's such as power, mercy, knowledge, blessedness, wisdom and splendour.”
 - ✦ *Look at NB Sermon 1
 - “So each attribute is infinite and coextensive with the infinitude of the essence. God is free of and exempt from finite attributes that might be distinct from each other and separate from the essence.

Proving the Existence of God

- Having understood the above (that the attributes and essence are one and infinite), then it becomes impossible to “to accept any contingent phenomenon or created thing in His place, and to imagine that any other being might be His partner or equal in commanding and controlling the destinies of the world, or even have some share in administering the order of the universe.”
 - If numerous gods ruled over the world and each of these gods acted and gave commands in accordance with his own will, the order of the universe would dissolve into anarchy.”
 - ✦ *"If there were numerous gods other than the one true God, the order of the heavens and the earth would collapse. So exalted be the Lord of the Throne above what they say concerning Him."* (21:22)
 - Why? He says: “It is (only) feasible to conceive of plurality within a given category once we speak of limitations such as quantity, quality, and time. God, however, is not limited by any of these, and it is, therefore, impossible to conceive of Him having any like or congener.