

## **Outline the Cosmological Argument-**

The Cosmological argument is an a posteriori argument; this means the argument is based on experience. The Cosmological argument's first premise is that the universe exists we all experience it. Cosmological is the name given to a group of arguments for the existence of God based on the fact that the universe exists. This belief has been suggested by Plato and Aristotle, developed by Aquinas, supported strongly by Leibniz and Samuel Clarke and most recently by Copleston.

The Cosmological argument is often expressed in three sections: The Kalam Argument, the Thomistic Argument and the Argument from Contingency.

The Kalam Argument suggests a beginning in time; Aquinas disregarded the idea that the universe had existed infinitely. , The idea that history is infinite causes philosophical problems. If we say history is infinite then we have to say that infinitude has happened but that time still passes and so infinity is being added to. Modern science finds evidence for the Big Bang. The universe began with the primeval nucleus, which exploded, traces of radiation were found from this explosion in the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. The big bang is an obvious beginning in time.

The Thomistic Argument envisages a chain of causes. It considers that every incident in the universe has a cause it was caused by something and will be the cause an event to come. The argument is set out in two of Aquinas' five ways. Nothing can cause itself because this means that the thing is prior to itself, which is impossible. The idea of infinite regression is not comprehensible and impossible; therefore there must be a first cause, which is itself uncaused. The first way of Aquinas' argument says that things move and therefore change, but they do not change themselves and therefore something must cause them - God the unmoved mover. The second talks of the uncaused causer, it says God is necessary; He is needed, as infinite regression is impossible. This parallel to the first way. The thing that causes other things to exist is the uncaused causer, which is God. Leibniz's adds to the argument he said if you believe in an infinite regression of causes there would not be what he calls 'sufficient reason' meaning a complete explanation. A sufficient reason will only be given if we can get back to something that does not rely on anything else and that will be God.

The third part of the Cosmological argument is called the Argument from Contingency taken from the third way of Aquinas' five ways. The third way argues contingency, the world is full of contingent items, things that come and go out of existence, such as humans. If all beings are contingent then at one

time nothing existed. Therefore not all things can be contingent, something must have begun the cycle a necessary being must exist, and this being is God. Copleston added to this argument he said that beings in the world are contingent, they are might have beens. The world is total of all these things. Everything in the world is in this non self-explanatory category. The explanation of everything in the universe must be external to the universe. This explanation must be an existent being, which is self-explanatory a being which contains within it the reason for its own existence, a necessary being.

### *Does the Cosmological Argument prove the existence of God?*

The Cosmological argument has both strengths and weaknesses, which add to the debate as to whether proof is found for God through the existence of the universe. The most potent strength is the invulnerable first premise, the universe exists and because this is an a posteriori it is something in our experience something we have to accept.

The world is made of contingent beings and humans accept they caused, a Childs birth is caused by the mother and father and their lives were caused by the same process between their parents and so on. But if everything has a cause so must God, this is answered with Aquinas' idea of the first cause the uncaused causer. Infinite regression is not comprehensible, and so a chain of causes must have its origins in a first cause something that does not rely on every thing else in the universe. The Big Bang supports the idea that the universe had a beginning.

The idea of person relative proof can be applied to the argument, if a person is willing to define God as a necessary being who is the cause of the existence of contingent beings then the argument is successful, as a proof for Gods existence. The Cosmological argument relies on the acceptance of certain principle is a person can accept these ideas then the argument works.

Is the argument convincing does it convince people that God exists? It may convince some people. Some people experience cosmic wonder, an experience of the contingency of things including their own existence. If a person accepts these experiences as meaningful they may well ask why is the universe here? And expects an answer. For them the principle of sufficient reason is true, for others the universe is just there. For some the cosmological argument is true is answers the questions they pose about their existence. Even if the Cosmological argument is upheld there are many limitations.

Causation is something of the spatio-temporal world we live in, this world relies on causation, each thing happens because it was caused, we are might have beens. But if God is as many definitions say, omnipotent, omniscient and omni loving then he is not of our experience can we apply our knowledge of

the temporal world to something that is non temporal. It is beyond our experience. Mills suggested that since we learn from experience that all events must have a cause then to say that there is a cause, which does not have a cause, cannot be maintained.

The question that always comes up is who made God? We suppose that everything has a cause, why is God exempt from this cycle? If you are not satisfied with ideas of the primeval nucleus and cosmic dust as the first thing in the universe then why be satisfied with God. If there is the reply no one made God then he is by definition the eternal creator, then this has no logical power to persuade, for there is no reason why anyone should accept a particular definition of God. The attempt to define God into existence is just another version of the ontological argument, which failed to prove God.

The Cosmological argument tries to show that God exists from the fact that the universe exists and that 'someone must have made it'. The argument is based on the abhorrence of the idea of infinite regression some claim it is impossible. But it may be held that all things in creation were created or formed out of something which came before it, but there is no sufficient reason to suppose that the whole universe must have had a beginning, the big bang theory is a theory and who started the big bang, was it part of something that was already in motion. Bertrand Russell asks why must there be a beginning to the universe.

The Cosmological argument has theological difficulties. The first difficulty is that the Cosmological argument need not lead to theism. The first cause may not be the God of the Christian tradition. It could lead to deism, the idea that a god created the world and left it to its own devices. So why doesn't the universe just stop? The theist may conclude that the universe continues because of the intervention of the divine. Another theological difficulty is that God is seen as a cause of the universe, a cause of all things and a necessary being cause of all contingent beings. The argument does not lead to the understanding of God as an omnipotent, omniscient, omni loving and moral authority. David Hume adds to the criticisms of the argument, he applies many of the ideas from the critique of the teleological argument for example he asks if one God why not many Gods how do we prove that this just one God.

The success of the Cosmological argument depends first of all willingness to ask the question, why is there a universe? If you are content to simply accept that the universe is there and does not need explanation, or that it can be explained by infinite regress, then the Cosmological argument fails. But if the person is able to accept the ideas like sufficient reason which some have disregarded, then they could accept the Cosmological argument, it could convince them of the existence of God. It could be suggested that an argument that leads to a creator is useful as part of the traditional understanding of God. The success of the Cosmological argument depends on the persons approach

for some it will be convincing or add to a faith and for other it will fail to answer the questions they have and will ultimately fail.