

## A Quick Response to: “Summaries of the Six Arguments”

(found here: <http://www.thesixwaysofatheism.com> – accessed 16 July 09)

### Argument 1: The Aggregate of Qualities Argument

1. If God exists, God must necessarily possess all of several remarkable qualities (including supreme goodness, omnipotence, immortality, omniscience, ultimate creator, purpose giver).
2. Every one of these qualities may not exist in any one entity and if any such quality does exist it exists in few entities or in some cases (e.g. omnipotence, ultimate creator) in at most one entity.
3. Therefore it is highly unlikely any entity would possess even one of these qualities.
4. There is an infinitesimal chance that any one entity (given the almost infinite number of entities in the Universe) might possess the combination of even some two of these qualities, let alone all of them.
5. In statistical analysis a merely hypothetical infinitesimal chance can in effect be treated as the no chance to which it approximates so very closely.
6. Therefore as there is statistically such an infinitesimal chance of any entity possessing, as God would have to do, all God’s essential qualities in combination it can be said for all practical and statistical purposes that God just does not exist.

1 granted

2 not quite - far better to say that only one entity (God) *could* have ALL of these qualities

3 massive chasm in logical progression. the uniqueness/singularity of a God (the only kind of entity who could possibly have most/all of those qualities) does not make God more or less likely/probable; i.e. there is no logical connection between uniqueness and probability

4 no logical connection – how do you know the likelihood? And if an entity had one of these qualities, wouldn’t that make it MORE likely that it had some/all of the other qualities?

5 & 6 attempting to make a non-argument into a conclusion

(First, how do we know that ‘statistical analysis’ is even an appropriate mode of analysis of God? Second, would it not make sense that if a) an entity had *even one* of those attributes, then b) the likelihood of having some/all of the others would *increase* (as opposed to *decrease*)?)

### **Argument 2: The Man And God Comprehension Gulf Argument**

1. Man is finite (in time, space and power etc).
2. God if he exists is infinite (in time, space and power etc).
3. Therefore mankind cannot possibly recognise God or even know that God exists.

1 granted

2 granted

3 NO logical argument leading to the 'therefore' statement. No logical connection proving that a finite man could not have at least some kind of recognition (i.e. 'finite/limited' recognition) of an infinite God. Does mankind have to have infinite recognition of God in order for his recognition of God to be valid? In other words, must mankind be omniscient (i.e. God!!!)? Wouldn't we expect mankind to have a finite/limited recognition of God?

### **Argument 3: The 'God Has No Explanatory Value' Argument**

1. God if he exists must be the ultimate being and provide the answer to all our ultimate questions - otherwise he is not really God.
2. Yet even supposing as a hypothesis that God exists the questions that God was supposed to finally answer still remain (though in some cases God is substituted in the question for the Universe).
3. Therefore hypothesising God's existence is only unnecessarily adding an extra stage to such problems and has no real explanatory value.
4. Therefore according to Logic (Occam's Razor Law - 'that entities are not to be multiplied beyond necessity') we should not postulate God's existence and there is no adequate reason to suppose that God exists.
5. Therefore we should suppose that God does not exist.

1 unclear as to what is meant by 'provide the answer to all our ultimate questions'.

2 unclarity again: what is meant by saying that the (ultimate) questions 'remain'; 'remain' totally/completely unanswered (not even starting to answer)? 'remain' slightly/partly unanswered (some hints of answer, but not fully)? Based on 3, we see that the assumption here is that they are totally/completely un-answered. Which, again, is unsupported here.

3 logical failure gain; no connection between a) the vague/unclear notions about questions and answers and b) the lack of explanatory value of God. The lack of clarity and argument for 1 & 2 fail to support the conclusion of 3.

4 & 5 concluding a faulty argument and appealing to Occam's Razor in support.

#### **Argument 4: The 'This Is Not The Best Possible World' Argument**

1. God if he exists must be omnipotent, supremely good and our ultimate creator.
2. Therefore an existent God (being supremely good and competent) would have created the best possible world (if he created anything).
3. As the world is inconsistent (between ages and people) it cannot all be the best possible world.
4. Therefore as the world is not the best possible world, God cannot exist.

1 granted, with assumed notions of 'good'

2 is that a 'therefore' at level 2 I see? how does that work? There's no argument for *why* a God must create 'the best possible world', and more significantly, how would we know a 'best possible world' when we saw it? What is 'good' and 'best'?

3 no logical connection between the world being a) 'inconsistent' and b) not the 'best' possible world.

4 no argument at all why God must create a world that we would automatically and unanimously deem to be the 'best possible'.

#### **Argument 5: The Universal Uncertainty Argument**

1. An uncertain God is a contradiction in terms.
2. Everything in the Universe must be fundamentally uncertain about its own relationship to the Universe as a whole because there is no way of attaining such certainty.
3. Therefore even an entity with all God's other qualities cannot have the final quality of certain knowledge concerning its own relationship to the Universe as a whole.
4. Therefore God cannot exist because even any potential God cannot know for sure that it is God.

**Note:** Stated as a logical paradox this argument is 'God cannot exist because God cannot know for sure that it is God'.

1 yes, an all-knowing (omniscient) God would know Himself to be God.

2 no logical connection between a) God's certainty and b) the certainty of 'everything in the universe'. Surely God is not assumed here to be a 'thing' which is 'in' the universe??

3 no logical connection here at all. Again, God is not a 'thing' within the Universe, so God's certainty and self-knowledge is not limited by the kinds of self-knowledge or certainty which characterises 'things' in the Universe.

4 concluding a faulty argument

### **Argument 6: The 'Some Of God's Defining Qualities Cannot Exist' Argument**

1. God must have certain characteristic qualities (such as providing purpose to life), otherwise he would not be God.
2. But it is impossible for any entity to possess some of these qualities (such as providing purpose to life since we can find no real purpose and therefore we in practice have no ultimate purpose to our lives) that are essential to God.
3. Therefore since some of God's essential qualities (such as being the purpose provider to life) cannot possibly exist in any entity, God cannot exist.

1 granted

2 again, a 'therefore'/'conclusion' at level 2!? No argument at all given. It simply states (not argues with logic) that 'it is impossible for any entity to possess some of these qualities that are essential to God.

As for the purpose example, no argument is given demonstrating that "we can find no real purpose and therefore we in practice have no ultimate purpose to our lives".

There are three logically possible options which would leave the existence of a purpose-providing God intact.

1 the God-provided purpose to life is only known by God

2 the God-provided purpose to life is known partially/incompletely by humanity

3 the God-provided purpose to life is fully/perfectly (omnisciently!!!) known by humanity (who are now omniscient – at least about the purpose of life!).

3 false conclusion to a faulty argument