

# 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