

The Five Ways, Plus Two

Arguments to Prove the Existence of God



The First Way

1. In the world we see that some things are in motion, which Aristotle defined as something going from potentiality to actuality.
2. Anything that goes from potentiality to actuality is brought to actuality by something that is actual. In other words, anything that moves is moved by another, which is itself moved by another, and so on.
3. There cannot be an infinite regress of movers.
4. There must be a first mover, and this we call God.

The Second Way

1. In the world we observe an order of efficient causes and their effects.
2. Each effect has an efficient cause, which itself has an efficient cause, and so on.
3. There cannot be an infinite regress of efficient causes.
4. There must be a first efficient cause, and this we call God.

The Third Way

1. In the world we see that things are generated and corrupted, and consequently they have the possibility to exist or not to exist (i.e., they are contingent).
2. It is impossible for contingent things to exist always, because if something has the possibility not to exist, then at one time it will not exist.
3. If everything has the possibility not to exist, then there could have been at one time nothing in existence.
4. If this were true, then even now there would be nothing in existence, because something can't come from nothing.

5. There must be something which doesn't have the possibility not to exist (i.e., it is necessary).

6. If more than one necessary thing exists, each thing either has its necessity caused by another or not.

7. There cannot be an infinite regress in the causes of necessity, for the same reason as in the case of efficient causes.

8. There must be a being that has its necessity of itself and causes the necessity of others, and this we call God.

Alternate Form of the Third Way

1. In the world we see that things are dependent on something else for their existence.
2. Each thing depends on something else, which itself depends on something else, and so on.
3. There cannot be an infinite regress of dependence.
4. There must be something independent, existing without needing anything else, and this we call God.

Gottfried Leibniz and the Principle of Sufficient Reason



Leibniz' Cosmological Argument

1. Any contingent fact about the world must have an explanation. (PSR)
2. It is a contingent fact that there are any contingent things.
3. The fact that there are contingent things must have an explanation.
4. The fact that there are contingent things can't be explained by any contingent things.
5. The fact that there are contingent things must be explained by something which is not contingent.
6. There is a necessary being.

The Kalam Argument

1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. The universe has a cause.

The Fourth Way

1. In the world we see that things are more or less good, more or less true, more or less beautiful, etc.
2. “More” and “less” are predicated of different things according to their resemblance to a maximum, just as a thing is said to be hotter insofar as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest.
3. There must exist something which is truest, best, most beautiful, and consequently most full of being, for those things that are greatest in truth are greatest in being, as Aristotle writes in the second book of his *Metaphysics*.
4. Since the maximum in any genus is the cause of everything in that genus (as fire, which is the maximum heat, is the cause of heat in all hot things), there must exist some maximum being which is for all things the cause of their being, their goodness, their beauty and every other perfection, and this we call God.

The Ontological Argument

1. God is that than which nothing greater can be thought.
2. To exist both in the mind and in reality is greater than to exist only in the mind.
3. If that than which nothing greater can be thought exists in the mind alone, the very being than which nothing greater can be thought is one than which a greater can be thought. But obviously this is impossible.
4. Hence, there is no doubt that there exists a being than which nothing greater can be thought, and it exists both in the mind and in reality.

The Fifth Way

1. In the world we see that unintelligent things—e.g., molecules, cells, plants and animals—act for a purpose, always behaving in the same way to obtain a specific result. Everything has a final cause, i.e., a reason for its existence.
2. Clearly these things achieve their ends not by chance but by design. (Purpose and reason presuppose intelligence. Repeated behaviors preclude chance.)
3. Whatever lacks intelligence cannot move towards an end unless it is directed there by an intelligent being, just as an arrow is aimed at its target by the archer.
4. Therefore some intelligent being exists by whom all molecules, cells, plants, animals, and other unintelligent things are directed to their ends, and this we call God.

Please note: The Fifth Way is NOT the same as the arguments of Intelligent Design or Directed Evolution. The latter are about “how,” whereas the former is about “why.”

The Way of Conscience

1. Everyone, even an atheist or moral relativist, would agree that personal conscience imposes a binding obligation.
2. From where does conscience get such absolute authority?
5 possibilities:
 - a) from nature (below me)
 - b) from myself (equal to me)
 - c) from society (equal to me)
 - d) from a superior being (above me but not absolute)
 - e) from God (above me and absolute)
3. The most reasonable answer is e).

Another refutation of a) is that if moral obligation came from nature through evolution, there would be no evolutionary advantage in sacrifice or taking care of the old or defective.

Moreover, evolution regards appearance and behavior but has nothing to do with intent.

Since morality is greatly affected by intent, evolution can't explain it.

Nature is about the way things are; morality is about the way things ought to be. The very concept of "ought" requires an explanation outside of nature.

The Way of Desire

1. We have certain innate and natural desires: food, water, clothing, shelter, security, love, a sense of belonging, comfort, sex, pleasure, etc.
2. For every natural desire we have, there exists something that can fulfill it. We may not possess the thing desired, but that thing certainly exists. Otherwise we wouldn't desire it.
3. Our deepest natural desire is for perfect happiness, which nothing and no one in this world, not even ourselves, can give us.
4. It is only reasonable to suppose that something exists somewhere that can satisfy our deepest desire. Furthermore, why would all of our other natural desires have an existing object, while our deepest natural desire has a non-existent object?
5. The existent object of our deepest natural desire is God.

Is Atheism Reasonable?

Faith Is Reasonable!



I'm one with the force

And

The force is with me.

Pascal's Wager

		Existence	
		No	Yes
Conduct	Righteous	Oh Well	Whew
	Sinful	Fun (short-term)	Damn (eternal)

The Agnostic's Prayer

The Weak Believer's Prayer