

## Study guide

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Craig, William L. *The Cosmological Argument From Plato to Leibniz*, Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2001, pp. 48-126. In chapter 3, Craig lays out the arguments of arabic philosophers and theologians. This is somewhat long and detailed; you should read up until page 61, unless perhaps you'd like to tackle some of the detailed arguments of Al-Kindi, al-Farai, Avicenna, Ghazali, and Averroes. A knowledge of arabic thinkers provides an opportunity for presenting the Faith to Muslims.

1. Islamic thinkers have contributed significantly to the cosmological argument.
2. Muslim philosophers have been historically divided into two groups.
  - 2.1. Avicenna represents the middle-eastern group (9th - 12th century)
  - 2.2. Averroes represents the western (Muslim Spain) group (10th - 12th century)
3. Muslim consideration of the cosmological argument can also be divided into two schools
  - 3.1. *Kalam* represents the cosmological argument based on temporal regress. The *mutakallim* focused on natural theology, or philosophical theism.
    - 3.1.1. Arabic scholasticism: they took the truth of Islam as a starting point (including the Quranic doctrine of creation), but they tried to make it intellectually consistent.
    - 3.1.2. They relied on *reason* and *atomism*; the continued existence of atoms were predicated entirely on God, who *created* and continually *sustains* them.
    - 3.1.3. Unlike Aristotelians, who believed that changes occur when something with *potential* changes into something *actual* (e.g. the potentially hot becomes hot), the mutakallim believed that changes occur when God recreates atoms in new states of being.
    - 3.1.4. There are not secondary causes; God is the prime and only cause.
    - 3.1.5. This led some mutakallim to determinism, fatalism, and the denial of free will.
    - 3.1.6. How did the mutakallimun argue for the existence of God
      - 3.1.6.1. Basically: the world is a *created thing*.

- 3.1.6.2. The created world had a beginning point in time.
  - 3.1.6.3. The world could have equally well existed or not existed, so the existence of the world must have a *determinant*, or a determining principle.
  - 3.1.6.4. The *determinant* is simply the will of God. (It is somewhat ambiguous whether the will of God acts as an efficient *cause* or a sufficient *reason*. According to Ghazali, God is the agent whose will is the efficient cause of the world.
- 3.2. *Falsafa* focused on arguments from contingency, from possible and necessary being. It is an intrusion of philosophy into Islamic culture. They did not take the Qur'an as the starting point, but neither did they ignore it as a source.
4. The Kalam cosmological argument goes like this:
- 4.1. Everything that begins to exist must have a cause.
  - 4.2. The World (universe) began to exist.
    - 4.2.1. Why? An infinity of time is nonsense. Proof: Jupiter orbits the sun every 12 years; Saturn orbits every 30 years. If the universe was infinitely old, then Jupiter and Saturn both orbited an infinite number of times. But clearly Jupiter must have orbited more times than Saturn.
  - 4.3. Therefore the World must have a cause.
5. Arabic philosophers may be credited with the (temporal form) of the modern argument from contingency.
- 5.1. Something that is contingent depends on something else. For example, your existence is contingent, in that it cannot be explained without reference to your parents. Your existence is contingent upon your parents.
  - 5.2. Generally speaking, an *explanation* of a contingent thing must be *different* from or *outside of* the thing itself.
  - 5.3. The world is composed entirely of contingent things and is therefore, as a whole, contingent.