

What is that called Philosophy of Religion?

The philosophical study of religion is primarily focused upon three areas:

▶ **The existence of God**

- ▶ How is god/God to be conceived?
- ▶ What is the nature of God?
- ▶ Can reason establish that there is a god/God?
- ▶ Are there any reasons, apart from religious faith itself, to believe in the existence of God?

▶ **Rationality and of Religious Belief**

▶ **The Problem of Evil.**

Two central questions

- ▶ What does it mean to talk of, or believe in, God?
 - ▶ Is talk about God talk about something that exists independently of us? Or a way of talking about life?
 - ▶ Does 'God exists' state something that can be true or false? Or express an attitude?
- ▶ Does God exist?
 - ▶ Can we answer this question by argument?

The main question

- ▶ Is there a good justification for believing in the existence of God (or for not believing)?
- ▶ To say that one is justified in believing something is just to say that *I have good reason and argument (and or explanation) to believe it*
- ▶ **Theoretical reasons**
- ▶ Practical reasons
- ▶ Explanation

Terminology

Theist: believes there is a God

Atheist: believes there is *no* God

Agnostic: hasn't even thought about it

Fideist (Extreme Fideism): Sin has damaged our ability to reason, ignore reason. Moderate fideism: faith goes 'beyond' reason, but doesn't oppose it.

Deist: affirms the existence of God, but deny that God has revealed himself as it is claimed by the religions, no intervention

Pantheist: God is identical with the cosmos

Panentheist: God in World or world in God

Open Theist: God exists while changing by man's will and action

Process Theist: God exists while changing in the process time

One Argument to Avoid

- ▶ Faith and Revelation, scripture

- ▶ We want justification

- ▶ And you are free to argue based on the reasons or explanations:

- ▶ **Induction, Deduction, Inference to the Best Explanation, Analogy**

A priori vs.

A posteriori arguments

- **A Posteriori Arguments:**
 - An a posteriori argument has at least one premise which is contingent. It has at least one premise that is a question of fact.
 - Examples: the Cosmological and Teleological arguments for the existence of God
- **A priori arguments:**
 - Have absolutely no premises that are a question of fact.
 - Composed entirely of a priori claims.
 - **An a priori claim:** true or false in virtue of the meaning of it's words alone.
- The ontological argument is an a priori argument...

Reason and Faith

▶ Reason:

- ▶ Human intellect abilities
- ▶ Our capacity to form beliefs for good reasons, on the basis of evidence: Empirical or Rational.

▶ Faith:

- ▶ A set of beliefs at least some of which are not supported by evidence; faith goes beyond available evidence. Faith is a gift of God- supernatural.

Reason and Faith

▶ **Natural Theology**

- ▶ The study of God, His attributes and His relation to the world.
- ▶ Beliefs are established by reason working independently of any revelation.

▶ **Revealed Theology or Dogmatic Theology**

- ▶ A belief that is mandatory for members of a particular religion

Belief-that

- ▶ Standard analysis: content, attitude
- ▶ Content: what the person believes, given by a proposition
 - ▶ E.g. 'He believes that *elephants are grey.*'
- ▶ Belief-that aims at truth:
 - ▶ To believe that p is to believe that p is true.

Belief in

- ▶ 'I believe him' =
 - ▶ 'I believe *that* what he says is true'
 - ▶ 'I believe *that* he is trustworthy/sincere'
- ▶ 'I believe in God' = 'I believe *that* God exists'?
- ▶ 'I believe in love'
- ▶ Not belief-that (no truth claim), but faith, trust, commitment

Faith and Reason



God in Faith:

Believing in, Blik, Worship, Social Practices ,
Conceptual Coherence , Faith

God in Reason:

Necessary Being, Uncaused Being, Perfect
Being, First Mover, The Greatest Being, The
Real, The Absolute, The Mind, The Intelligence,
Personal and Impersonal God

Religious belief

- ▶ Does belief in God presuppose belief that God exists?
 - ▶ Yes: you can't believe in a person if you think they don't exist
 - ▶ No: you don't have to believe that love exists to believe in love
- ▶ What is more basic in religious belief? Should belief-that be analyzed as (really) belief-in or vice-versa?
- ▶ **Basic Belief...**

To Justify or to Believe



1. To justify God

1. Argument, **Natural Theology**

1. Theoretical Arguments, **Evidentialism**

1. Ontological Argument
2. Cosmological Argument
3. New Kalam Cosmological Argument
4. Fine Tuned Argument

2. Practical Arguments

1. Moral Arguments
2. Pascal's Wager Arguments
3. Practical Rationality Arguments
4. Religious Experience Arguments
5. Argument from Miracle

2. Explanations

2. To Believe in God; Reveled Theology, Fideism, Dogmatic Theology