

## The Possibility or Impossibility of Proving the Existence of God through Philosophical Arguments from the Perspective of Faith-Defenders and Rationalists

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### ABSTRACT

The discussion on the possibility or impossibility of proving the existence of God through philosophical arguments has always been one of the most challenging topics in the philosophy of religion. This study, using a comparative philosophical analysis method and referencing primary sources from both Western and Islamic philosophy traditions, examines the "Fideism" and "Rationalism" approaches in proving the existence of God. Fideists, emphasizing the inherent limitations of human reason and the danger of reducing God to an abstract concept, argue that philosophical proofs are not only incomplete but may also lead to religious skepticism. In contrast, rationalists, by presenting arguments such as the arguments of the righteous (Ibn Sina and Mulla Sadra), the ontological argument (Anselm), and the cosmological argument (Aquinas, al-Kindi, and Averroes), demonstrate that philosophical logic is capable of proving the existence of God as the "Necessary Being." However, these arguments must be reinterpreted in a constructive interaction with religious and revelatory experiences to avoid reducing God to an abstract concept. This study suggests that contemporary philosophy of religion should move beyond the dichotomy of "reason and faith" toward a more integrated model that benefits both the capacities of rational argumentation and the depth of religious experiences. This investigation is necessary because the answer to this question not only impacts theological discussions but also directly influences our understanding of the relationship between reason and faith, the structure of ethics, and even intercultural discourses. Data were collected using a library-based method and evaluated through critical content analysis to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each approach.

**KEYWORDS:** Possibility of proving God, philosophical arguments, fideism, rationalism, reason and revelation, religious experience, ontological argument.

### INTRODUCTION

The discussion on the possibility or impossibility of proving the existence of God through philosophical arguments is one of the most fundamental issues in the philosophy of religion, with widespread implications for theology, ethics, and the humanities. Since ancient times, philosophers, theologians, and scholars have used logical and philosophical reasoning in an attempt to address the issue of God's existence. These efforts have led to the formulation of numerous arguments, each approaching the matter from a distinct perspective. However, this question remains contentious: Can God's existence truly be proven through philosophical

arguments? Or is the nature of God such that it lies beyond the cognitive abilities of human reason, and any attempt to prove it is doomed to failure?

This debate can be examined from several angles. First, the question must be addressed: Is proving the existence of God necessary in the first place? If the answer is yes, what reasons justify this necessity? Second, various viewpoints on the possibility or impossibility of proving God's existence must be considered. In this article, the necessity of proving God's existence will be analyzed from philosophical, religious, and ethical perspectives. Then, the views of fideists, who emphasize the limitations of human reason and the role of faith and revelation, will be explored. Following that, the views of rationalists will be presented, and their philosophical arguments, such as the ontological, cosmological, and arguments of the righteous, will be analyzed.

The research method of this article is based on comparative analysis. Therefore, using primary sources from both Western and Islamic philosophy, various views on the possibility or impossibility of proving God's existence will be examined. Data were gathered through a library-based method and evaluated through critical content analysis to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each approach. This comprehensive examination helps us gain a better understanding of the issue and provides a foundation for intercultural and interfaith dialogue in this domain. The ultimate goal is to move beyond the traditional dichotomy of "reason and faith" and towards an integrated model that benefits from both the capacities of rational argumentation and the depth of religious experiences.

## **1. The Necessity of Proving the Existence of God**

The question of proving the existence of God is one of the most fundamental and important philosophical inquiries that has occupied human thought for centuries. This question is not merely a theoretical and abstract debate; it has a profound impact on both the individual and social lives of human beings. To understand the necessity of this discussion, we must address the question: Is proving the existence of God necessary for humanity? The significance of answering this question lies in the fact that if proving the existence of God has no effect on human life, the effort to do so may seem pointless. However, with a bit of reflection, it becomes clear that belief in the existence of God not only influences human thinking, but also shapes values, ethics, and even the structure of societies. In the following, we will examine the necessity of proving the existence of God from various perspectives.

### **A) Philosophical Necessity**

From a philosophical perspective, proving the existence of God as the origin of existence serves as a foundation for many philosophical discussions, such as ontology and epistemology. Philosophers have long sought to prove the existence of God through rational arguments as the first cause and the unmoved mover.

Plato: In his work *Timaeus*, he refers to a god named "Demiurge" (the creator of the world), who created the world based on eternal ideas. He believes that the material world is a reflection of the world of ideas, and the Demiurge, as the creator, established this connection (Plato, 1380: 29-30).

Aristotle: In his *Metaphysics*, he introduces the concept of the unmoved mover. He argues that every motion in the world requires a mover, and this chain of movers ends with one unmoved mover. This unmoved mover is God (Aristotle, 1385: 399).

In Islamic philosophy, thinkers such as Ibn Sina and Mulla Sadra have also proven the existence of God as the Necessary Being.

These philosophical efforts show that proving the existence of God is not only a theoretical issue but also a foundation for understanding the world and humanity's place within it.

### **B) Religious Necessity**

In Abrahamic religions, belief in God as the Creator of the world is the basis of faith and religious practice. Sacred texts consistently invite humans to reflect on the creation of the world and the proof of God's existence. The Qur'an contains numerous verses that call upon humans to contemplate the creation of the world. For example, consider this verse: "*Indeed, in the creation of the heavens and the earth, and in the alternation of the night and the day, are signs for those of understanding.*" (Al-Imran, 190).

This verse demonstrates that knowing God through contemplation of the world is considered part of religious faith. In the Christian Bible, in the Book of Genesis, the creation of the world by God is described. This sacred text affirms the existence of God as the Creator of the world and invites humans to worship and obey Him (Genesis, Chapter 1).

Thus, from a religious perspective, proving the existence of God is not only a philosophical issue but also a part of faith and religious practice.

### **C) Ethical Necessity**

Some philosophers consider the existence of God as essential to ensuring the moral order of the world. They believe that without God, ethics and justice have no meaning. Kant, in his *Critique of Practical Reason*, refers to the moral argument, asserting that the existence of God is necessary as the guarantor of justice in the world. Without God, the reward and punishment of human actions in the afterlife would be meaningless (Kant, 1389: 158). In Islamic philosophy, the existence of God is also seen as the guarantor of justice and reward in the world. For example, Mulla Sadra in his *Asfar al-Arba'a* addresses this issue and believes that the existence of God guarantees the justice and moral order of the world (Sadra, 1428 AH: 6/123).

These views demonstrate that proving the existence of God is necessary not only from a philosophical and religious perspective but also from an ethical standpoint.

In conclusion, we can say that proving the existence of God is necessary from various perspectives. From a philosophical standpoint, this issue forms the basis for understanding the world and humanity's place in it. From a religious perspective, belief in God is the foundation of faith and religious practice. From an ethical standpoint, God's existence guarantees justice and moral order in the world.

Now, considering the necessity of proving the existence of God, is it possible to prove God's existence rationally and philosophically? In answering this question, there are two main viewpoints to consider.

## **2\_ The Rejection of Philosophical Arguments for God's Existence from the Perspective of Fideists**

Fideism refers to a viewpoint that sees belief in God as beyond rational arguments and philosophical proofs. Fideists argue that using philosophical proofs in the realm of religious beliefs can harm and damage the convictions of the faithful. As a result, they either disregard or limit the role of reason in proving religious beliefs, especially the existence of God. In the book *Reason and Religious Belief*, fideism is defined as a viewpoint that does not consider the systems of religious beliefs as subjects of rational evaluation and measurement (Patterson, 2004: 78). This group believes that faith in God goes beyond rational and philosophical reasoning. They argue that efforts to prove God's existence through philosophical arguments

could lead to a reduction in spirituality or distance from the truth of faith. They hold that knowledge of God should be obtained through faith, religious experience, intuition, revelation, and traditions, not through rational and philosophical proofs.

Fideists oppose using philosophical arguments for proving God's existence for several reasons and, instead of relying on rational arguments, they resort to other methods to prove God's existence.

### **A) Reasons for Fideism**

#### **1\_ The Limitations of Human Reason**

Fideists believe that human reason, due to its inherent limitations, is incapable of fully comprehending the existence of God. They argue that God, as an infinite being, is beyond the understanding of human finite reason. Søren Kierkegaard, in his book *Fear and Trembling*, emphasizes that faith is a leap toward the unknown and requires commitment and courage (Kierkegaard, 1985: 16). He further claims that if we could definitively prove God's existence and His love, faith in God would become impossible. Even if our efforts to prove God's existence were successful, the desired outcome (knowledge of God) would not be achieved but would be destroyed instead (Patterson, 2004: 80). In other words, proving God's existence rationally destroys the nature of faith.

According to Kierkegaard, faith means nothing without taking risks. One must take the risk and dive into faith. This requires courage and sincerity because faith must be lived with complete conviction and should not turn into something else, like the tasteless rationalism of Hegel (Kierkegaard, 1985: 16).

Blaise Pascal, the French philosopher and mathematician, offers a unique perspective on the relationship between faith and reason. He argues that belief in God is perceived through the heart (the emotions), not through reason. Pascal's famous idea is encapsulated in the phrase: "The heart has its reasons that reason knows nothing of" (Patterson, 2004: 70). This is one of the main pillars of his religious philosophy. He also believes that attempting to prove God's existence through reason is not only futile but may lead to a misunderstanding of the divine nature (Rahmati, 2006: 9, 10).

In Islamic thought, there are also fideists who believe that philosophical arguments are insufficient for proving God's existence and cannot lead to true knowledge of God. They argue that these arguments, due to the inherent limitations of human reason, cannot fully prove God's existence. One of the most significant critiques of rational arguments for God's existence made by fideists is the fallibility of human reason. Critics argue that since humans can make errors in understanding the truth, rational arguments aimed at proving the existence of a supernatural being like God cannot be fully trusted. They point out that the history of philosophy is full of theories that seemed valid at the time but were later proven false. Therefore, how can we be sure that the arguments for proving God's existence are immune from such a fate? Allama Iqbal Lahori, in reference to philosophical proofs, world-knowledge, goal-oriented knowledge, and existential knowledge, states:

"The true movement of thought embodies the search for the 'Absolute.' However, since they are seen as logical proofs, there is a fear that they may be subject to serious critique" (Lahori, n.d.: 35).

Ibn Taymiyyah, a prominent Sunni scholar known for his Salafi leanings, was also strongly opposed to using philosophy and reason to prove God's existence. He believed that the only legitimate source for knowing God is the Quran and Sunnah. In his book *Dar' Ta'arud al-'Aql wa al-Naql*, he critiques philosophy and reason and argues that human reason, due to its

inherent limitations, cannot fully comprehend God's existence. He states that human reason alone cannot reach the knowledge of God, and only through revelation can we know God (Ibn Taymiyyah, 1991: 1/123).

The group that Ibn Rushd refers to as the "Hashwiyyah" are those who believe that the knowledge of God's existence is only possible through hearing and transmission (i.e., religious texts and narrations). This group holds that faith in God, which people are obligated to have, must be obtained through the lawgiver (the Prophet or religious sources), and individuals should only believe in and affirm what is conveyed through the law (Ibn Rushd, 1998: 101). In other words, they believe that the knowledge of God and faith in Him does not require intellectual or philosophical arguments, but should rely solely on religious sources and credible transmissions.

In Islamic mysticism, there is also the idea of the impossibility of proving the existence of God through rational or philosophical arguments. They place greater importance on the intuitive and spiritual path to knowing God. Rumi says: "The intellect, in its explanation, like a donkey, falls into the mud / The explanation of love and passion is told only by love" (Rumi, n.d.: 14). Imam Muhammad Ghazali also emphasizes the importance of religious experience and the purification of the soul for the knowledge of God. He believes that true knowledge of God can only be attained through faith and piety (Ghazali, 2011: 1/86). That is, the true knowledge of God is only possible through faith and piety. He argues that religious experience and soul purification—cleansing the heart and spirit from worldly impurities—are fundamental ways to approach God. Given the need for brevity and to avoid excessive discourse, we will limit ourselves to these sayings.

Overall, it can be said that the idea of the impossibility of philosophical proofs for the existence of God exists both among Western fideists and Islamic fideists. These groups, considering the limitations of human reason in understanding the existence of God, emphasize auditory knowledge (transmissions) and intuitive knowledge (inner experiences). They believe that reason alone cannot lead to complete and true knowledge of God, and only through revelation and inner experience can one attain this knowledge.

## **2. The Dangers of Philosophical and Rational Arguments**

Fideists believe that the use of philosophical and rational arguments to prove the existence of God carries significant risks. They argue that these methods can lead to skepticism and doubt in faith. Such an approach can be found both among Western fideists and Islamic fideists. In Western theology, there are various perspectives on the dangers of philosophical proofs for the existence of God. To avoid an extended discussion, we will only refer to a few of these perspectives, including the views of Kierkegaard, Pascal, and Cohen.

Kierkegaard believes that the attempt to prove the existence of God through reason may diminish the role of faith and weaken the personal relationship with God. He states that those who explore the truth of religion and God through rational proofs forget that, in doing so, their existence as human beings is placed at risk (Patterson, 2004: 79-80). Pascal, whose theories are also well-known, is generally opposed to the rationalist approach in theology. He believes that rationalism may lead to a reduction in the importance of faith and an over-reliance on human concepts. He famously stated: "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, not the God of philosophers and scholars" (Rahmati, 2006: 9-10). This quote illustrates his distinction between the God known through faith and personal experience, and the God understood through reason and philosophy. The God of the prophets is a tangible and concrete God, whereas the God sought by philosophical proofs is nothing more than an abstract and mental

concept (Ibid.). Cohen, as one of the influential figures in the philosophy of religion, believes that rational arguments for the existence of God, although they may be philosophically valid, do not affect a person's religious life and cannot guide them to a more devout way of living. "If ontological, cosmological, and teleological arguments are valid and ultimately prove the existence of a being with no superior existence, or the first cause or the organizer, they will not affect an individual's religious life, nor can they guide a believer to a more religious way of life" (Akbari, 2007: 51).

In the Islamic context, many thinkers have warned against the dangers of using philosophical proofs to establish the existence of God. These thinkers argue that relying solely on rational arguments can lead to misunderstandings and limitations in understanding the divine truth. Imam Abu Hamid al-Ghazali, one of the greatest Ash'ari theologians, was strongly opposed to using philosophy to prove the existence of God. In his book *Tabafut al-Falasifah* (The Incoherence of the Philosophers), he critiques the methods and arguments used by philosophers to prove the existence of God and other theological issues. He believes that philosophers, especially figures like Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Al-Farabi, use rational and philosophical methods in their attempts to prove the existence of God and other religious concepts, which may lead to errors and mistakes. In the fourth issue of his book, he seeks to demonstrate that these methods, namely those of the philosophers, not only fail to reveal the divine truth but may also lead to skepticism and doubt in faith (Ghazali, n.d.: 155-159). Rumi also hints at this idea: "The feet of the rationalists are wooden / the wooden feet are rigid and disobedient" (Rumi, n.d.: 16).

The *Fuqaha* (theologians) also have a particular view regarding the role of reason and philosophy in understanding the truth. This school of thought, led by Mirza Mahdi Isfahani, argues that the conventional and logical reason used in human sciences lacks intrinsic validity and cannot be considered a legitimate tool for understanding divine truths. Therefore, the *Fuqaha* not only oppose the use of philosophy as a rational science to understand the truth but also consider reasoning and intellectual activity as a soul-driven and darkening act, an obstacle to innate understanding and a great veil against divine revelation. Mirza Mahdi Isfahani says: "The greatest veil to knowledge is the veil of reason" (Shakerin, 2023: 90). According to the *Fuqaha*, the validity of reason is limited to innate, luminous reason. This innate reason, which is of the divine light, has very limited and illuminating functions. In contrast, logical reasoning, syllogisms, and philosophical deductions, which are the products of soul-driven and dark activities, are considered invalid from their perspective. The *Fuqaha* argue that philosophy and even mysticism, due to their mixture with human ideas, do not align with divine revelation and, thus, are eclectic and misleading in religious discussions (Ibid.).

Given the need for brevity and avoiding an extended discussion, it can be said that a group of thinkers, both in the Western world and in the Islamic world, have warned about the dangers of using philosophical proofs to establish the existence of the Necessary Being. These thinkers believe that relying solely on rational and philosophical arguments, without considering the innate and revelatory aspects of faith, may lead not only to weakening religious convictions but also to creating doubt and uncertainty in authentic religious beliefs. Therefore, they emphasize that the knowledge of God should be based primarily on heartfelt faith and credible transmission (Quran and Sunnah), rather than merely on philosophical reasoning.

### **A) Critique of the Viewpoint of Fideists**

1. **Inability to Prove Objectively:** One of the main critiques against the fideists' viewpoint is the inability to prove faith objectively and universally. Fideists believe that the knowledge of God is acquired through personal and mystical experiences, but these experiences cannot be transferred or proven to others. This issue makes their viewpoint unconvincing to those who do not share such experiences.
2. **Risk of Relativism:** By emphasizing personal and mystical experiences, fideists may fall into relativism. If each individual reaches knowledge of God based on their own personal experiences, there could be different or even contradictory perceptions of God. This issue can lead to instability in religious beliefs.
3. **Failure to Address Rational Doubts:** By rejecting rational and philosophical arguments, fideists may struggle when confronted with rational doubts or criticisms. If someone asks them to prove the existence of God or respond to philosophical challenges, they may not be able to provide convincing answers.
4. **Dependence on Revelation and Tradition:** Fideists who emphasize revelation and tradition face the challenge of how to prove the validity of these sources. If someone does not believe in revelation or tradition, how can they be persuaded that these sources are valid?

#### **B) Limitations of the Fideist Viewpoint**

1. **Inability to Engage in Intercultural Dialogue:** Fideists, by emphasizing personal and mystical experiences, may face challenges in intercultural and interfaith dialogues. If each individual reaches knowledge of God based on their personal experiences, how can we achieve a common understanding and engage in constructive dialogue between different religions and sects?
2. **Dependence on Culture and Context:** Religious and mystical experiences may be influenced by the individual's cultural and social context. This results in different, sometimes contradictory, religious experiences among individuals. This dependence on culture and context can undermine the credibility of religious experiences.
3. **Inability to Critique or Examine Experiences:** If faith in God can only be attained through personal and mystical experiences, how can these experiences be critiqued or examined? Is it possible to provide criteria for distinguishing between valid and invalid experiences?

In conclusion, it can be stated that while the fideist viewpoint emphasizes faith, religious experience, revelation, and mysticism, it faces serious challenges and limitations. The inability to prove faith objectively, the risk of relativism, failure to address rational doubts, and dependence on revelation and tradition are some of the most significant criticisms against this viewpoint. To overcome these challenges, fideists need to combine their approach with rational and philosophical reasoning and engage in the critique and examination of religious experiences.

### **3. The Possibility of Proving the Existence of God from the Perspective of Rationalists**

Rationalists, a group of philosophers and theologians, believe that the existence of God can be proven through logical and philosophical arguments. This group, which opposes the fideists, believes that human reason is capable of understanding and proving the existence of God through logical and philosophical reasoning. The discussion of the possibility of proving God's existence is based on three foundations: conceptual, innate, and philosophical.

Before delving into the various perspectives on this matter, it is important to first clarify whether the existence of God is something possible or impossible. This question is crucial

because if God's existence is of the possible type, then a proof can be presented for it. However, if God's existence is of the impossible type, then the possibility of presenting a philosophical proof would be meaningless, as the proof of any thing depends on its possibility.

**Note:** It should be noted that when we speak of the possibility of God's existence here, we mean general possibility as opposed to impossibility, not possibility in the sense of poverty (dependent existence). In other words, when we say that the existence of God is possible, we do not mean that God, like contingent beings, requires a cause or is dependent on something outside of itself. Rather, what we mean is that God's existence does not involve any intrinsic impossibility and there is no contradiction in the concept of God's existence. This general possibility means that God's existence is not impossible and can be subjected to intellectual and philosophical inquiry. Therefore, the possibility of God's existence here refers to the absence of internal contradiction and the concept being conceivable, not the dependency or need for an external cause.

• **Innate Foundation:** The innate inclination of humans toward God is one of the most important reasons for the possibility of proving God's existence. This inclination has been observed throughout history and across all cultures. Allama Tabatabai, in his book *Usul al-Falsafah wa Ra'yi' al-Rialism* (Principles of Philosophy and the Method of Realism), believes that the discussion about God is an innate matter for humans, and if human nature had no way to prove or deny this matter, it would never have occurred to them. "The discussion about the God of the world is innate to human beings. If our nature had no way to prove or deny this matter, we would never have entertained such thoughts and ideas. Thus, this discussion is both correct and appropriate for us" (Tabatabai, 1390: 5/42).

This innate need indicates that not only is the existence of God possible, but it is also necessary and required. Therefore, the effort to prove God's existence is a natural and logical endeavor. This innate inclination manifests not only in religious beliefs but also in art, literature, and philosophy.

• **Conceptual Foundation:** The concept of God does not involve any logical impossibility, and therefore it is entirely possible. The concept we have of God is one that encompasses all perfections and has no deficiencies. God is defined as a necessary and independent existence whose existence is essential and not dependent on anything outside of itself. In philosophy, God is recognized as the necessary being (*wajib al-wujud*), meaning an existence whose non-existence is impossible, as its existence is intrinsic and necessary. This definition of God is clearly observed in philosophical texts, especially in the works of Islamic philosophers such as Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Mulla Sadra. For example, Avicenna in his book *al-Shifa* defines God as a necessary existence who possesses all perfections.

A logical examination of the concept of God shows that it has no internal contradiction. The existence of the necessary being means an existence whose non-existence is impossible because its existence is intrinsic and necessary. Furthermore, God's independence means that He is not dependent on anything outside of Himself, and His existence arises from within Himself. These characteristics make the concept of God entirely possible and understandable. This definition has been confirmed not only in Islamic philosophy but also in Western philosophy.

• **Philosophical Foundation:** Various philosophical proofs have been presented to prove the existence of God, showing that God's existence is not only possible but also provable. Cosmological arguments, ontological arguments, moral arguments, and natural arguments all indicate that proving the existence of God through philosophical reasoning is feasible. The

arguments provided by Western and Islamic philosophers and theologians themselves serve as evidence for the provability of God's existence. In philosophical terms, the occurrence of anything is the best proof of its possibility. This principle, expressed in philosophy by the phrase "*adell al-daleel ale imkan al-shay' wuku'uh*", shows that if something occurs in the real world, it is a strong reason for its possibility. Based on this principle, the very fact that philosophers have presented arguments for the proof of God's existence in their numerous works is itself strong evidence for the possibility of proving the existence of God.

Based on the above foundations, it can be concluded that the existence of God is of the possible type and involves no logical impossibility. Therefore, presenting a proof for the existence of God is not only possible but necessary.

### **A) Philosophical Proofs of God's Existence from the Perspective of Rationalists**

Philosophers and theologians, using logical and intellectual methods, have attempted to prove God's existence as a necessary being, creator, and administrator of the world. These efforts have led to the formulation of numerous proofs, each addressing the issue of God's existence from a different angle. These proofs can be broadly divided into two categories: *a priori* proofs, which are based on mental concepts and do not require experience, and *a posteriori* proofs, which are based on observation and the experience of the world.

Among Western arguments, the Ontological Argument, which relies on the definition of God as the most perfect being, the Cosmological Argument, which is based on the principle of causality, and the Teleological Argument, which emphasizes the order and purpose of the universe, are considered some of the most important arguments for proving God's existence. Each of these arguments, despite their logical strength, has faced critiques and challenges that have called into question their validity. On the other hand, in the tradition of Islamic philosophy, proofs such as the Argument of the Sincere (Burhan al-Sidqeen), the Argument from Motion (Burhan al-Hadath), and the Argument from Fitra (Natural Argument) have been proposed. These arguments, by combining philosophical and mystical concepts, have sought to prove God's existence in a coherent and convincing way. Philosophers such as Al-Farabi, Ibn Sina, Shihab al-Din Suhrawardi, Mulla Sadra, and Allama Tabatabai have all contributed new perspectives that have enriched these arguments.

In this discussion, in order to avoid excessive length, we will only examine two examples of arguments (one from the *a priori* category and the other from the *a posteriori* category) from both Western and Islamic thought. This approach allows us to analyze the strengths and challenges of each argument in greater depth.

In Western philosophy, we will examine the Ontological Argument (as an example of *a priori* arguments) and Cosmological Arguments (as examples of *a posteriori* arguments). In Islamic philosophy, we will analyze the Argument of the Sincere (as an example of *a priori* arguments) and the Argument from Motion (as an example of *a posteriori* arguments). In each case, we will discuss the logical strengths as well as the critiques and challenges that these arguments have faced. This analysis will not only help deepen our understanding of the philosophical proofs for God's existence, but it will also provide a foundation for inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue in this field.

## **1. Philosophical Arguments for the Existence of God from the Perspective of Western Rationalists**

### **A) The Ontological Argument**

The Ontological Argument is one of the most famous a priori arguments for the existence of God. This argument seeks to prove God's existence solely through the conceptual definition of God, without the need for sensory experience. The foundation of this argument is the idea that if God can be defined as a being than which nothing greater can be conceived, then existence must be an essential part of His nature, because a being that exists in reality is greater than one that exists only in the mind.

## Key Views

### 1. Anselm's Viewpoint:

Saint Anselm first presented the Ontological Argument in his book *Proslogion*. Although this argument was expressed by Anselm as a speech directed to God, it can be summarized as follows: If we define God as a being than which nothing greater can be conceived, then existence must be a part of this definition, because a being that exists in reality is greater than a being that exists only in the mind. In other words, the non-existence of God leads to a contradiction because, in that case, one could conceive of a being greater than God, one that exists both in the mind and in reality. (Anselm, 2007: 45-46)

Anselm's argument can be put into the form of a syllogism for clarity:

- Minor Premise: God is something than which nothing greater can be conceived;
- Major Premise: But something than which nothing greater can be conceived must exist not only in the mind and conception but also outside of it;
- Conclusion: Therefore, God exists not only in the mind but also outside of it.

### 2. Descartes' Viewpoint:

René Descartes, in his *Meditations on First Philosophy*, reformulated the Ontological Argument with an emphasis on the concept of perfection. He argued that since God is defined as the most perfect being, existence must be a part of His essence, because non-existence would be a flaw in His perfection. Descartes believed that the concept of God as a perfect being is innately present in the human mind. In the Third Meditation, he presents the idea that the notion of a perfect being cannot arise from the human mind, as humans are imperfect beings and cannot be the source of the idea of a perfect being. Therefore, this concept must have been placed in the human mind by God Himself. (Descartes, 1982: 63-64)

Descartes' argument, as presented in *Meditations on First Philosophy*, can be outlined as follows:

- Definition of God: God is defined as the most perfect being, possessing all perfections (including absolute power, absolute knowledge, and absolute goodness);
- Existence as a Perfection: Descartes considers existence to be one of the perfections. In other words, a being that exists is more perfect than one that does not exist;
- Necessity of God's Existence: If God is defined as the most perfect being, then existence must be an essential part of His essence, because non-existence would be a defect in His perfection.
- Conclusion: Therefore, God must exist, not only in the mind but also in reality.

### 4. Leibniz's Viewpoint:

Gottfried Leibniz, in completing the Ontological Argument, emphasized that for the argument to be valid, the logical possibility of God must first be proven. Leibniz argued that if God is defined as a perfect being, and this definition is free of contradictions, then God's existence is necessary. Further, he explores this argument in more detail:

In his *Monadology*, Leibniz argues that God's existence is proven both by the *a posteriori* and *a priori* arguments. He states: "Firstly, God, as the source and origin of all beings and possibilities,

or eternal truths, is necessary and essential due to the reality that exists in them. Secondly, if God is possible, meaning His definition does not entail a contradiction, His existence is necessary.” (Leibniz, 1996: 87-88)

Leibniz argues that before we can use the Ontological Argument to prove God's existence, we must first prove that the concept of God is logically possible. In other words, we must show that the definition of God as a perfect being is free from any internal contradictions. If this definition is contradictory, then it cannot be used to prove God's existence. Leibniz defines God as a being that possesses all perfections, including absolute power, knowledge, goodness, and existence. He argues that if this definition is free from contradiction, then God's existence is necessary, as His non-existence would imply a flaw in His perfection.

Unlike Anselm and Descartes, who focused more on the definition of God and His perfections, Leibniz emphasizes that the logical possibility of God must first be proven before anything else.

Nonetheless, the Ontological Argument, despite its logical strength, has always been subject to serious criticism. Due to its reliance on abstract concepts and lack of sensory experience, it has been challenged by many philosophers. However, it remains one of the most significant attempts to prove the existence of God through a priori reasoning.

The cosmological argument is one of the most important posteriori arguments for the existence of God. As one of the most significant philosophical arguments for God's existence, it has been presented in various forms. Due to the breadth of these arguments and to avoid lengthy discussion, the classical cosmological argument, presented by the Christian philosopher and theologian Thomas Aquinas, will be chosen as the primary example. This argument is based on fundamental concepts such as causality, motion, and the existence of contingent beings. The selection of this argument among other cosmological arguments is due to its fame, comprehensiveness, and ability to be applied to other cosmological arguments. Despite critiques such as the problem of infinite regress and the concept of the First Cause, the classical argument remains one of the strongest attempts to prove the existence of God. This argument has been examined and developed over time by various philosophers and theologians.

### **Thomas Aquinas' View:**

Thomas Aquinas presented five ways to prove the existence of God, three of which (the first, second, and third ways) are related to the cosmological argument. These three ways are:

1. **The Way of Motion:** The Way of Motion is one of the three primary arguments that Thomas Aquinas presents in the cosmological argument for the existence of God. This argument is based on the observation of motion in the world and its philosophical analysis. We will now examine this argument in more detail: Aquinas observes that all beings are in motion and change. He defines motion not only as physical and material displacement but as any change from potentiality to actuality. For example, the transformation of a seed into a tree or the change of an object from rest to motion are examples of motion. Every motion requires a mover. In other words, something that is in motion cannot move itself; it must be moved by something else. This principle is based on the concept of cause and effect: every effect (motion) requires a cause (a mover). This chain of motion (i.e., each mover itself is moved by another mover) cannot extend infinitely. If this chain were infinite, no motion would have ever begun, because every motion depends on a prior one, and without a starting point, no motion would exist. Since the chain of motion cannot extend infinitely, Aquinas concludes

that there must be a first unmoved mover. This first mover does not need another mover because it is the source of all motion. In other words, this first mover is the First Cause of all motion in the world. Aquinas identifies this first mover with God. He argues that this first mover must have qualities such as absolute power, absolute knowledge, and necessary existence, because only such a being could be the source of all motion in the world. Therefore, the first mover is God (Giesler, 1391: 248).

2. **The Way of Efficient Cause:** The Way of Efficient Cause is the second way that Thomas Aquinas presents in the cosmological argument for the existence of God. This argument is based on the principle of cause and effect and attempts to prove the existence of a first cause by analyzing the chain of causes. Aquinas observes that everything that exists has a cause. In other words, nothing comes into existence without a cause. This principle, known as the principle of causality, is one of the foundational principles of philosophy and science. This chain of causes (i.e., each cause itself is the effect of another cause) cannot extend infinitely. If this chain were infinite, then nothing would exist, because each cause depends on a prior cause, and without a starting point, no effect would exist. Since the chain of causes cannot extend infinitely, Aquinas concludes that there must be a first cause that itself is uncaused. This first cause does not require another cause because it is the origin of all causes and effects. In other words, this first cause is the First Cause of all beings in the world. Aquinas identifies this first cause with God. He argues that this first cause must have qualities such as absolute power, absolute knowledge, and necessary existence, because only such a being could be the origin of all causes and effects in the world. Therefore, the first cause is God (ibid, 249).

3. **The Way of Necessity and Contingency:** The Way of Necessity and Contingency is the third way that Thomas Aquinas presents in the cosmological argument for the existence of God. This argument is based on the distinction between possible beings and necessary beings and attempts to prove the existence of a necessary being by analyzing the existence of contingent beings. Aquinas observes that all the beings we know are contingent beings. Contingent beings are those whose existence depends on something else. In other words, they can either exist or not exist, and their existence is not necessary. For example, a tree, a human, or a star are all contingent beings because their existence depends on external conditions and causes. Contingent beings cannot exist by themselves because their existence depends on another being. If all beings were contingent, then there must be a being whose existence is necessary and not dependent on anything else. This being is called a necessary being. Since possible beings cannot exist on their own, Aquinas concludes that there must be a necessary being whose existence is intrinsic and not dependent on anything else. This necessary being is the source of the existence of all possible beings, and without it, no possible being could exist. Aquinas identifies this necessary being with God. Therefore, the necessary being is God (same).

In his cosmological argument, Thomas Aquinas attempts to prove the existence of God by using three main ways (the way of motion, the way of efficient causality, and the way of necessity and possibility). Aquinas argues that every motion requires a first mover, every cause requires a first cause, and possible beings require a necessary being. These chains and sequences cannot continue indefinitely, so there must be a first mover, a first cause, and a necessary being that is itself uncaused. Aquinas identifies this first mover, first cause, and necessary being with God and regards it as the source of all motion, causes, and possible beings. Despite challenges and critiques, this argument remains one of the strongest arguments in Western philosophy for proving the existence of God.

## 2. Philosophical Arguments for God's Existence from the Perspective of Islamic Rationalists

In Islamic philosophy, arguments for the existence of God can be classified, based on the method of reasoning, the reasoner (the one who argues), and the objective (the goal of the argument), as follows, drawing from the book *Asfar* by Mulla Sadra:

- **The way and goal are the same, but the reasoner is different:** In some arguments, the way and the goal are the same, but the reasoner is different. For example, in the argument from existence (the way) to God (the goal) performed by a human (the reasoner), this method could include various formulations of the argument from existence, such as those of Avicenna and Mulla Sadra.

- **The way and reasoner are the same, but the goal is different:** In some arguments, the way (method of reasoning) and the reasoner (the one who reasons) are the same, but the goal (the objective of the reasoning) is something else. For instance, in the argument from the existence of the soul to prove the existence of God, the soul is both the reasoner (since it is the subject of thought) and the way (because through analyzing the soul, we reach God), but the goal is to prove God's existence. Many philosophers, including Al-Kindi and Suhrawardi, have used this argument.

- **The way, reasoner, and goal are separate:** In some arguments, the way, reasoner, and goal are completely separate. For example, in arguments that use creatures and their effects (the way) by a human (the reasoner) to prove the existence of God (the goal). These types of arguments are often presented in theological texts and are understandable by all segments of society due to their simplicity and general applicability.

In this section, we will examine examples of these arguments from the perspective of some prominent Islamic philosophers.

### A) Ontological Argument (Argument of the Sufficient Being)

The ontological argument in Islamic philosophy, known as the Argument of the Sufficient Being, is one of the deepest and most respected philosophical arguments in Islamic thought for proving the existence of God. It has been proposed by great philosophers such as Avicenna and Mulla Sadra. This argument is based on the distinction between possible beings (beings whose existence depends on another cause due to their existential poverty) and the necessary being (a being whose existence is intrinsic and independent). It argues that the existence of possible beings requires a necessary being that is the source of their existence.

The ontological argument is considered a priori, as it does not depend on material observations but relies on philosophical and logical concepts, making it highly robust and credible. This argument holds a special place among Islamic philosophers because it not only avoids the complexities of other arguments but also proves the existence of God as the necessary being with simplicity and philosophical depth. Avicenna presented this argument as one of the strongest proofs, and Mulla Sadra developed it further within his philosophical system. Due to its logical strength and independence from common critiques, the ontological argument remains one of the most respected arguments for proving the existence of God in Islamic philosophy, and even among some Western philosophers.

Various formulations of the ontological argument have been presented by different philosophers. However, we will focus only on the formulations by Avicenna and Mulla Sadra, who represent distinct philosophical schools. Avicenna, as the founder of the Islamic Peripatetic school, and Mulla Sadra, as the founder of Transcendental Philosophy, each provided unique approaches to explaining this argument. Due to the significant role these two

philosophers played in the history of Islamic philosophy and their profound influence on philosophical thought, their formulations of the ontological argument are of special importance. Therefore, we will bypass an analysis of other formulations and focus on the views of these two great thinkers.

#### 1\_ Avicenna's Argument

To precisely and understandably present Avicenna's Argument for the Proof of God (Burhan al-Siddiqin), the foundational elements of the argument must first be clearly stated. Then, an explanation of the argument is provided. After that, the features of the argument and, ultimately, its validity compared to other arguments are discussed. This shows why Avicenna's Proof of God, due to its a priori nature and philosophical depth, is considered one of the strongest arguments for the existence of God.

#### B) Foundations of Avicenna's Argument

Avicenna's Burhan al-Siddiqin is based on four fundamental principles, which act as the logical and philosophical foundations of this argument. These principles are as follows:

1\_ The Principle of the Reality of Existence: The external world and the realities within it are clear, evident, and self-evident. This principle is raised in response to views like skepticism and sophism, which deny the existence of any external reality. It also stands against idealism, which denies the existence of external realities and only recognizes the existence of the mind. This principle serves as the starting point of the argument and emphasizes that the external world is real and can be used as the foundation for reasoning.

2\_ The Division of Being into Necessary and Possible: Every being, in terms of its essence, is either necessary in existence (wajib al-wujud) or possible in existence (mumkin al-wujud). A necessary being is one whose existence is intrinsic and essential, whereas a possible being is one whose existence depends on something outside of itself. This division is logically exclusive, meaning no third option is conceivable. This principle forms the core of the argument, showing that every being must ultimately be traced back to a necessary being.

3\_ The Need of the Possible Being for a Cause: Every possible being requires a cause for its existence. Since a possible being is in a state of equality between existence and non-existence, its existence is not necessary. Therefore, for a possible being to transition from the state of equality and come into existence, it requires an external cause that makes existence preferable to non-existence. This principle demonstrates that possible beings cannot exist without a cause, and this chain of causes must ultimately lead to a first cause (the necessary being).

4\_ The Impossibility of Circular Causation and Infinite Regression: Circular causation (where cause and effect depend on each other) and infinite regression (an endless chain of causes and effects) are both impossible and false. This principle is based on logical rules and shows that the chain of causes cannot continue indefinitely.

These principles form the logical and philosophical foundations of the argument, leading to the proof of the necessary being (God). Presenting these principles at the beginning of the argument helps clarify and enhance understanding, preventing ambiguities and misunderstandings.

#### B) Explanation of Avicenna's Argument

Avicenna, the great Islamic philosopher, presents the Burhan al-Siddiqin in his various works, including *al-Isharat wa al-Tanbihat*, *Mabda' wa Ma'ad*, and *Ilahiyat al-Najat*. Here, we will focus on his presentation of the argument in the *Isharat*, which proves the existence of God based on the analysis of the essence of existence, without relying on anything outside of existence.

Avicenna begins his reasoning with this question: Every being considered is, in terms of its essence, either necessary in existence or possible in existence. If a being is necessary in existence, meaning its existence is intrinsic and essential, then it is God, the desired being. However, if a being is possible in existence, meaning its existence depends on something outside itself, then it must ultimately trace back to a necessary being.

Avicenna explains that a possible being, by its essence, is neither necessarily existent nor non-existent. In other words, existence and non-existence are equal for it. If such a being comes into existence, its existence must result from an external cause that prefers existence over non-existence. This external cause is called the "decisive cause" (al-'illat al-murajjihah).

Avicenna argues that if all beings are possible, then each of them would require an external cause. This chain of causes cannot continue infinitely because, in that case, no being would have ever existed. Therefore, there must be a necessary being that is self-sufficient and the source of the existence of all possible beings (Avicenna, 1435 AH: 3/17-20).

A summary of Avicenna's argument is as follows: A being is either necessary in existence by itself or possible in existence. If it is necessary in existence, then God (the desired being) is proved. If it is possible, to avoid an endless cycle or infinite regression, it must ultimately lead to a necessary being. Therefore, the existence of God as the necessary being is established.

#### C) Characteristics of Avicenna's Argument

1\_ Independence from the Material World: This argument does not rely on the material world or sensory observations, but directly argues from the concept of existence itself.

2\_ Philosophical Depth: Avicenna proves the existence of God through an analysis of the essence of existence and the dependence of beings.

3\_ Logical Strength: Due to its simplicity and logical robustness, this argument is less susceptible to the usual criticisms that challenge other arguments.

#### D) Its Validity Compared to Other Arguments

In the *Burhan al-Siddiqin*, Avicenna proves the existence of God by analyzing the concept of existence and distinguishing between possible beings and the necessary being. This argument, due to its independence from material observations and reliance on philosophical concepts, is regarded as one of the strongest and most profound proofs for the existence of God in Islamic philosophy. Avicenna considers this argument as a more solid and noble method compared to other arguments because it directly proves God from the essence of existence itself.

#### **1. The Proof of the Existence of God According to Ibn Sina (The Proof of the Truthful)**

Therefore, it can be said that Ibn Sina's Proof of the Truthful relies on analyzing the principle of existence and the distinction between possible beings and the Necessary Being to prove the existence of God. This proof, due to its independence from the material world, its philosophical depth, and its logical strength, is considered one of the strongest and noblest arguments for proving the existence of God in Islamic philosophy. Ibn Sina, through this proof, demonstrates that the existence of God, as the Necessary Being, is essential and self-evident.

#### **2. Mulla Sadra's Version**

Mulla Sadra is among the rare philosophers who has presented multiple proofs for the existence of God. He has conveyed some of these proofs from previous philosophers and presented them with new formulations, while others he has developed based on the principles of his Transcendent Wisdom (*Hikmat Mut'aliya*). Mulla Sadra emphasizes that there are many ways to reach God, but some of these ways are more certain, noble, and clearer than others.

He states: "The ways to God are numerous because He has many virtues and aspects... but some of them are more certain, noble, and illuminated than others" (Sadra, 1428 AH: 6/14). He believes that none of the proofs provided by earlier philosophers can precisely prove the existence of God. Therefore, he presents the Proof of the Truthful based on his Transcendent Wisdom and considers it the noblest and most reliable proof. He has presented various formulations of this proof in his works, but the most important and complete version of it is found in his book *Asfar*.

### **A) Principles and Foundations of Sadra's Proof**

Mulla Sadra's Proof of the Truthful is based on three fundamental principles of Transcendent Wisdom. These principles demonstrate Mulla Sadra's unique approach to the issue of existence and the proof of God. These principles are:

1. **Primacy of Existence:** Unlike some philosophers who believe in the primacy of essence, Mulla Sadra gives primacy to existence. According to this principle, what exists in the external world is the truth of existence, not essence. Essence is merely a conceptual and mental construct, while existence is an objective and genuine reality. This principle forms the foundation of Mulla Sadra's Proof of the Truthful and shows that existence is a real entity independent of the mind.
2. **Gradation of Existence:** Through the theory of the unity of the gradation of existence, Mulla Sadra asserts that existence is a unified truth, yet it has different degrees and levels. This means that all beings, from cause to effect, from strong to weak, share a common existence, but each exists at a specific level of intensity or weakness.
3. **Existence as the Connection of the Effect to the Cause (Principle of Causality):** Mulla Sadra interprets the principle of causality in a unique way. He believes that the effect is intrinsically connected to its cause and has no independence from it. In other words, the existence of the effect is completely dependent on the cause and does not have any independent existence. This view is one of Mulla Sadra's innovations, and it is referred to as the existence of the effect or "poverty of existence." This principle explains the necessity of a cause for all possible beings and shows that each being in a lower level requires a being in a higher level.

Based on these three principles, which are fundamental to his philosophy, Mulla Sadra proves the existence of God as the absolutely independent and perfect Being.

### **B) Explanation of Sadra's Proof**

Mulla Sadra's Proof of the Truthful is based on analyzing the nature of existence and the distinction between Necessary and Possible Existence. This proof, relying on the foundations of Transcendent Wisdom, particularly the primacy of existence, gradation of existence, and the connection of the effect to the cause, aims to prove the existence of God as the Necessary Being. The proof can be stated as follows:

Existence is an objective, unified, and simple reality. This truth is shared by all beings, but it exists in various degrees and levels. The difference between beings is not in the essence of existence, but in terms of completeness and imperfection, intensity and weakness, or accidental qualities that belong to their specific essence. At the highest level of perfection, there exists a Being that is independent of everything else, and no greater or more complete existence can be imagined. This Being is the Necessary Existence. The Necessary Existence is a Being that is, by nature, independent of everything else and free from any imperfection. This existence is pure and complete, with no mixture of non-being or imperfection.

Possible existence, on the other hand, is a being that, by nature, is dependent on something else, and because of its existential deficiency, it belongs to another. This being is completely dependent on its cause and cannot exist without it. Every possible being, due to its existential imperfection, needs a cause to prefer existence over non-being. This dependency arises from the weakness in the existential level of the effect. The effect is inherently connected to the cause and has no independence from it. If the effect did not have existence, and the cause did not give it existence, no deficiency or imperfection would be imagined in it.

The Necessary Existence is pure and simple and does not involve any combination or essence. If the Necessary Existence were composed or had an essence, it would need parts or an external cause. However, the Necessary Existence is pure and complete and has no inherent need.

Therefore, existence is either the Necessary Existence, which, by nature, is independent of everything else and cannot be more complete, or it is the Possible Existence, which, by nature, is dependent on something else and belongs to an external cause. Since the chain of possible beings cannot continue infinitely, there must be a Necessary Existence that is the source of all possible beings. This Necessary Existence is God, whose existence is intrinsic and essential. Mulla Sadra emphasizes that this proof is ultimately solid and powerful because it directly derives from the truth of existence and does not rely on the material world or sensory observations (Sadra, 16-17).

### **Summary of the Proof:**

Existence is an objective, unified, and simple truth that has gradational levels. This gradational existence, at its highest and most complete level, which cannot be imagined more perfect, is independent of anything else. Since the perfect existence is prior to imperfection, and action is prior to potentiality, the completeness and perfection of anything are intrinsic to it, along with its superiority. Therefore, we conclude that existence is either independent of anything else, which is the Necessary Existence, or dependent on something else, which, due to its imperfection and dependence, is linked to the perfect, independent existence, which is the Necessary Existence.

### **C) Characteristics of Sadra's Proof**

Sadra's Proof of Existence (Burhan al-Siddiqin) has distinct features and advantages that set it apart from many other proofs. These features are as follows:

1. **No Need to Accept the Existence of Creatures as a Premise:** In this proof, there is no need to accept the existence of creatures as a premise for proving the Creator's existence. Unlike some proofs that rely on the existence of creatures to prove the existence of God, Sadra's proof argues directly from the truth of existence itself.
2. **No Need to Examine the Attributes of Creatures:** This proof does not require an examination of the attributes of creatures. While some proofs analyze the qualities of beings to prove God's existence, Sadra's proof establishes the existence of God without delving into these matters.
3. **Focus on the Truth of Existence, Not the Concept of Existence:** In this proof, the emphasis is on the truth of existence, not the concept of existence. This distinguishes it from proofs like Anselm's ontological argument, which rely on the concept of existence.
4. **No Need to Refute Circularity and Infinite Regress:** In Sadra's proof, there is no need to refute circularity (dawr) and infinite regress (tasalsul). The proof can be made even without

considering the impossibility of circularity and infinite regress, while it also serves as an argument for rejecting infinite regress and causal chains.

5. **Proving the Perfection of God's Attributes:** Through this proof, not only is the existence of God established, but His perfect attributes, such as unity, perfection, actuality, and self-sufficiency, can also be proven.

#### **D) The Credibility of Sadra's Proof Compared to Other Proofs**

Sadra's Proof of Existence holds a special place and credibility compared to other arguments for the existence of God for several reasons. This proof, without relying on the material world or sensory observations, directly argues from the truth of existence. This feature distinguishes it from other proofs, such as the Argument from Design or the Argument from Contingency, which rely on the existence of creatures or the characteristics of the natural world. Additionally, Sadra's proof is based on an analysis of the truth of existence and the distinction between necessary existence and contingent existence, which distinguishes it from proofs like Anselm's Ontological Argument, which rely on the concept of existence and have less philosophical depth.

Another advantage of this proof is its lack of dependence on refuting circularity or infinite regress. This means that even without considering the impossibility of circularity and infinite regress, it can be established, making it distinct from causal arguments that require the rejection of infinite regress for their conclusion. Moreover, Sadra's proof not only proves the existence of God but also explains His attributes of perfection, such as unity, perfection, actuality, and self-sufficiency. This sets it apart from proofs like the Argument from Motion or the Argument from Contingency, which focus solely on proving God's existence without discussing His attributes.

Furthermore, due to its reliance on the principles of the primacy of existence, the gradation of existence, and the dependence of the contingent on the cause, Sadra's proof possesses high coherence and comprehensiveness. This characteristic distinguishes it from other proofs that focus only on one particular aspect of existence. Finally, because of its simplicity and logical robustness, Sadra's proof is less susceptible to common criticisms and has established itself as one of the strongest and deepest arguments in Islamic philosophy, securing its place as a reliable and noble method for proving the existence of God.

#### **The Existence of God**

As Maturidi has stated, the existence of God has never been a subject of doubt for any of the Islamic sects. The main issue has been the definition and description of God. However, believers in God, in opposition to the deniers, have resorted to various arguments to rationally justify their viewpoint. Although all these arguments pursue a single goal—proving the existence of God—their foundations and methods differ. Therefore, Islamic theologians and philosophers have provided several proofs for the existence of God.

In the previous section, we discussed the ontological arguments, or the Proof of the Truthful (Burhan al-Sadiqin), as proposed by philosophers such as Avicenna and Mulla Sadra. In this section, we aim to examine a few examples of cosmological arguments from the perspective of some Islamic thinkers. Cosmological arguments are those that prove the existence of the Creator through His creations and the tangible world, or in other words, through the attributes of His creatures. These arguments can be found in the works of many Islamic theologians and philosophers. To avoid unnecessary length, we will focus on a few of these arguments from the perspectives of two great Islamic philosophers, Al-Kindi and Averroes.

## 1. Al-Kindi's Viewpoint

Al-Kindi, as the first Muslim philosopher, holds a special place in the history of Islamic philosophy. He laid the foundations of Islamic philosophy by translating and interpreting Greek philosophical works, particularly those of Aristotle and Plato, and sought to blend philosophy with religious teachings. With his emphasis on rationalism and logical reasoning, he played a significant role in shaping Islamic philosophy. Al-Kindi explored philosophical issues such as the proof for the existence of God (Necessary Existence) by examining concepts like unity, multiplicity, and the First Cause. His reasoning, through logical and philosophical arguments, paved the way for later philosophers like Al-Farabi, Avicenna, and Averroes. Below, we will explore Al-Kindi's arguments for proving the existence of God.

As the first Muslim philosopher, Al-Kindi used rational and philosophical methods to prove the existence of God. Drawing on Greek philosophy and focusing on concepts like origin, unity, order, and the First Cause, he presented arguments for the existence of God. The five main arguments put forward by Al-Kindi to prove the existence of God are outlined below in an organized, concise manner.

**A) The Origin of the World and the Need for a Cause:** Al-Kindi argues that the world is finite in terms of matter, movement, and time. This limitation indicates that the world is contingent, meaning it has a beginning. Anything that is contingent requires a cause to bring it from non-existence to existence. Therefore, the world must have a cause that created it, and that cause is God, who brought the world from nothing into being. (Yazdani, 2009: 405)

**B) The Multiplicity of Beings and the Unity of God:** Al-Kindi argues that through the analysis of the multiplicity of beings, one arrives at the unity of God. He reasons that tangible beings and their attributes are either one or many. The multiplicity is nothing but a collection of unities. Therefore, if unity did not exist, multiplicity could not exist. The result of this reasoning is that the identity of beings is shaped by unity, which comes from the one God who grants identity to tangible beings and their attributes. Thus, God, as the cause of creation, is the source of movement and unity in the world, and all beings are dependent on Him for both their coming into existence and their continued existence. (Ibid.)

**C) The Impossibility of Being the Cause of One's Own Existence:** Al-Kindi argues that a contingent thing cannot be its own cause. Considering the origin of the world and its composition, he concludes that the world needs a cause to bring it into existence. This cause must be something that is not contingent and can give unity to the world. Since multiplicity cannot always arise from multiplicity, it must eventually culminate in a unity that is beyond any form of multiplicity. This unity, which is the cause of all movements and compositions in the world, is God. (Ibid.)

**D) The Order and Purposefulness of the World:** Al-Kindi uses the order and purposefulness of the world as evidence for the existence of God. He argues that the order of the world, the arrangement of its interactions, and the best system governing the creation, dissolution, stability, and change of phenomena in the world point to a guiding intelligence. No order can occur without a director, as order requires a direct relationship with a director. Thus, the world requires an intelligent director to govern it, and this director is God. (Ibid., 406)

**E) The Analogy of Humans as a Microcosm:** Al-Kindi uses the analogy of humans as a microcosm to further argue for the existence of God. He reasons that just as humans manage their bodies through the guidance of their souls, the world also requires a director to manage

it. This analogy suggests that the world, like humans, requires a Creator to govern it in the best possible way. Therefore, the existence of God as the manager of the world is necessary. (Ibid.) In conclusion, Al-Kindi, using rational and philosophical arguments, proves the existence of God as the First Cause, the Unifier, the Director, and the Creator of the world. His arguments are based on concepts such as the origin of the world, the unity of beings, order and purposefulness, and the analogy of humans. These reasons, due to their philosophical depth and logical coherence, hold a special place in Islamic philosophy and play an important role in the rational justification of belief in God. By combining philosophy with religion, Al-Kindi established a philosophical framework for understanding the existence of God, which profoundly influenced later philosophers such as Al-Farabi and Avicenna.

## 2. Ibn Rushd's Perspective

Ibn Rushd, a great Islamic philosopher, in his book *Kashf 'an Manahij al-Adillah*, examines and critiques the views of various Islamic sects regarding the proof of God's existence. He mentions four main sects in this regard: Ash'arites, Mu'tazilites, Sufis, and Hashawites. After analyzing and critiquing the views of these sects, Ibn Rushd presents two main reasons for proving God's existence: the reason of providence (*'imayat*) and the reason of creation (*ikhtira*). Below, these two reasons are examined in detail.

### A) The Reason of Providence

This reason is based on two principles or premises:

1. All beings in the world are harmonized and aligned with the existence of human beings. In other words, the world is designed in such a way that it fulfills the needs and conditions for human life.
2. This harmony and alignment is not accidental but is caused by an essential will. This means that this order and harmony cannot be the product of mere chance, but must be the result of the will of a necessary and purposeful being (Ibn Rushd, 1998: 18).

Ibn Rushd then explains the evidence and indications of this harmony in the world and considers the connection of this harmony with intellect and will as self-evident. He argues that the existence of such order and harmony in the world indicates the existence of a purposeful creator who established this order.

### C) The Reason of Creation

The reason of creation is also based on two premises or principles, which Ibn Rushd considers self-evident to all people:

1. All beings are created, meaning they have come into existence and have a beginning.
2. Every creation needs a creator (maker) (Ibid., 19). In other words, everything that has come into existence must have a cause that brought it into being.

Ibn Rushd argues that every being in the world, as a created entity, serves as an independent proof of its creator's existence. He considers this argument sufficient to prove the existence of God, and believes it is understandable both for the masses and the elites. The only difference between these two groups lies in their level of understanding: the masses comprehend it in general terms, while the elites grasp it in detailed terms.

After presenting these two reasons, Ibn Rushd finds them to be in full agreement with the verses of the Qur'an. He argues that these reasons are not only strong in terms of reasoning but also perfectly aligned with the teachings of the Qur'an.

## D) A Detailed Analysis of Ibn Rushd's Proofs

Ibn Rushd's arguments for proving the existence of God, especially the reason of providence and the reason of creation, are among the strong and influential arguments in Islamic philosophy and theology. These arguments convincingly prove God's existence based on the order and harmony of the world and the principle of causality. However, these arguments also face challenges, including their reliance on the understanding of the world's order, the problem of infinite regress in causes, and the dependence on a specific interpretation of the world.

In general, it can be said that Ibn Rushd's proofs, despite some weaknesses, hold a special place in Islamic philosophy and theology and play a crucial role in rationally justifying belief in God.

In summarizing the possibility of proving God's existence from the perspective of rationalists, one can say that one of the most important topics in philosophy and theology is the possibility of proving God's existence through philosophical arguments. Rationalists, in contrast to fideists, believe that God's existence can be proven through rational and philosophical arguments. These arguments are based on three foundations: innate, conceptual, and philosophical. From a philosophical perspective, various arguments, such as cosmological arguments, ontological arguments, and others, prove God's existence. In Islamic philosophy, arguments such as the *Burhan al-Siddiqin*, relying on concepts like the primacy of existence and the gradation of being, and cosmological arguments, relying on created beings and their effects, prove the existence of God as the Necessary Existent (*Wajib al-Wujud*). In Western philosophy, the ontological argument (Anselm and Descartes) and cosmological arguments (Thomas Aquinas) are among the strong arguments for proving God's existence. Despite challenges and critiques, these arguments continue to be presented as powerful tools for rationally justifying belief in God and clarifying the relationship between reason and faith.

## CONCLUSION

The discussion of the possibility or impossibility of proving the existence of God through philosophical arguments is one of the most fundamental topics in philosophy and theology. This discussion is divided into two main approaches: fideists, who emphasize the limitations of human reason and believe that knowledge of God is possible only through faith and religious experience, and rationalists, who, through logical and philosophical arguments, attempt to prove the existence of God as the Necessary Existent (*Wajib al-Wujud*).

Fideists believe that human reason, due to its inherent limitations, cannot reach a complete understanding of God, and this understanding can only be attained through faith, intuition, and revelation. This approach faces challenges such as the impossibility of objective proof, the risk of relativism, and dependence on cultural context.

Rationalists, on the other hand, attempt to justify belief in God rationally using logical and philosophical proofs. These proofs include ontological arguments (such as the *Burhan al-Siddiqin*), cosmological arguments (such as the argument of cause and effect), and moral arguments. In Islamic philosophy, philosophers like Avicenna (Ibn Sina) and Mulla Sadra, and in Western philosophy, philosophers such as Anselm and Thomas Aquinas, have presented numerous arguments to prove God's existence. Both approaches have their own strengths and weaknesses. Fideists focus on the emotional and spiritual dimensions of human experience by emphasizing the role of faith and religious experience, while rationalists aim to justify belief in God rationally through logical arguments.

Ultimately, it can be said that combining these two approaches can lead to a more comprehensive understanding of the existence of God. Reason and faith should not be viewed as two contradictory concepts, but rather as complementary aspects of each other. This combination can create a foundation for intercultural and interfaith dialogue and help strengthen the relationship between reason and faith.

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