

## Aggregate of Qualities Argument against Existence of God

This argument with a few variations comes from Geoffrey Berg's book, *The Six Ways of Atheism* (2009).

<http://www.amazon.com/The-Six-Ways-Atheism-Disproofs/dp/0954395662>

### The Argument

Geoffrey Berg's argument Aggregate of Qualities Argument against Existence of God is as follows:

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.

So the conclusion is that there is there is virtually no chance that God exists.

### The Argument Examined

God is said to have not just supreme goodness, power, life etc but infinite goodness, power and life etc. Infinite means that there is no limit to them.

Berg is saying that statistically it is virtually impossible or close to it for God by coincidence to have all the infinite powers. Religion answers that God has these powers by default and it is not like he has the powers by chance. Religion says God is utterly simple and is non-material and is not an entity but the source of all entities. This seems to prove that Berg is criticising the wrong view of God.

Let us take it for granted that religion is right. It follows then that this argument only explains the infinite powers God needs to be God. If God has infinite powers he does not need then clearly Berg has a point. If God has infinite capabilities that he can do without then Berg is correct.

Let us work out the properties that the creator does not need to have. It does not need to be alive. It does not need to be conscious. We are to believe that God is infinite life and infinite consciousness. Believers say that but when you think about how they mean that a being with no parts is alive you soon see this is not life as we know it.

Anything other than the notion of a personal God might be like God but it is not God and not to be worshipped. The demand for a God who is entitled to worship or who can be worshipped is only a religious demand. It is nothing other than the stupid, "We want a God who is alive like us. Therefore such a God exists."

They then argue that if God is infinite then he is perfect in what he is. They say he cannot be perfect if he is not alive or conscious. That is nonsense for God cannot be alive or conscious in the way we understand these things. He is not biological. And if he can be intelligent and do all he does without being alive or conscious is his being alive and aware really a perfection? They don't know what they mean or want by God being alive anyway.

It could have been that there would have been nothing at all not even God. Even though God always existed it could still be said that it is chance that he exists. Chance does not necessarily refer to something that starts happening. Something can be always there and still down to chance. Berg argues that there is an infinitesimal chance then that an existing being can have omnipotence (page 31). I agree. God's power is unlimited so the chance of a being existing with unlimited power is itself unlimited! Its virtually impossible! Religion will respond that infinite power does not refer to the quantity of power God has. But it does. He can make an infinite universe in which there is nothing but water - that would be infinite water.

The more qualities the Christian version of God has the sillier it gets. For he must have infinite knowledge and infinite consciousness and so on. The chance of one being having all these powers each of which is infinite on its own is so close to impossible that we may describe it as impossible. And even more so when God could have infinite powers but know nothing at all. He doesn't need all the properties the Church says he has.

Berg deals with the objection: "Chance says all these infinite properties are unlikely to be the properties of God but we have evidence that God has these properties." But even evidence has its limits. You should ignore evidence that points to something insanely improbable such as Queen Victoria being Jack the Ripper. And there is no need for a God who knows what he is doing. He could be an unconscious intelligence. So the evidence is non-existent.

Berg thinks the objection errs in assuming that greater things cannot come from lesser things so lesser things come from the greater. The idea is that since creation and we are so great God must be better than us. For example, we see the evidence that intelligence exists. So we assume God has intelligence too but infinitely so. We see how we are conscious so God must be infinite consciousness. We assume that because we see the lesser the greater must exist. Christians see that God makes wise people so they reason that he must be wiser than they, for example. Berg rejects this view arguing that Einstein's parents with average intelligence were able to produce this genius of a scientist.

I would prefer to argue that God is good not by choice - Christians say God is necessarily perfect and cannot do wrong - and we are so we are better than him when we choose good. That is what I would concentrate on.

Christians may say that if Berg's argument is right and it is very unlikely for God to have all those properties it is still possible. They say unlikely things can happen. True. Maybe Jack the Ripper did not murder any of his victims and they cut their own throats. Very very unlikely but possible. But we have to ignore what is improbable to be able to function and live in this world. They only turn faith into opinion. If they do that then they should not be going around pretending God matters.

If you say to atheists, "Okay I am a believer in God. Even if there is a tiny chance that God exists, we should believe." That argument comes up all the time in books opposing atheism and proposing Christianity. But it should turn the warning lights on. The Christians are desperate to believe so how much can you trust their evidences for God? No atheist says we should disbelieve in God because there is a small chance there is no God. Should the Christian or atheist philosopher should have the biggest credibility? Which one?

Berg's point is that for example, God could be perfectly and infinitely good but that does not mean he has to be perfectly and infinitely powerful. Also, God can be all-powerful without being all-knowing. Or God can be all-knowing without being all-powerful.

Meaning Giver idea is insulting

The thought that God is a meaning giver denies the fact that most people are not that interested in him and are happy enough. It implies that they are defective and blind and dangerous and harming others through their example. It is putting a belief before people at least by implication. They must not be allowed to do that. This fact implies that we must be suspicious of arguments for God unless they claim to be 100% proof and are 100% proof.

Christianity should take note that Jesus denied that God was about giving meaning to your life for he himself stated he felt on the cross that he was forsaken. It is not true that God necessarily has to be a meaning-giver. If creation broke from God during a rebellion as Christianity says then it is inflicting independence from God on itself with all the consequences. God may not be able to give meaning to such a universe. A parent cannot give meaning to a child who rejects her.

If you want a meaning giver then if there is a God it is very unlikely he is one.

The Argument and Divine Goodness

To say that God is good is not as simple as it looks. Goodness is just a term used to cover a countless million activities and qualities. Goodness is not one thing but umbrella term. For example, God would be perfect at chess, crosswords, typing ad infinitum. The quality of being good at chess is a different quality from being good at crosswords. Then there is moral goodness. God could be perfectly

God is supposed to have compassion and kindness. If he never created he would not use them. The Christians say that God doesn't need to make anybody or anything. So his virtues are no good to him. The Church replies that they are good in themselves and that is all that matters.

## Improving the Argument from Aggregate Qualities

Berg's argument is good but it needs improvement.

The argument needs to be changed to:

If God exists then God possesses the qualities of infinite goodness, power, immortality, purpose giver etc.

Every one of these qualities may not exist in any one entity. Each quality if it exists exists in a few entities. Or sometimes some of the qualities may exist in one entity at most.

It is very unlikely that God could have all those qualities. It is infinitesimal. This is almost no chance.

Therefore there is virtually no chance that God exists. And especially when for example we know that God need not be a meaning giver at all!

The argument is excellent now!

## The Argument and God as Creator

God is infinite power according to believing philosophers. Some think, "It is easier for something finite to exist than for something infinite to exist. That is because infinite means unlimited power and finite means limited power."

The objection to that is that even a grain of sand though finite cannot exist unless some power brings it out of nothing. The distance between non-existing and existing is infinite. So in that sense, it is harder for a finite thing to exist than for an infinite power to exist.

If it is not true that a finite thing needs an infinitely powerful cause then it is clear that a finite thing existing is more likely than an infinite thing existing. An infinite creator or infinite cause is incoherent. That makes it possible that the existence of the universe as a finite thing is a refutation of the likelihood that an infinite God exists.

The doctrine of God and the universe being distinct because it is the distinction between creator and creation makes no sense. The doctrine of creation is incoherent. Reason says something cannot come from nothing. Christianity agrees and says something can be brought of nothing by God. That is like saying that A cannot be B at the same time in the same way but God can make it so. A becoming B though a contradiction is not as bad as the contradiction between nothing becoming something. That is an extreme contradiction.

## Morality and God

God believers are united in the thought that God is not important unless belief in him safeguards belief in objective morality. Christians use the moral argument for God. This argument says that we know that it is objectively wrong to torture babies and since we know that there is a God who has made it law that this is objectively wrong. But they say we know its objectively wrong and we work out that God exists from that. But if we know it then what do we need belief in God for? Also, it follows that if you need God in order to sanction morality then the more proof you have that God is real the better - the more you accept the objective moral values. God then is doing wrong by hiding himself so much. Moreover, if we should know that torturing babies is wrong we are saying we want to be less sure of it by bringing in the concept of a God to authenticate this morality. It is like saying you believe you should love your mother but you will not do it unless you get medical proof that she is your mother. It undermines real concern for objective morality. We all feel and sense that the argument: there is such a thing as doing right or doing wrong therefore there is a God who makes laws about right and wrong, does not follow. We don't understand it because it makes no sense. Yet manipulative Christians love to promote it. They have to for belief in God does not matter much if the argument is false or invalid. But the argument is more than silly - it insults morality and creates a concoction that resembles it but which is not in fact it.

What has all that to do with the aggregate qualities argument? It would be impossible for God to be the ground of objective morality. If the two go together then God is God. If they do not, then if there is a choice between God and morality then you choose morality so God is not God. Not only would it be unlikely for God to be God but impossible. He cannot be God. If it would be too unlikely for God to be the same as morality then the aggregate qualities argument is correct for morality should for believers be the most important quality of all.

Nobody can prove that torturing babies is wrong. You can only prove that it is probably wrong. The idea that some magical spirit is inspiring you to do it for some greater good that justifies it is irrefutable. If you do it with bad intent it follows that

it is the intention that is wrong not the action. Nothing we do is completely wrong. To describe something as bad means there is more bad in it than good not that it is totally bad. The thief who steals for his children is doing the bad thing of taking what belongs to another and doing it for the good end of feeding his children. If there is a God who only lets evil happen so he can use it for a good purpose then you are on less certain ground than ever if you think that torturing babies is probably wrong. The uncertainty is bigger for a believer in God than for an atheist.

It is simply too unlikely for God to be any help if we want to be more appreciative of morality and to live it out better.

The Chance that Believers Believe in the Right God is tiny

No two believers in God have exactly the same beliefs about him. Believers somehow make God and moral values identical.

God represents different values to different people.

For example, a person who thinks it is good to steal money to buy a baby from its abusive mother thinks God represents this value. A person who thinks stealing is very wrong even then thinks God represents this value. Then you have the people who disagree on how bad it is. Their views grade from one extreme to the other.

The chance then that any person believes in the exactly correct God is infinitesimally small (page 28).

The assumption that God has the qualities we want him to have is arrogant.

The Evidence Objection

Berg deals with the objection that there is evidence for the existence of God so that the argument is wrong. He points out that there is no real evidence and argues that those who claim to have experienced God are wrong and making unwarranted assumptions. He omits to point out that if reason says there is probably no God then evidence however good is no good. We only accept evidence as being probably true. So if evidence points to something improbable such as that an alien committed the Jack the Ripper murders we are not entitled to believe that an alien did it. What we do is hold that the evidence is wrong or misunderstood or planted or that there is better evidence out there that we know nothing about that puts a different spin on things.

If you think you see a sign in the sky that there is a God you could be right. But if God comes with extremely or very unlikely ideas then the evidence of the sign means nothing in comparison. God is still unlikely. The sign is evidence that signs are misleading or something misinterpreted as a sign.

Finally

Believers invest God with all kinds of qualities he does not need. It is too unlikely for him to have those qualities. If there is something it is unworthy of worship and religion needs to disband.