THE PROOFS TO BELIEVE THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

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INTRODUCTION

In the history of philosophy, proofs for ‘the existence of God’ occupies a remarkable position. Beginning with the Ancient Western era to the contemporary, many philosophers have contributed a lot to the field of philosophy. But in this research I have discussed only up to the modern philosophy. Here it is clear that though their aim was one they have taken different ways to reach those ends in different angle.

In my first chapter I have talk about some of the Ancient Western philosophers who have laid the foundation to the history of philosophy as well as the ground to demonstrate the ‘existence of God’. Here at the very early stages they saw and recognize God in nature.

But when it come to the second chapter I have discussed about some medieval philosophers who gave their efforts to demonstrate the existence of God. The a priori ontological argument seeks to prove God’s necessary existence from an analysis of the definition of him as the greatest conceivable and most perfect being, famously presented in the eleventh century by St Anselm. In the same way Augustine, though he was a sckeptic, after his conversion he proofs that we come to know the truth not by our but by the divine illumination. The a posteriori cosmological argument is designed to prove the existence of God from indisputable empirical phenomenon. Here the most famous version is presented by St. Thomas Aquinas in his *Summa Theologiae.*

We see in the medieval they were strict on to the Church’s doctrines. The center was God and they never went beyond that rationally. Whatever the Church says, they accepted. Therefore, this era we call as the Dark Age only for the people but not for the Church because, Church was educated where as people simply went by faith. So, when it comes to the modern era it was completely changed. People started to think or reason out everything, and they were educated like the Church. It does not mean that they deny the existence of God. The beauty of this is, they needed a God (to philosophy) while they do their researches. Why? Because there were some areas that they were not able to proceed or to give perfect answers. As a result of that they happened to demonstrate the existence of God. This is how they wanted to prove the existence of God to go forward in their field of philosophy.

So, therefore in this work, gathering all these factors I have tried to show or rather proved the existence of God as it was done by these great philosophers. But after all at the end of the day what counts is not merely these proves of God but rather our receptive heart to experience His existence daily in our lives.

As we study and observed philosophical proofs of the existence of God have a long and distinguished history. We see that almost every major western philosophers has sought defend or refute such proofs, and many cotemporary philosopher continued to show interest in these arguments. We might expect and predict that religious belief would be vitally entrusted in discussions of this topics, that when a proof of God’s existence is eloquently defended, beliefs would be most enthusiastic and when a proof is refuted, they would be seriously disappointed.

Over the cause of history those who believed in God existence typically were eager to learn God’s will and tendered to rely on those individuals who claim to causes such insight are experiences justifies the conclusion that God exists, or rather the very idea of God, we have implies that God exist. The proof of God thus, lies within, as it were, the logic of God, in the logical implications of what we must say about him.

We have heard, in the Ocean there are enough and more places which are not yet discovered and it may not be discovered too. Even though we see our science and technology is developed, there are places in the ocean that the scientists cannot measure the depths. I hope that those who read this will be encouraged to reflect of their own life and to think about the existence of God and His marvelous creation.

CHAPTER ONE

FROM THE NATURAL PHILOSOPHICAL ELABORATION

1.1 Introduction

In the history we find the Ancient Greek Philosophers have played an important role for the development of the philosophical arguments. There is no exact date to say that philosophy was started on this day, at this time, by this man because, only when people started to think philosophy was born, as ‘wonder’. Before that everything was relied on myths. With the development of philosophy people started to reason out everything in cosmos, for example rain. Earlier when there was rain people thought and they used to say that it was from God and a gift of God. But with the development of the philosophy thinkers went beyond and started to reason out how this was happening. In short when man began to think rationally with his complete freedom, using his intellectual power the word philosophy came into existence.

We can divide the ancient Western philosophers into three groups such as pre-Socratic, Socratic, and Post Socratic. In this chapter I am going to talk about their contribution in the field of the existence of God. I have divided this chapter into three parts such as; pre Socratic, the Eleatic, and Socratic and the post Socratic philosophers.

1.2 Heraclitus

The famous book that he wrote was “On Nature”. It has divided into three; universe, politics, theology. The person who reads his writings has to resolve the puzzles he creates in his book. “*For him God was not an Anthropomorphous being rather the world was God or the world was the many estivation of the activity of God.”*[[1]](#footnote-1)

The book ‘Popular History of Philosophy’, written by Teodoro de la Torre, talks about the existence of God and he continues to say that God is in the nature. For him the concept of God was nature or logos.“*Heraclitus concept of God was rather cosmic: for him God was nature, or logos – the law of nature.”*[[2]](#footnote-2)

Heraclitus held that there is one supreme God. That leading God he identifies with a number of key notions; with logos, with cosmic justice and wisdom, with war and with fire, in fact with the entire pattern of conflict and change in the universe. Heraclitus’ god is neither personal nor transcendent; it is wholly immanent in the world and identical with the order of the cosmos over time. (Kahn 1979, p.267)[[3]](#footnote-3)

1.3 Xenophanes

The philosophers before him were “Milesians”, they all talk about gods. Xenophanes was the first Greek thinker who was the pioneer of the “Monotheism”; talking about one God reality and he said, “there is one god, among gods and men the greatest..."[[4]](#footnote-4) It was not the common understanding of the people those who were at that time because, philosophers such as poets, writers etc., taught by their poems and writings that there were many gods or deities and they affected the life of the people in many ways.[[5]](#footnote-5)Furthermore, the language we have is human and secular and this secular language we use to refer the divine or transcendental being. It created a big problem among the philosophers and this problem is known as, “Anthropomorphism”; giving attribution or form to the divine reality. Therefore, in order to understand god we use human words and as a result we find many errors in their teachings. So, their teachings were also criticized.

There was a conception of divine being saying that gods are also humanlike and morally imperfect and he rejected it. He said, "Mortals think that the gods are born,"[[6]](#footnote-6) It means, god has both body and soul but not at all like humans. Therefore he said that “it is a mistake to think that anything divine could have come into being.”[[7]](#footnote-7)

We find, Xenophanes found one real God, and that God is the greatest among all the gods and men, and his God is not mortal in mind and body. “It follows that, for Xenophanes, the proper conception of the divine involves denying that the gods have any specifically human qualities while holding them to be both uncreated (and of course deathless) and morally good…”[[8]](#footnote-8)

He goes beyond from the first thinkers and said, the universe or the cosmos is divine whereas Milesians hold that their conception on the basic stuff out of which the universe made, is divine. “If so, he cannot have thought that the general structure of the world came into being as the Milesians had held - he had already said that gods cannot be born.”[[9]](#footnote-9)

When we look at the God of Xenophanes, his God also same like Judeo-Christian God in some ways. “First is the concept that God is greater than any other being. Second, that God is not begotten or created from something or someone else, thus He has always existed. Third, that though the Judeo-Christian God "speaks" (revelation) to His people, the anthropomorphic descriptions of Him are not really adequate to account for His nature. Fourth, He is One. Fifth, He is omniscient (all sight, all hearing, all thought). Sixth, God creates or acts "by the thought of His mind." Seventh, He is immutable.”[[10]](#footnote-10)

The main purpose of Xenophanes was to present a new type of divine being. That divine being we came to know as “The god of the philosophers”[[11]](#footnote-11), and this god was different from god of the religious belief because, “This deity could be worshiped, although probably not prayed to.”[[12]](#footnote-12)

According to Aristotle, “Xenophanes, who was the originator of this attempt to reduce things to a One... gave no clear account, but directing his gaze to the whole heavens he says that God and the One are identical."[[13]](#footnote-13)

1.4 Parmenides

According to him, the reality of the world is one, and unchanging, ingenerated in destructible whole. Likewise, the phenomenon of movement and change are simple appearances of the real static, eternal reality.[[14]](#footnote-14)

…the stuff of the cosmos was said to be imperishable and because that same thing was taken to be capable of self-transformation in a rational, orderly fashion, it was thought that that out of which the world sprang was a worthy divine being.

Parmenides’ conclusions do not fit in with that developing religious conception... It is simply a hunk of unchanging stuff about which the question of rationality does not arise.[[15]](#footnote-15)

1.5 Socrates

He does not talk about the existence of God as such. But he believes that he was sent by gods on a special diplomatic mission. He saw, those days’ people, instead of being, they were very much concerned with political responsibilities and with their family careers. Therefore, they did not have time to think about the well fair of the soul.

…critias applied the distinction between convention and nature to religion: He asserted that the gods were invented by clever men to inculcate fear in people and thus to deter them from secret crimes. Religion was therefore a conventional way of inspiring fear in men and, as such, it fulfilled a natural purpose in society.[[16]](#footnote-16)

1.6 Plato

We do not have explicit proof for God’s existence in Plato. Instead, we can use two of his doctrines for this purpose. They are, “proof of dialectical and Eros” and proof of Automation.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

In “proof of dialectics and Eros” Plato shows God as truth which do not need outside support. Basically man is not moved towards truth because, rational or dialectical motive but because of God. According to Plato it is God who attracts man towards absolute eliminating shadows and illusions. Teodoro de la Torre beautifully puts it. “Not only man’s reason, but his whole being attracted to God”.[[18]](#footnote-18)

In proof auto motion, Plato explains how man moves towards good because of the soul. This explanation presupposes a supremely good soul to account for all the partially good auto motion. This supreme good could be understood as God.

Plato also speaks about the essence of God. He names that God is the supreme good, supreme Beauty and Supreme Being. Plato also discourages the inquiry into the existence of God because, He transcends the human knowledge. His presentation of God is very dialectical rather than personal because, he understands God as an absolute idea rather than a person endowed with life, intellection and will.[[19]](#footnote-19)

Anyway he encourages man to pray to God, in order to transcend the illusions of the world. Plato at times spoke of earthly gods since he was from milieu, which worshipped different gods. Anyway, he places this philosophical God above all the invite people to move towards him. As Teodoro de la Torre puts it “Men must flee the world and seek to be as completely assimilated to God as possible.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

Plato also answers the question “If God is infinitely good and he is the principle of everything, how can the existence of evil be explained?”[[21]](#footnote-21) And he answered this question in two ways.

1. The good of men are from God and the evil come from their limitations.
2. If we undergo evil in this life, God’s justice will prevail and accomplished in another life.[[22]](#footnote-22)

Therefore, Plato warns his readers to appreciate the good that God has endowed people with.

1.7 Aristotle

At the outset it should be noted that Aristotle does not consider Natural Theology as a special branch of philosophy. Instead, Aristotle studies God in his Metaphysics. In his study of being the names God as the ultimate being, which is a pure act. In other words, no other being has the nature or the essence of God, according to Aristotle.

His peculiar contribution to the study of God in anyway made in his physics; when he argued naming God as, “The Unmoved Mover”. It should be well noted that Aristotle’s ideas on this recurs when he argued from the contingent and necessary beings in his Metaphysics.[[23]](#footnote-23)

Teodoro de la Torre in his “Popular History of Philosophy” thus, introduces the argument of the “Unmoved mover.”

1. There are in the world beings which come to be, this undeniable fact needs no proof.
2. Coming to be is moving from potency to act: beings cannot move from potency to act except by virtue of a being in act (otherwise they would not have come to be, they had to be necessarily); but, before they came to be, those beings were not in act; therefore they received their existence from another being.
3. If these movable being have received their existence from another movable being, we can in turn question the existence of the other movable being, and so on, until we arrive at a mover which is unmoved or necessary. The other alternative would be to assert an indefinite series of movable movers, but this hypothesis proves nothing; it would be extending the problem rather than solving it. Since no movable being in the series accounts for its own existence, the whole series has no ultimate reason to account for the existence of all the beings involved.
4. The conclusion is that there is a first unmoved mover which accounts for its own existence and for the existence of all other beings. Aristotle, implicitly at least, identified this unmoved mover with God.[[24]](#footnote-24)

Aristotle also discusses the essence of God. The renders can gather from his writings that Aristotle places or name God as an intellectual substance or a person. He exaggerated the transcendence of God and says that God is one, and unmixed with matter.

We should be very clear that Aristotle’s Theology and Cosmology go hand in hand. These two topics are very much united and interconnected. Aristotle holds the view that God created the world. He explained that God created the world by purely an intellectual action with pre-existing matter. It should be well-noted that matter pre-existed before the creative action of God according to Aristotle. When explaining this, Aristotle affirms that God was never affected by matter since God’s creative action was intellectual, not physical. A question arises how can matter be moved by the intellect? To which Aristotle answers that all matter tends towards its perfection and fulfillment because of the creative intellectual action of God. Therefore, we can affirm that Aristotle’s Natural Theology is highly rational and contributive throughout the ages.[[25]](#footnote-25)

**Conclusio**n

I have come to the end of my research regarding this chapter on the philosophical argument for the existence of God from the natural philosophical elaboration. Furthermore, here, I have selected some philosophers, to show the way that they have presented the argument on the existence of God. In this chapter we perceive the ideas, thoughts that the philosophers have given in different ways to understand and to prove the existence of God. Though they have given their ideas by reasoning to prove the existence of God there were errors too. But their thinking patterns were the foundation for the new thinkers who came after them. If there was an error the one who come after him used to argue on that. In the similar way, if there is an error or lack, they have developed that. This is how we see the development of the philosophy progressively. So, even in this chapter we see how philosophers have developed the arguments about the existence of God rationally in the ancient time.

CHAPTER TWO

CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS

2.1 Introduction

First of all I would like to say, most of us think as Christians we are the first. But we must not forget that there were Arabic and Jewish before us. It says that the Christianity was influenced by these two. In this chapter I would like to talk about the existence of God with the help of some Christian philosophers and how they demonstrate their thoughts to show the existence of God. Here, I have discussed some of the general ideas for God’s existence developing my statement with the help of their theories. One of the most basic or most fundamental issues of the human mind is the issue, “Whether God exists or not.”

Though this question seems to be small, it is very difficult question to answer. According to the religion, especially as Christians, we believe that God is the almighty and ever living God. In the similar way, there are some philosophers who raised question on the existence of God. Though the theists boldly affirm that God exists; atheists boldly said that God does not exist. In the similar way, even the skeptics have the same doubt on the existence of God. We see in this chapter, St. Augustine also a skeptic before his conversion and after his conversion he stood against the skepticism. Here, I am not going to prove the existence of God exactly, but to make people clear about the different ideas of the existence of God and the theories of these Christian philosophers with examples, in order to have a clear knowledge about the existence of God as well as these theories proposed by these great figures.

2.2 St. Anselm

St. Anselm was born in 1033 and he was the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1093 to 1109. He thought, the better way to prove the existence of God was, by analysing what it means to God. As we know he is the founder of the ontological argument. We find his famous argument in his book called, *‘Proslogion’* which addresses to God. It is very important, and many of them have misunderstood the argument that he has proposed according to his belief. That is, “Something than which nothing greater can be thought, (*aliquid quo nihilmaiuscogitaripossit*)”[[26]](#footnote-26) As a Christian or Bishop he believed in God and was reflecting on God, and His existence. Even from his ontological argument he was not trying to prove the existence of God for those who do not believe in God.

The ontological argument begins with the analysing the definition of God. It is an attempt to prove that God exist by examining the definition of what God is. So, we present this argument as ‘a priori’, which means ‘before experience’.

In the Atheists point of view, ‘there is no God’. But Anselm says that ‘there is no God’ does not make you a sense and the fact that there is no God, is wrong because, it is contradictory and no more true or false. It is like to say that “John is a married bachelor”.[[27]](#footnote-27) If we say John is a bachelor, there is no contradiction. It is enough, clear and correct. In the similar way, it is very clear, to say that there is no God means the one who says must have an idea of God. Otherwise how he says that there is no God.

In his book *Proslogian*, the second chapter he says that “Even ‘the fool’ can understand this concept”.[[28]](#footnote-28) In other words he says, “It is only the fool who says that there is no God”.[[29]](#footnote-29) As I said earlier, to say that there is no God, the idea or the concept of God should exist in the mind. Further, “The concept must exist either only in our mind, or in both our mind and in reality”.[[30]](#footnote-30) That is where, Anselm says, even if the fool does not understand God by definition (Ontologically) has to exist both in mind and the reality.

If we take ‘superman’ as an example we know it exists in the minds of the people and even children believes that he exists in the reality too. In the similar way we can say that the concept of God is also only an idea which exists in the minds of people but no more in reality. This is the argument of the Atheists. But Anselm continues to say that, as an example, “I have an idea of superman but there is no real superman, you cannot consistently say, I have an idea of God, but there is no real God”.[[31]](#footnote-31)This is where his argument begins to say that,

Surely that-than-which-a-greater-cannot –be-thought cannot exist in the mind alone. For if it exists solely in the mind even, it cannot be thought to exist in reality also, which is greater. If then that-than-which-a-greater-cannot –be-thought cannot exist in the mind alone, this same that-than-which-a-greater-*cannot* –be-thought is that-than-which-a-greater-*can* –be-thought. But this is obviously impossible. Therefore, there is absolutely no doubt that something-than-which-a-greater-cannot –be-thought exist both in the mind and in reality.[[32]](#footnote-32)

 Hence, Anselm's argument, the second chapter of the book *Prologian* can be summarized as following way.

1. It is a conceptual truth (or, so to speak, true by definition) that God is a being than which none greater can be imagined (that is, the greatest possible being that can be imagined).
2. God exists as an idea in the mind.
3. A being that exists as an idea in the mind and in reality is, other things being equal, greater than a being that exists only as an idea in the mind.
4. Thus, if God exists only as an idea in the mind, then we can imagine something that is greater than God (that is, a greatest possible being that does exist).
5. But we cannot imagine something that is greater than God (for it is a contradiction to suppose that we can imagine a being greater than the greatest possible being that can be imagined.)
6. Therefore, God exists[[33]](#footnote-33)

According to Anselm, God means that than which nothing greater can be thought, and He must really exist. If somebody says that ‘God does not exist’ it cannot be false and it cannot be true too. It is not to say or to prove that God exist but to say that His non-existence is also inconceivable as he explains in his book under the third chapter.

And certainly this being so truly exists that it cannot be even thought not to exist. For something can be thought to exist that cannot be thought not to exist, and this is greater than that which can be thought not to exist. Hence, if that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought can be thought not to exist, then that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought is not the same as that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought, which is absurd. Something that-than-which-a-greater-cannot-be-thought exists so truly then, that it cannot be even thought not to exist.[[34]](#footnote-34)

In the same way the third chapter, Anselm presented can be summarised in this way.

1. By definition, God is a being than which none greater can be imagined.
2. A being that necessarily exists in reality is greater than a being that does not necessarily exist.
3. Thus, by definition, if God exists as an idea in the mind but does not necessarily exist in reality, then we can imagine something that is greater than God.
4. But we cannot imagine something that is greater than God.
5. Thus, if God exists in the mind as an idea, then God necessarily exists in reality.
6. God exists in the mind as an idea.[[35]](#footnote-35)

Therefore, finally he comes to a conclusion saying that God necessarily exists in reality.

2.3 St. Augustine

St. Augustine of Hippo was an Algerian 354-430 A.D. He was a philosopher as well as a theologian of early medieval period. According to the history we find that he has worked for the development of Western Christianity. “He is well known as one of the four greatest Fathers of the Church and the Fathers of the Orthodox theology.”[[36]](#footnote-36) When we read his writings it is very clear that he was influenced by Plato and Neo-Platonism and from them only he has developed his philosophical and theological arguments or systems. He was a best writer, and Confession, De Civitate Dei, City of God, are very famous writings among the people. It says that “For his philosophical reasoning he was particularly influenced by the enneads of Plotinus and by European thinking.”[[37]](#footnote-37)

It is said that St. Augustine was a sckeptic. He is the son to a devoted Christian mother and to a pagan father. He had a vulnerable life and his mother did not please towards his life style. Therefore, she continued to pray for him and asked God’s grace to change the life of his son. So, we believe, as a result of his devoted mother the whole life of Augustine was changed. Then he started to attack to the sckepticism since he was a sckeptic after his conversion. Then he said that we can attain knowledge through divine illumination but not by our own intellect. It says that he was ordained as a priest in 391 as a bishop and remain faithful until his death, and the age of 75 he passed away.

According to the point of view of St. Augustine there were two major questions. The first one was the human soul and the other one was God. When it comes to God, it helps to know about ourselves and our existence too. So, when we come to know ourselves and especially God, one is able to understand the reality through the divine illumination. Then it will be easy for a man to know how this world is formed or created by the creator because, from our rational power alone cannot do anything to understand this deep reality or mystery. When we go to the thoughts of Augustine, “The most important element in the real world ... that being whom humans call "God".[[38]](#footnote-38)It is true and clear to say that the most important element is God According to the Christian thinking. But when it comes to philosophy the philosophers talk about “The most perfect "Being" must necessarily be the most important”.[[39]](#footnote-39)But for Augustine it was not so. For him God was personal and real or practical. With his experiences he found the real happiness only in God and that happiness was not a normal happiness. As he explained, it was the perfect happiness.

As we see, at the early stages of Augustine’s life there was nobody or a worthy power to control him. Therefore, he has his own way of life style and doing things. Further, he felt after his conversion he must have a perfect, infinitely loving God who can guide him in perfect way in every moments of his life, but not an evil god who was with him. So, it says that he found that God in Christianity after thirty years of searching, and he kept on experiencing the presence of God whom he found.

Augustine wanted a Supreme Being who was yet lovable, a God who respected the individual freedom of humans while at the same time providentially caring for them. He wanted a God who was both omnipotent and loving, fair and forgiving, transcendent and immanent, awesome but not frightening. He wanted a God whom he could trust from afar and embrace happily at the end of time.[[40]](#footnote-40)

No one can say ‘God does not exist’ because, as he believed that God is superior to all human beings. In the same way, that God can be understood once humans start to think and reason out about Him, and also the same God can be understood as the author of the world. “In Augustine's opinion atheism was a moral problem, not intellectual. The question of belief was not about whether one accepted the existence of God; it was about what sort of God one accepted”.[[41]](#footnote-41) Moreover, he understood the nature and the existence of God in three ways. They are;

1. By direct vision (mystical experience)
2. By faith (belief in the testimony of others)
3. By reason (argument from perceived facts about the universe)[[42]](#footnote-42)

When it comes to the second point it is limited but for those who believe in God is not limited. This faith come only through persons or the teaching of Jesus. But when it goes to reason it is different from the second, ‘faith’. The person who reason out this matter, first he thinks about the world and then his own self because, it will help a person to understand the existence of God and to have knowledge of God. In the same way to know the fundamental truth about the reality as Augustine said we need the divine illumination. “Augustine's words to his friends were meant to apply to any human being: Look, I shall show you my God by showing you his works. I will not do this in any terribly complicated way. I will not ask you without Faith to accept something you cannot understand ... I will not demand that you look at a lot of different things. Indeed, all you need do is look at yourselves”.[[43]](#footnote-43) Furthermore, he says, “It is the experience of such truths within oneself that is the basis for the uniquely "Augustinian" proof from reason for the existence of God, i.e. a "being which has no being superior to it."[[44]](#footnote-44)

He clearly says in his second book on *Free Will,* the best of the all creation is human beings. So, as he said, how we can find something better by human reason without divine illumination. We can see the full argument of Kondolean and Roberts as follows.

* God is that to which nothing is superior, i.e. God is the Supreme Being.
* If there is anything superior to our minds, then that reality is either God or God is superior to it.
* But eternal and immutable truth exists and is superior to our mind (which is temporal and changeable);
* If this "superior" truth exists and is identical with God then God exists.
* If this "superior: truth exists and God is superior to this truth, then God exists.
* Thus (on either alternative), God exists.[[45]](#footnote-45)

As we find in his doctrine of illumination, he talks about the three cognitive operations. They are; “senses, inferior reason and superior reason”.[[46]](#footnote-46) If we discuss about these factors in short, sensitive knowledge we gain through our senses such as the colour, taste, shape etc. or this sensitive knowledge we get through meditation. This meditation is different from the meditation what we do today. According to Augustine scientific knowledge is from inferior reason. This knowledge is completely based on corporeal and the material world. The third point is, ‘superior reason’ and according to this point we can acquire truth only through the divine illumination.

At last, St. Augustine says that all perfections can be found or seen only in God who is the truth. According to his experience God is everlasting, eternal, self-existence and infinite who represents the world of Plato. In this God we also find *‘arche’* types of everything without changes. He created this world and the human beings out of His free will and will not be a change.

2.4 St. Thomas Aquinas

St. Thomas Aquinas was born to a noble family in the kingdom of Sicily, in 1225. He was an Italian philosopher and theologian of medieval era. He was the foremost classical proponent of natural theology at the peak of the scholasticism and the founder of Thomastic School. His philosophy exerted enormous influence on subsequent Christian theology and also wester philosophy in general.[[47]](#footnote-47) At the age of sixteen he continued his studies and became a Dominican monk in 1242. Specially, he was characterized as a humble, simple, peace, loving, contemplative and a lover of poetry.[[48]](#footnote-48) He died in 1274 and he was announced as a saint of the Catholic Church by Pope John 22, and his theology began its rise. In 1568, he was named as the Doctor of the Church. His famous writings are known as, *Summa Contra Gentiles* and *Summa Theologica, Theologie*.

We find, there are two types of arguments in Islamic philosophy. When we come to the Arabic philosophers, they developed a temporal argument from contingency and this was taken up by St. Thomas Aquinas in his books which I have mentioned earlier. In *Summa Theologica* Aquinas mentioned rational approach, which are known as ‘five ways of Aquinas,’ to believe in God and to prove the existence of God.

St. Thomas Aquinas approach was opposite from the Ontological argument of St. Anselm. St. Anselm begins with the idea of God, and from this he concludes the existence of God, both in reality and mind. In article number one Aquinas attacked Anselm asking, whether God’s existence is self-evidence because, in the ontological argument the existence of God is self-evidence to us. If God existence is not self-evidence to us then how we demonstrate that God exists. In simple way to understand this is, we are self-evidence of ourselves in individual and only we can prove our existence. Therefore, we cannot say whether God does exist or does not exist. According to him this method of proving can happen in two ways, either starting from cause to effect or effect to cause.

Aquinas says, in the case of God even though we know that there is God we do not know what this God is. Therefore, we cannot start our demonstration from God Himself or the cause. Hence, according to him there is only one possible way to prove the existence of God starting from the effect to cause. So, St. Thomas presents a set of five arguments, which we known as ‘the five ways’, and which can be found in Aristotle, for showing that God exists.

2.4.1 The Argument from the Motion [Unmoved mover]

We all know, through our sense experience that something in this world are moved the motion is the fact. And we see everything in a movement. To understand this if we take ‘seed and fetes’ as examples, there is a movement from seed to plant and in the similar way, there is a movement from fetes to man. What causes this movement? So, there must be something that is moved by some mover which exists, and that chain of movement cannot go to infinite. There must be one point by which it started and which should not be moved by the other and which is the reason of the movement of the rest, and there we find that there is an unmoved mover whom we call as God.

It is certain, and evident to our senses, that in the world some things are in motion. Now whatever is in motion is put in motion by another, for nothing can be in motion except it is in potentiality to that towards which it is in motion; whereas a thing moves inasmuch as it is in act. For motion is nothing else than the reduction of something from potentiality to actuality. But nothing can be reduced from potentiality to actuality, except by something state of actuality. Thus that which is actually hot, as fire, makes wood, which is potentially hot, to be actually hot, and thereby moves and changes it. Now it is not possible that the same thing should be at once in actuality and potentiality in the same respect, but only in different respects. For what is actually hot cannot simultaneously be potentially hot; but it is simultaneously potentially cold. It is therefore impossible that in the same respect and in the same way a thing should be both mover and moved, i.e., that it should move itself. Therefore, whatever is in motion must be put in motion by another. If that by which it is put in motion be itself put in motion, then this also must needs be put in motion by another, and that by another again. But this cannot go on to infinity, because then there would be no first mover, and consequently, no other mover; seen that subsequent movers move only inasmuch as they are put in motion by the first mover; as the staff moves only because it is put in motion by the hand. Therefore it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no other; and this everyone understands to be God.[[49]](#footnote-49)

2.4.2 The Argument from Causation [Uncaused cause]

We see that the first and the second one are very similar. ‘Everything is caused’. So, it must be caused by something that caused by the other. In other words, there is a series of one thing causing another, but every cause itself needed a cause and there would not be any chain of cause and effect at all. This way deals with the matter of existence. St. Thomas Aquinas concluded that common sense observation tells us that no object create itself. He believed that ultimately there must have been an uncaused first cause who began the chain of existence for all things whom we call as God.

In the world of sense we find there is an order of efficient causes. There is no case known (neither is it, indeed, possible) in which a thing is found to be the efficient cause of itself; for so it would be prior to itself, which is impossible. Now in efficient causes it is not possible to go on to infinity, because in all efficient causes following in order, the first is the cause of the intermediate cause, and the intermediate is the cause of the ultimate cause, whether the intermediate cause be several, or one only. Now to take away the cause is to take away the effect. Therefore, if there be no first cause among efficient causes, there will be no ultimate, nor any intermediate cause. But if in efficient causes it is possible to go on to infinity, there will be no first efficient cause, neither will there be an ultimate effect, nor any intermediate efficient causes; all of which is plainly false. Therefore, it is necessary to admit a first efficient cause, to which everyone gives the name of God.[[50]](#footnote-50)

2.4.3 The Argument from the Contingency [Possible Being and Necessary Being]

When it comes to Necessary being, the essence is to exist. Whatever we see in the world they begin to exist and essence to exist. If they begin to exist there must be something before that in the existence. To understand this matter let us go by examples. If we take an example like ‘Man’, both his father and mother have to exist before him, and his grandparents must have to exist before his parents. Likewise, there must be someone before that in the existence.

In the same manner, if we all are people who began to exist or ceased to exist, there will be a time that none of us existence. Let us take an example like, ‘class room’. We are possible being, and there was a time that none of us existence in the class room. So, how life came to this room. So, there must be something that necessary to exist and which we call as a necessary being because, that essence is to exist, and that is the reason for the rest of the existence and that necessary being we call as God.

The third way is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be, since they are found to be generated, and to corrupt, and consequently, they are possible to be and not to be. But it is impossible for these always to exist, for that which is possible not to be at some time is not. Therefore, if everything is possible not to be, then at one time there could have been nothing in existence. Now if this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence-which is absurd.[[51]](#footnote-51)

According to Thomas Aquinas’ word for contingent is ‘possible’, since there are things which can exist and not exist, by coming into and going into existence. As he said, we would not have a world of contingent things that is of things, which might or might not happen to be, unless there were some necessary being.

Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. But every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not. Now it is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.[[52]](#footnote-52)

2.4.4 The Argument from the Gradation [degrees and perfection]

There are various degrees of all the perfection which Morales roughly the absolute perfection. Then there must be a being or several beings that are comparatively supreme. So, what is supreme in goodness must be the cause of goodness in all things. The highest goodness is known as God. “Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.”[[53]](#footnote-53)

As we have learnt in the class, let us go by this explanation. Then it will be very easy to understand the Thomistic argument of gradation. To develop this argument of gradation or degrees, Thomas Aquinas begins with an example namely, ‘beauty’. Human being observes degrees in beauty. Whatever the beauty that we talk about the maximum of beauty should be somewhere else and Aquinas calls it, it is in the God’s mind. In simple way, as we all know, by looking at a thing we cannot say that it is the beautiful one. Why? Because there will be another who does not see the beauty of that particular thing and he see the beauty in other thing. Therefore, it is clear that we cannot say that this is ‘the beautiful’ one because, it differs from person to person.

The fourth way is taken from the gradation to be found in things. Among beings there are some more and some less good, true, noble, and the like. But "more" and "less" are predicated of different things, according as they resemble in their different ways something which is the maximum, as a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest; so that there is some- thing which is truest, something best, some- thing noblest, and, consequently, something which is uttermost being; for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as it is written in *Metaph*, ii. Now the maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus; as fire, which is the maximum of heat, is the cause of all hot things. Therefore there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God.[[54]](#footnote-54)

2.4.5 The argument from Design [Governance of things]

This Argument is known as ‘Teleological’ argument too. “It says that this was later developed by William Paley.”[[55]](#footnote-55) As Aquinas says, things do not take place just. There is a system, order, or design in everything. So, it must be a work of a designer who is an intelligent being. And also there must be a perfect designer to design the universe to an order. This intelligent being or designer Aquinas named as God.

We see that things which lack intelligence, such as natural bodies, act for an end, and this is evident from their acting always, or nearly always, in the same way, so as to obtain the best result. Hence it is plain that not fortuitously, but designedly, do they achieve their end. Now whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end, unless be directed by some being endowed with knowledge and intelligence; as the arrow is shot to its mark by the archer. Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and being we call God.[[56]](#footnote-56)

St. Thomas Aquinas contributed, ‘five ways’ to prove the existence of God expecting his readers to read much more, to get wide idea or knowledge about the arguments which can be found in detail in other figures such as Aristotle, Avicenna etc.

Hence, in this cosmological argument, the concept of the God’s existence is given with the linking of the cosmos and the movement, and with the use of reason we cannot demonstrate the existence of God because it is in doubt. However, we can come to an end and say that there is God who exists forever, by whom everything exists and has the motion on the earth.

Conclusion

This chapter was mainly based on the Christian philosophers and how they work hard to demonstrate the existence of God. So, here, I have come to the end of my research regarding this chapter. According to our understanding, even though there are some doubts in us as human beings we cannot refuse the existence of God because, God is beyond our limits. We have experience, even scientists have belief in God. That is why when they are unable to continue their experiments they depend on or trust in God. Even in the medical field also the same. When it comes to the people, they do not care about the existence of God. But when they face any difficulty or when they fail their lives they start to think about God. Therefore, as Christian philosophers say, there is someone exists forever to give life to all the living and non-living creatures whom we known or call as God.

**CHAPTER THREE**

MODERN PHILOSOPHERS

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I would like to talk about ‘the existence of God’ under the modern philosophers. For this chapter I have selected only two main philosophers who have contributed a lot to the modern era. In the second chapter you see, I have discussed about the idea of the medieval philosophers and their contribution to proof the existence of God. Further we find that era is completely God centered. Why I say like this? Because, whatever the thing happened to the life of the people they believed, that was the will of God and the thing that was happen to them was from God. Therefore, humbly they accepted everything. The history says, during that time people were forced and formed to think in that way, and we find this age like a dark age to the people but not to the Church. But removing all these walls modern philosophers came up with their thoughts and ideas and help people to think rationally as rational beings, without handing over everything to God. Specially I must remember that the modern philosophers were not against God but they wanted to think and they wanted to make people to think rationally as rational beings, without handing over everything to God’s hand.

3.2 Rene Descartes (1596 - 1650 AD)

Descartes is well known as the father of the modern philosophy. He was educated under Jesuit Fathers and he was mastered in mathematics and philosophy of medieval time. After his masters he has joined to the French army, and from there he was sent to German and to Netherland to the mission. So, it is says that he started his philosophy in Netherland as he was working as an army.

In the ontological arguments, Descartes also plays a bug role after St. Anselm. Anselm argues that God must really exist since He is something than which nothing greater can be thought. On the other hand, Descartes works from a simpler-sounding formula. According to him, God is a ‘Supremely perfect Being’. Here, Descartes provides two examples in order to make the logic of his reasoning thought explicit. So, by the word ‘God’ we mean ‘a Supremely Being’. Moreover he says, existence is certain perfection. With this point of view he came to the conclusion that if God is supremely perfect and if existence is a perfection then God must have the perfection of existence. If we say He does not exist then He would not be supremely perfect. In order to give a clear idea Descartes used the other two terms, which are, the first one is that ‘Triangle’ it follows that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right angles. The second one is that given the idea of a hill, one is forced to think of a valley.

Existence can no more be taken away from the divine essence that the magnitude of its three angles together (that is, their being equal to two right angles) can be taken away from the essence of a triangle, or than the idea of a valley can be taken away from the idea of a hill. So it is not the less absurd to think God (that is, lacking certain perfection), than to think of a hill without a valley…[[57]](#footnote-57)

As we have studied in the class, to understand easily the next part what I am going to talk about let me have an example. We all know that in the medical field whatever the sickness is there, first of all doctors will ask patients to bring a blood report to understand his/ her sickness because, blood is related to all the body parts. In the same way Descartes thought that there must be a common theory or system and that system should be infallible and indubitable. As a result of his thinking he found a theory, nobody can questioned that truth calls, ‘Theory of Doubt’. So this method was; when you have doubt, remove your all the doubts one by one, including oneself, then what is remaining is the truth. This is what he propose in his theory.

His basic concept is that ‘I am’, that means ‘I exist’, even he doubts his existence. According to him when one exists means that he thinks. If it is not he does not think. In this way he said that ‘I doubt therefore I exist’. If I do not exist I do not doubt. That means you are conscious of thinking even if you sleep. So he said, ‘*cogito ergo sum*’ ‘I think therefore I am.’[[58]](#footnote-58)

In the same way, to Descartes, if something is perfect, then the imperfect cannot be a part of perfection. Therefore, deceiving is imperfection. So, God can never deceive. Therefore, God is perfect. So we have a God who does not deceive us and it is clear that God who exist is perfect. For him, the fact that God exists is intuition. Therefore he needed a good God who does not mislead us, deceive us. In the same manner he needed a God to continue his philosophy who is perfect and who do not deceive him. As a result of that his researches he came to a conclusion saying, perfect means there cannot be imperfect beings, all human beings are imperfect beings, but we have an idea of perfection, can idea ‘perfect’ comes from something ‘imperfect’, therefore the fact that we have the idea of ‘perfect’ must come from a ‘perfect’ being, therefore there must be a ‘perfect’ being. Then he found a perfect God exist.[[59]](#footnote-59)

Rene Descartes is famous with his meditations specially in those who study philosophy. He has arranged these meditations systematically so that people may understand them logically, though these concepts or ideas are deep. But here in this chapter I am going to talk about only four chapters such as meditations; one, two, three and five.

In the first meditation he has begun with a question, ‘what we can doubt?’ So we find by answering this question first he said if you want to do science you should have absolute certainty. Then you should remove all your doubts and then what is remaining is the truth. And you do not want to worry about other truth but only the fundamental truth. If that fundamental truth is truth, it is the truth. In other words, if the foundational truth is truth do not go further and spend time because, that is the truth. Then at last he said in this meditation, our senses can mislead us though our senses tell us the truth.

1. A firm foundation for the sciences requires a truth that is absolutely certain; for this purpose, I will reject all my beliefs, for which there is even a possibility of doubt, and whatever truths are left will be absolutely certain.
2. To this end it is not necessary to go through all my beliefs individually, since they are all based on a more fundamental belief. If there is any reason to doubt this foundation belief, then all the beliefs based on it are equally doubtful.
3. All my beliefs about the world are based on the fundamental belief that the senses tell me the truth. But this belief is not absolutely certain. It is at least possible that everything my senses tell me is an illusion created by a powerful being. Therefore, there is some reason to doubt my foundation belief, and thus all my beliefs about the world are doubtful; none of them can serve as the foundation for science.[[60]](#footnote-60)

In the second meditation he mainly focus on ‘I doubt therefore I exist’. In this meditation it says, the judgment that I made doubtful but the fact that I experience cannot doubt. The only evidence that I have to say that I exist because I think. It is mind that thinks therefore, I am sure that I am mind. What gives us real knowledge is not senses but the intellect. In other words, your conclusion may wrong but the fact that you experience is not wrong because, it exists so it is not doubtful. As an example when you see something you make judgment. So that judgment may doubtful but the fact that you see is not doubtful.

1. If al1 my beliefs about the world are doubtful, is there any truth which can be absolutely certain? Yes. Even if all of my experience is an illusion, it cannot be doubted that the experience is taking place. And this means that I, the experiencer, must exist.
2. Since the only evidence I have that I exist is that I am thinking (experiencing), then it is also absolutely certain that I am a thing that thinks (experiences), that is, a mind.
3. Since I am not certain (yet) that the physical world (including my body) exists, but I am certain that I exist, it follows that I am not my body. Therefore, I know with certainty that I am only a mind.
4. I am much more certain of my mind's existence than my body's. It might seem that in fact we know physical things through the senses with greater certainty than we know something intangible like the mind. But the wax experiment demonstrates that the senses themselves know nothing, and that only the intellect truly knows physical things. It follows that the mind itself is known with greater certainty than anything that we know through the senses.[[61]](#footnote-61)

After first and the second meditation the third meditation itself discussed and proofs that God exists. Whereas he said, the ideas that I have born with, is not my ideas but somebody else’s ideas. We have mystical image or idea of God which anybody accepts. So, there should be a God but what that God is a different story. But the fact that there is God or perfect Being should be accepted. Therefore, God as a perfect Being we conceive but that idea cannot come from us, it is only from God alone.

1. Every idea must be caused, and the cause must be as real as the idea. If I have any idea of which I cannot be the cause, then something besides me must exist.
2. All ideas of material reality could have their origin within me. But the idea of God, an infinite and perfect being, could not have originated from within me, since I am finite and imperfect.
3. I have an idea of God, and it can only have been caused by God. Therefore God exists.[[62]](#footnote-62)

From this fourth meditation I wanted to say or emphasize that God is non deceiver. So, you see in this meditation, God is non deceiver because He is perfect. Therefore, if I use my faculty of judgment properly only I make no mistakes because, it comes from God. Further he says, when you do not the truth even in freedom you say that you know without knowing the truth. As a result of that you do mistakes. If you do not know the truth do not say that you know. The better way to say that is, I believe or I think etc.

1. Only an imperfect (less than perfectly good) being could practice deliberate deception. Therefore, God is no deceiver.
2. Since my faculty of judgment comes from God, I can make no mistake as long as 1 use it properly. But it is not an infinite faculty; I make mistakes when J judge things that I don't really know.
3. God also gave me free will, which is infinite and therefore extends beyond my finite intellect. This is why it is possible to deceive myself: J am free to jump to conclusions or to proclaim as knowledge things that I don't know with absolute certainty.
4. I therefore know now that if I know something with absolute certainty (clearly and distinctly), then I cannot be mistaken, because God is no deceiver. The correct way to proceed is to avoid mistakes and limit my claims to knowledge to those things I know clearly and distinctly.[[63]](#footnote-63)

3.3 Immanuel Kant

Although Kant thought that morality needs God if what it requires is ultimately to be achieved, he did not think that moral requirements lack force without God. He says, “Not be understood that the assumption of the existence of God is necessary as the ground of all obligation in general for there are obligations which rest ‘solely on the autonomy of reason itself’.”[[64]](#footnote-64) But the second form of the moral argument takes a different line. The reason for acting morally is that one ought to act morally to who associates with Kant. According to writers like Kant, he will not be doing his duty for the right reason. On this account, therefore it would be quite wrong to suppose that one can only justify adherence to moral principles on the assumption that God exists as a rewarded of moral behavior. In short, “You ought because you ought, and whether or not God exists is beside the point. Or as Kant put it; the first proposition of morality is that to have moral worth an action must be done from duty.”[[65]](#footnote-65)

Yet, as others have pointed out this line of thinking is profoundly unsatisfactory. Indeed, it can be considered that there is an important distinction between someone who is say, legitimately charitable and someone who only practices a show of charity in order to win a reputation. For, if someone asks why he should or should not do something it makes perfectly good sense to appeal to something that the questioner needs. And this is precisely what yet another major tradition of moral thinking has argued. For by paying attention to what people need one is able to give them reasons for their behavior, or for the behavior one recommends to them, which do not necessarily involve reference to God. Even if we reject the appeal to duty, we can still make sense of acting morally independently of belief in God. And we can do so with regards to what people need. For example, we should strive to be just. This is the common moral principle. For this we do not need to refer to God. People have reason to be moral. Temperance and courage are the traditional virtues, but we do not need to refer to God in order to give people good reason to be moderate and courageous. In this sense, therefore we can indeed give reason for behaving morally which does not refer to belief in God. And for this reason, we are bound to reject the second form of the moral argument. Even if God does not exist, there is reason to be moral.

However morality may not give us reason to believe in God, but it still remains possible that there would be no morality without God. “Why do people think that evil should lead us to conclude that there is no God? As we have seen, they often suppose that, if God exist, then God is morally good. And they believe that evil gives us grounds for concluding that there is morally good God (or non that is also omnipotent and omniscient).”[[66]](#footnote-66) If I take it an example that a scientist is trying to discover how best to cure the certain illness. He discovers a cure and declares that God is irrelevant to the concerns of the scientist. In this case, one can do science without presupposing the existence of God. But if it is not true that God exists as creator of the universe. For if that is the case then science depends on God in at least two ways. The data studied by scientists will owe their existence to God. And the same will be true of the scientists who study the data. We can find the same things in the moralists. Even though moral judgments need not by themselves presuppose or imply the existence of God, it is also independent of God, “For it implies that whether an action is right or wrong maybe decided by reference to an independent criterion of judgment, requiring no appeal to theistic premises. Thus even if God does exist, His existence can make no difference to the moral situation.”[[67]](#footnote-67) In this case what we are and what we do will depend on God as the cause of the fact that we are able to do things. Like the argument from experience, the argument from morality is not enough to show that it is more reasonable than not believe in God. The argument from the morality holds that morality requires the existence of God and that may in some sense be true. But whether or not it is true, remains unproved by the argument itself and must, at best be assumed by Argument.

Conclusion

In this last chapter of my tutorial I have given some of the ideas are from the modern thinkers. Since there are some people who live without any idea about the existence of God, I hope that my research will enrich their hearts and minds to have some sort of knowledge regarding the existence of God. In the special manner it is very easy to understand, ‘if there is no God or if He does not exist’ philosophers may not be able to continue their philosophical research. Because, when the philosophy was not able to give answers for some question, from there the faith or religion started to give answers. Thereby, this chapter will helpful, meaningful and fruitful for all the people who read this chapter and this chapter may help them to have deep faith in God and that faith will lead them to a happy life on this earth.

CONCLUSION

We find in the history there are some philosophers who had given some sort of proofs regarding the existence of God, but still for all, the arguments are carried on to date, to inquire whether God exists or not. In the research I have done, I have tried extensively to establish the existence of God with some of the powerful theories of some major philosophers whose thoughts have chosen for my effort. When one speaks of the proof of divine existence, one has got to accept the fact that the proof of God also depends on subjective experience and definitions since the importance of proof is relied, by different people depends, on different scales of their own measurements. It is not everybody who needs the proofs to believe the existence of God. Yet, there are others who refuse to take anything as proofs when they have personal reasons to hold Atheism.

Therefore, my main purpose of doing this research is to propose some reliable ideas regarding the existence of God to the people who deny His existence. Here, I have systematically arranged the chapters of this work and through all the chapters I have tried to explain clearly the existence of God. So, I think that my research will help the people to understand the thoughts of the philosophers, I have considered here for, I have clearly arranged their theories with examples. I hope that my efforts is successful

As a student of philosophy I understand that we do not need to look into new answers to demonstrate the existence of God but what we need is assimilation of the theories that have already been established in the history. There can be some defects with regard to the certain dimensions of these methods, but we cannot come to an absolute negativity to say that God does not exist. A reasonable mind can perceive the valid logic that is contained in the arguments of these great thinkers or philosophers. It would be irrational to say at once that God’s existence is falsehood.

I too have personally attempted in my own meditation to experience God. I was able; hence it has given me my faith in God. I know that there is God who is eternal, self-existent, lovable, creative, and acts as protector of all created realities.

This topic is very vast. Hence, the theories and arguments have to be understood well. It leads to true appreciation of the work of the philosophers and their unique contributions. The popular view is that most of the philosophers have lost their faith or some do not believe the existence of God. This looks a fallacy to me. Even the secular philosophers have attempted to deal the inquiry of the existence of God. It shows that the question of the presence of a Divine power is a nagging issue of those who want to practice the trade of serious thinking of the realities of the universe.

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