

An Investigation of the Possibility of Using the Degrees of Perfection Argument for Proving the Existence of God

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Abstract

Proving the existence of God has always been among the main intellectual concerns of the human. As a result, during the history of religious thoughts, the suggestion of various arguments for proving the existence of God as well as the assessment of the validity of these arguments have been the essential issues for the scholars of this field. One of these arguments which has been discussed mostly in the Western Philosophy – in particular in the works of Thomas Aquinas – is the Degrees of Perfection Argument. Due to the misunderstandings about it, this argument has received fierce criticisms and so, has not been welcomed warmly by the Western Philosophy. Similarly, this argument has either remained unknown or has been considered as invalid in the Islamic philosophy and theology. In this article, along with the introduction of the Degrees of Perfection argument and the expression of its backgrounds, some criticisms about it are answered. Moreover, through a brief comparison of this argument with the Sadrian reading of the Higher Possibility principle in the Islamic philosophy, we have tried to suggest a new reading of this argument based on the Sadrian philosophy.

Keywords: Degrees of Perfection argument, Aristotle, Aquinas, Christian philosophy, Islamic philosophy.

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An Examination of the Social and Cultural Consequences of Managerialism in the Government Institution from the Viewpoint of the Theocratic Philosophy

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Abstract

At the end of the 20th century, many governments started a new style of public administration to solve the different problems they faced. This new style was given different names such as Managerialism and Modern Public Administration. But soon criticisms were targeted at this public administration method, too, and it became clear that the public administration style based on the Market Economy philosophy and the methods used in the private sector not only cannot fulfill their initial claims and have internal conflicts, but also bring about unfavorable consequences that stem from the main principle of Managerialism, i.e. Capitalism. The establishment of the behavioral principles based on the Market economy and the acceptance of the philosophical values of this managerial style by the government and its officials will inevitably turn them into the preachers and symbols of the same beliefs and assumptions that are in clear contrast to the goals and assumptions of the theocratic governments. On the other hand, the assumptions and consequences of the establishment of a theocracy have been analyzed using an extensive library research. At the end, using the analytical method and adopting a theocratic view, the researcher has tried to mention the cultural consequences of Managerialism and to show that the use of non-religious principles hidden in the Modern Public Administration, even if it is done inadvertently, can have destructive and secularizing consequences for the society and can even lead to the religious alteration through the elimination of the people's trust in the theocratic government.

Keywords: Modern Public Administration, Managerialism, Theocracy, Culture, Social system.

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The Views of Schellenberg, Hick, and Swinburne to the Concept of Divine Hiddenness

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Abstract

The Divine Hiddenness concept is one of the main existing arguments for atheism. The article at hand sets out to examine the viewpoints of three contemporary philosophers of religion about the Divine Hiddenness, namely John Schellenberg, John Hick, and Richard Swinburne. Schellenberg deems the Divine Hiddenness inconsistent with the Divine Love and believes that as a requirement for the former, God should provide enough evidence about his existence for the capable people who have no shortcoming in this regard. The availability of such an evidence means that God is not hidden. However, as Schellenberg asserts, God has not done so and therefore, there exists essentially no God. From Hick's viewpoint, in order to protect our epistemic and moral freedom, it is necessary for God to be hidden. Swinburne holds that the hiddenness of God permits us to choose our destiny. Therefore, in the eyes of Swinburne, the hiddenness of God is necessary for the fulfillment of our wholesome destiny choice. The findings of this article reveal that the Divine Hiddenness cannot justify atheism. Meanwhile, the freedom-oriented reasons put forth by Hick and Swinburne for the justification of the Divine Hiddenness cannot prove that the nonfulfillment of the Divine Hiddenness contradicts humans' freedom of choice.

Keywords: Divine Hiddenness, Theism, Atheism, John Schellenberg, John Hick, Richard Swinburne.

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The Meaning of Life in Three Metaphorical Stories of Avicenna

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Abstract

The issue of “the meaning of life” has always been in the background of all humans' minds and has been a prelude to the works of philosophers, psychologists and ethics scholars. Accordingly, as one of the greatest existential philosophers, Avicenna shows an understanding of the importance of the problem in all his works and tries to give a reasonable and well-founded explanation about the meaning of life. From three main applications of the word “meaning”, i.e. purpose, value and function, the main focus of Avicenna has been the achievement of “the purpose of life”. Through a descriptive-analytic-comparative methodology, this article intends to examine the foregoing problem in three metaphorical stories of Hayy ibn Yaqdhan, *Risalat al-Tayr*, and *Salaman and Absal*. In Avicenna's view, the recognition of the meaning of life and the attainment of its final purposes is a very difficult way and a path abundant with so many obstacles. He sometimes interprets the obstacles as “bad friends” (in *Hayy ibn Yaqdhan*), sometimes as “net, seed and chain” (in *Risalat al-Tayr*) and sometimes as “coquettishness” (in *Salaman and Absal*). Avicenna suggests that the only way to free oneself from such disagreeable circumstances and to obtain the meaning of life is to seek it in conscious action, continuous struggle, and a deep and broad vision of the human life.

Keywords: Avicenna, Meaning of life, Hayy ibn Yaqdha, *Risalat al-Tayr*, *Salaman and Absal*.

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The Relationship between Faith and Reason from the Viewpoint of Najmuddin Razi

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Abstract

The present article aims at finding an epistemic relationship between faith and reason and ultimately measuring the amount of rationality from the viewpoint of Najmuddin Razi. Faith and reason in his view are epistemological instruments, and the essence of wisdom or the spirit of *the Mercy to the Worlds* - with its numerous qualities - is a luminous substance with aspects such as reign, light and pen. Then, rational knowledge is a level on the hierarchy of attaining the monotheism knowledge and is a position for reaching the intuitive knowledge that is useful in the intelligible world, and the saving knowledge is the one in which the human intellect structure informs the light of faith, so that prophecy of the prophets is prescribed. The essence of faith is a mine whose second place is the heart, and reliance on rationality is the path for faith; the effect of the radiation of the light of faith on the heart is called acknowledgment. The relationship between faith and reason as depicted by Razi is a balanced and mixed rationality, one which falls between maximal and critical rationalism combined with fideism that play an effective role in determining the validity or invalidity of religious belief systems in the philosophy of religion and the interaction of the two causes the correct presentation of religion, and prevents internal and external damages. All of these have been extracted from the comparison of his views with the comprehensive approaches to the faith and reason.

Keywords: Njameddin Razi, Faith, Reason, Fideism, Maximal rationalism, Critical rationalism, Balanced rationalism.

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The Role of Qur'ānic Semiotics in Revealing the Origin of the Islamic Sufism and Mysticism

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Abstract

Regardless of the mystics' claim, there have been various discussions on the origin of Islamic Sufism and Mysticism among Muslim and non-Muslim scholars for a long time, and some attempts have been made to clarify its true origin in Islam in both negation and affirmation domains. Allamah Tabataba'i, Hasanzadeh Amoli, Jawadi Amoli, Ramezani, Yazdanpanah, Motahhari, and Imam Khumeini (May God have mercy on him) and many other Hawzah graduates and figures along with Homa'i, Zarrinkub, Purjawadi, Pazuki, A'wani, and tens of other great university scholars in the contemporary era introduce the Qur'ān and Hadith legacy of Islam as the origin of the Islamic mysticism. Similarly, Massignon, Nicholson, Corbin, Schimmel, Paul Noya, Chittick and tens of other orientalist seriously believe that the main origin of the Islamic mysticism is comprised of the Qur'ān as well as the Sunna and practices of the Noble Prophet (s). The study at hand uses an analytic approach to classify the Qur'ānic semiotics that refer to the origin of the mysticism and Sufism into the following categories: a) narrating the words of some of the foregoing figures to prove the argument; b) presenting direct quotations and clear expositions of some great masters of the early mystics about the intended issue; c) specifying the relationship between the Qur'ān and the definition, topic, problems, and purpose of Sufism and mysticism; d) word choices made by the mystics for the title of their books as well as the terminology they have used in the two realms of theoretical mysticism and practical conduct of Sufism taken from the Qur'ānic words, and e) reporting more than fifty groups of Qur'ānic verses, each alluding or directly referring to the important mystic teachings and revealing the main origin of the Islamic mysticism.

Keywords: Origin of mysticism, Origin of Sufism, Qur'ānic origin of mysticism, Qur'ān and mysticism, Qur'ān and Sufism.

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The Network Model of Sharia in the Epistemic Theory of Ibn Arabi and Its Anthropological Outcomes

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Abstract

Ibn Arabi's epistemology has an irrevocable tie with sharia. For Ibn Arabi, Sharia is the single route to the truth. Sharia is the criterion for cognition, the source of cognition and the provider of double certitude in his epistemology. Sharia, in his view, acts as a criterion in the field of theory and practice. In theory, sharia is also a criterion in both intellectual knowledge and visionary knowledge both of which, the author believes, are comprehended with or without a mediator. The one who travels with his intellects toward the truth takes the divine religion as his model and imitates it to acquire the triad of justice, knowledge and etiquette. The realization of these characteristics in his existence necessitates attending the secondary causes. Ibn Arabi introduces the gist of these secondary causes as the human "identity" and although he considers it a barrier, he believes that it is an inevitable barrier, and wisdom requires reverence to this barrier.

Keywords: Sharia, Knowledge, Criterion, Wisdom, Justice, Etiquette, Human identity.

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An Analytic Comparison of Kant's Interpretation of Job (a) and Kierkegaard's Interpretation of Ibrahim(a)

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Abstract

Kant bases religion on ethics, and in his treatise “On the miscarriage of all philosophical trials in Theodicy”, by representing Job as an ethical character, calls him a representative of authentic Theodicy. But, the faith for Kierkegaard is a synthesis of the thesis (desire) and antithesis (abandonment). This process can be perceived in Fear and Trembling, in the story of sacrifice of Isaac. Kierkegaard believes that faith is a teleological suspension of ethics, i.e. resignation to the absurd that reason tends to deny while faith can accept the absurd. Although reason rejects the absolute paradox and morality convicts such a paradox, it is just due to the faith that causes Ibrahim to try to sacrifice his son. This paper seeks to examine the divergent and convergent opinions of these two thinkers toward Job and Ibrahim based on Kant and Kierkegaard’s thought about the relation between ethics and religion.

Keywords: Religion, Ethics, Ibrahim, Job, Kant, Kierkegaard.

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From the Autonomy of Worldly Ethics to the Heteronomy of Divine Ethics (A new Stance to the Different Types of Relations between Ethics and Religion)

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Abstract

A question that has always engulfed the minds of the thinkers is the relationship between religion and reason. This issue has been dealt with in the Islamic world, too, and in particular, the subject of good and evil in the field of ethics has been discussed. In this article, various types of relations between ethics and religion are discussed, each of these approaches has been criticized, and finally, a new viewpoint to autonomy has been offered in which a distinction between Worldly ethics and divine ethics is used to show that the worldly ethics is not based or dependent on the divine ethics and can be examined independently. However, the divine and transcendental ethics can only be driven from religion and is defined and explained in the context of religion. Moreover, it is found that autonomy in the domain of worldly ethics is congruent with heteronomy in the domain of divine ethics, that is to say, the two might prescribe similar moral rulings in many cases, but the spirit, and more precisely, the basis of their acts and the origin of their suggestions and admonitions are different.

Keywords: Reason, Religious Law, Ethics, Good and evil, Worldly ethics, Divine ethics.

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The Theological Beliefs and Humanities: Position and Manner of Influence

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Abstract

Undoubtedly, a comprehensive awareness of the shortcomings of existing theology, a precise answer to the possibility of the Islamization of sciences, and a clear response to the possibility of the emancipation of sciences from presuppositions are possible only through the adoption of a macro-vision to the interaction points, which in turn leads to an understanding of the way theological beliefs affect humanities. Along with accepting the dependence of humanities and its main issues on the theological propositions in general (and not in particular), this article adopts a historical-analytic method to attain the foregoing purpose through a comprehensive design. The design suggests that: a) as the receiver of the effects, science or scientific activity sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly is affected by the beliefs; b) in the indirect effect, the theological beliefs first affect the epistemic (i.e. philosophical and scientific) or non-epistemic (e.g. scientists' traits, culture, environment, research population) factors that influence science or scientific activity, and then they affect the humanities; c) effects on the activities and processes of science and research can be perceived at minor and major levels, since science can be considered in relation to research question and general knowledge, and so it can be examined based the processes of these two domains, and d) in case science is taken to mean discipline, the scientific factors such as topic, method, purpose, etc. are affected by the theological beliefs.

Keywords: Theological beliefs, Humanities, Epistemic and non-epistemic factors, Paradigm.

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The Nature of Spirituality and the Process of Ascribing Meaning to it in the West

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Abstract

In the early days, spirituality was limited to religious traditions. Nowadays, however, it is used not only in all religious and non-religious traditions, but in some doctrines, it receives its main essence from opposition to religion. Discussions on spirituality in the West have sporadically existed from the ancient times in the intellectual and artistic works. And in all its forms, a process of communication with the invisible world and the sublime being can be observed that gradually changes the human inclination and brings him closer to the immaterial world. Adopting a descriptive-analytic method, the article at hand aims at specifying the process of ascribing meanings to the concept of spirituality in the West and answering the question about the differences between modern Western spirituality and the religious spirituality. In order to answer this question, the article refers to the conceptualizations of the term "spirituality" by Muslim scholars and Western researchers, and through recounting its meaning ascription process in the West, the study philosophically specifies the concept of spirituality, explains its aspects and modes, and comes to the conclusion that spirituality, with all its constituents and assumptions, is not detached from the worldly life. Moreover, it is found that there are two main differences between modern Western spirituality and religious spirituality: one in their methods, and the other in their origins. Finally, it is shown that most forms of modern spirituality are essentially intuitive concepts.

Keywords: Spirituality, Modern spirituality, Religious spirituality, Nature of spirituality.

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A discussion of the Triple Arguments of Muhaqqiq Khafri for the Existence of God and the Assessment of Sadr al-Muta'llihin's Objections to Them

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Abstract

Muhaqqiq Khafri is a philosopher who has put forth several arguments for the existence of God. He has considered his arguments as possessing the characteristics of the Truthful Ones' arguments. These arguments use issues such as the reality of existence and the set of beings to prove the Necessary Being. Mulla Sadra deems these arguments incomplete since he believes that they confuse the individual with nature or are formed based on the existence of a set of beings, while only the individuals within the set have real existence. The article at hand presents and explains Khafri's arguments in detail and assesses the objections of Mulla Sadra to them. The conclusion is that the arguments of Khafri have been correct and the objections of Mulla Sadra to them are not acceptable.

Keywords: Reality of being, Concept of existence, Necessary Being, Set of beings, Possible being.

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