

[Al-Ghazali's Argument for the Eternity of the World and the Problem of Divine Immutability and Timelessness]

[Original Topic]

**Al-Ghazali's Argument for the Eternity of the World in Tahafut al-Falasifa
(Discussion One, Proofs 1 and 2a) and the Problem of Divine Immutability
and Timelessness**

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Introduction

In the history of ideas, there is no question that the figure of al-Ghazali stands out as one of the greatest thinkers of the West. Touted as the greatest Sunni theologian of all time, his polemic against the Neoplatonic philosophers, chiefly Ibn Sina, dealt a deadly blow to philosophy in the Islamic world.¹ Born in 1058 CE in Tus, a city in modern day Iran, al-Ghazali began his studies in jurisprudence, moving on to study theology under the great theologian al-Juwayni. Al-Ghazali was fortunate enough to secure a teaching position in the Nizamiya College of Baghdad, one of a number of seminaries established by Nizam al-Mulk, the vizier for the Saljuk sultan, for the defense of Sunni theology against the Isma‘ili Fatimid caliphate in Egypt. Al-Ghazali soon became a popular teacher and renowned defender of Ash‘arite Sunni theology.² After five years of teaching in Baghdad, al-Ghazali became disillusioned with his profession and entered a period of wandering, monastic-like travels. His disillusionment was founded, no doubt, in an intellectual and spiritual crisis of skepticism that led him to a study of philosophy, and then into the mystical practice of sufism.³ Al-Ghazali’s prominence as a legalist, theologian, apologist, and then mystic, cast him into the role of religious reformer, the Muslim parallel of Augustine and Aquinas in Christendom. After his travels, al-Ghazali eventually returned to teaching at the Nizamiya College in Nishapur, only to die five years later in 1111 CE.

Written after al-Ghazali’s period of private philosophical study, and finished in January 1094 CE, the *Tahafut al-Falasifa* had the aim of “pursuing the critique of reason which underlay his bout of skepticism, and was trying to show that reason is not self-sufficient in the field of metaphysics and is unable out of itself to produce a complete world-view.”⁴ Even though, as Montgomery Watt explains, al-Ghazali personally held certain doctrines that he refuted in the *Tahafut*.⁵ Al-Ghazali wanted to show that reason itself “cannot prove that the world has a creator, that two gods are impossible, that God is not a body, that He knows both others and Himself, and that the soul is a self-subsistent entity.”⁶

Al-Ghazali, in a form reminiscent of Plato and Justin Martyr’s dialogues, created dialogue partners with a group called “the philosophers.” Whether this representation of the Islamic philosophers with whom he was in dialogue with is true or not, is a subject for another essay. This essay will examine al-Ghazali’s argument for the temporal finiteness of the universe, as found in the first area of discussion with the philosophers. It will show that the criticisms given by al-Ghazali’s dialogue partners remain largely unanswered. Given that, this paper will provide alternative philosophical proofs that allow al-Ghazali to uphold his central thesis, while maintaining some air of the orthodoxy he sought to defend.

Tahafut al-Falasifa: Discussion One, Proofs 1 and 2a

Al-Ghazali began his first discussion by noting that there are, historically, three philosophical views on the world's past eternity. The first and most widely held position was that of "upholding [the world's] past eternity: that it has never ceased to exist with God, exalted be He, to be an effect of His, to exist along with Him, not be posterior to Him in time."⁷ The second position, related to Plato, suggested that the world was "generated and originated in time." The third position was agnostic in nature, and is found in the works of Galen; it holds that one can never know "whether the world is pre-eternal or temporally originated."⁸

From these, al-Ghazali turned his polemic to the most widely held position, believing that this position was heretical and had led many Muslims away from their religion.⁹ Al-Ghazali accuses the philosophers of producing confusion by describing creation as Neoplatonic emanation, instead of a creation *ex nihilo*. "The philosophers," comments Watt, "had been adapting Neoplatonic cosmology to Qur'anic conceptions by equating emanation with creation."¹⁰ Though the philosophers had many proofs for an eternal universe, al-Ghazali chose to focus on three of the most powerful, considering all others products of "feeble imagining." Within this refutation of the arguments for the eternity of the world, can be discovered the *kalam* cosmological argument for the finite temporality of the world.¹¹

The cosmological argument, according to Majid Fakhry, is considered the "classical argument for the existence of God in the West."¹² Though the cosmological argument was found in philosophers such as al-Farabi, Ibn Sina and Ibn Rushd,¹³ based on an infinite contingency, al-Ghazali argued that upholding the eternity of the universe makes the affirmation of a Creator pointless.¹⁴ This was based on a traditional rejection of the concept of efficient causality,¹⁵ seen clearly in Discussion Seventeen of the *Tahafut*, where al-Ghazali "repudiates the validity of the causal principle...on the ground that the alleged necessity of this principle is a mere illusion."¹⁶ Efficient causality was, according to al-Ghazali, an unwarranted inference based only on an apparent observation of a correlation between temporal events. It is God; rather, who directly creates each and every action in the universe in each and every moment.

Therefore, with "nearly a quarter of the *Incoherence* devoted to the issue of whether the universe had a beginning in time...Ghazali ardently upholds the traditional *kalam* argument."¹⁷ The *kalam* form of the cosmological argument was based in the traditional Ash'arite (along with the Mu'tazilah¹⁸) arguments for God's existence - the demonstration of the universe as a created thing.¹⁹ Fakhry notes,

The general procedure of the Mutakallims in proving the temporality of the universe considered in showing that the world, which they defined as everything other than God, was composed of atoms and accidents. Now the accidents, they argued, cannot endure for two instants of time, but are continually created by God who creates or annihilates them at will.²⁰

Though al-Ghazali did not assert this doctrine explicitly in his first discussion, it factors into his argument implicitly, along with appearing explicitly later in the philosopher's question about an atom receiving

whiteness or blackness from God's will. This is important to note, because, for the Ash'arite theologian, the world of atoms and accidents was in a continuous state of change.²¹ A change that was directly actualized by the power and will of God alone.

Al-Ghazali's *kalam* cosmological argument for finite temporality of the universe can clearly be found in his *Iqtisad* and *Jerusalem Letter*, while it is only found implicitly in the *Tahafut*, and was diagramed by the following syllogism.

1- Whatever began to exist has a cause for its coming into being.
(Premise)

2- The universe began to exist. (Premise)

Therefore, the universe has a cause for coming into being. (From 1-2)²²

Al-Ghazali, in accordance with common sense, perceived that the first premise is indisputable. Therefore, it became important to demonstrate the truth of the second premise - that the universe is finite and began to exist. In order to do so, al-Ghazali used two lines of attack: first, showing that the philosophers had failed to demonstrate the impossibility of the creation of a temporal entity from an eternal being; second, that the beginning of the universe is demonstrable.²³

Argument for the Eternity of the Universe

Al-Ghazali began his first proof by summarizing the argument between theologians and philosophers, and started with his over arching premise: “That it is impossible for the temporal to proceed from an eternal.”²⁴ Al-Ghazali recorded the philosopher’s argument, that without perceiving that the world proceeded from God co-eternally, the world would remain in the realm of pure possibility, since “existence would not have had that which gives [it] preponderance.”²⁵ If the world did come into existence temporally, then the One who gave it existence would have had to “come into existence anew.” For if such an Originator did not come into existence anew, then the world would remain in the realm of possibility. Yet, if the Originator did come into existence anew, the question arises, “who originated this giver of preponderance and why did it originate now and not earlier?”²⁶ If the Eternal never changes, consequently, then either nothing ever comes into existence or “it comes into existence perpetually.” For God cannot exist in a state of refraining to act, then move into a state of acting. If this is not so, then the question arises, why was the world created at one point and not another? Any answer given here, by the theologians, can only infer “a change in the states of affairs in the Eternal by way of power, instrument, time, purpose, or nature [that which] is impossible.”²⁷

Al-Ghazali offered some possible replies to this argument.²⁸ William Lane Craig comments

Al-Ghazali’s first point is a clear repudiation of the notion of perfect cause. God is not the cause of the world in the sense that a cause is that which necessarily accompanies its effect. But God is a cause in [a] second sense, a free agent that precedes its effect. Thus, the effect (the universe) need not follow upon the heels of the cause (God), but can appear a finite number of years ago when God willed from eternity that it should.²⁹

Al-Ghazali’s reply began with the assertion that God willed from all eternity to create the world at a specific point.³⁰ Al-Ghazali admits that an opponent would respond that this still has the temporal occurrence of the world being necessitated and caused. And just as it is impossible to have an event exist without a cause, it is just as impossible to have a cause delaying an event, when all the conditions that are needed to cause such an event exist and are ready to actualize the event. For such preconditions would necessitate the cause of an event or thing. As applied to God and creation, this means having a willer, the will, and having the relation to what is willed occur, but not having the object of will come into existence. This would mean that there be change within God, because there would be a difference between states of affairs and being before and after creation, along with the need for these causes to come into existence anew.³¹

Actions coming about through human intention are not delayed unless there is some impediment. “Once intent and ability are realized, [all] obstacles being removed, the delay of what is intended is not rationally intelligible.” It is only in the case of “resolve” that a delay can be considered, for “resolve is not sufficient for the existence of the act.” Therefore, “if the eternal will belongs to the same category as that of our intention to act, then, unless there is an impediment, neither the delay of

what was intended nor the [temporal] priority of the intent are conceivable.” If the eternal will, however, is similar to human resolve, in that resolve cannot be a cause itself, there would then need to be a “renewed intentional upsurge” at the time of action to bring something into existence. Such arising of a new intent within the Eternal would entail “upholding change in the Eternal.” Furthermore, the question of why such an upsurge of intention would occur at one point in time rather than another continues. Therefore, a necessitating cause with intention to act and no impediment to action, having all conditions for an action fulfilled, would have an action occur. To say this, and then affirm that this action was delayed, only to come about at some future point with no new upsurge in intention or condition is impossible.³²

Al-Ghazali retorted by asking how the philosophers can know that the impossibility of the eternal will relates to temporal creation. Is it through “necessity of reason or its theoretical reflection?” Al-Ghazali wondered if the philosophers have an implied middle term between “eternal will” and “temporal creation”? If there is a middle term, which would make it a theoretical reflection, then al-Ghazali asks the philosophers to show this middle term. If, however, this knowledge is understood by necessity of reason, then why is it that the vast numbers of those who affirm temporal creation do not share this knowledge? It is, therefore, according to al-Ghazali, the burden of the philosopher to make a “demonstrative proof according to the condition of logic that would show the impossibility of this.” For, according to al-Ghazali, all that the philosophers have shown is “an expression of unlikelihood,” and an analogy between divine and human will. Such an analogy, according to al-Ghazali, was false, for the eternal will does not resemble the human will.

Al-Ghazali commented that a philosopher might reply that one knows through necessity of reason that “a necessitating cause with all its conditions fulfilled is inconceivable without a necessitated effect.” To this, al-Ghazali answered that the philosophers resort to saying something similar, that divine knowledge is different than human knowledge when it comes to the philosopher’s belief that God’s knowledge does not necessitate any change in the one divine essence. That is, there is no multiplicity in knowing multiple universals, or addition because of knowledge. Al-Ghazali admitted that some philosophers have seen the impossibility of this theory, which was already denied by Ash‘arite theology, and have put forth a belief that God thinks of God’s self alone - making God the apprehender, the intellect, and the intelligible of divine knowledge.³³ Al-Ghazali believed that such an affirmation was foolish, for it would make God into the Creator who is not aware of his own creation.

Argument for Finite Temporality of the Universe

From here, al-Ghazali turned to his philosophical support for denying the eternity of the world. Craig outlines the argument as follows:

- 1- There are temporal phenomena in the world.
- 2- These are caused by other temporal phenomena.
- 3- The series of temporal phenomena cannot regress infinitely.
- 4- Therefore, the series must stop at the Eternal.³⁴

The first point is obvious, in that it is based in necessity of reason, for humans have sensual experiences of things coming into being and passing away from existence. Craig makes note of the second premise based on secondary causation, an idea that al-Ghazali thoroughly rejects.³⁵

This leads to al-Ghazali's third premise, which was the crux of the argument. Al-Ghazali argued, in three different places, that science and philosophy speak of a temporal beginning to the universe. Al-Ghazali began by noting the contradiction in saying that the revolutions of the planets are eternal, while at the same time one can determine the length of their rotations around the world. "The world's past eternity is impossible because it leads to affirming circular movements of the heavenly sphere whose number is infinite and whose individual units are innumerable, even though they [divide into] a sixth, a fourth, a half [and so on]."³⁶

Next, al-Ghazali asked if one could determine whether the number of planet rotations would be odd or even? If one states that they are either: odd or even, neither odd nor even, or both odd and even, they are being irrational. For, "if you were to say that the number is even, and the even becomes odd by [the addition of] one, then how can the infinite be in need of one?" Or how can the odd be made even in an infinite system? One is then forced to say that there is either odd or even, for the infinite is not like the finite, in that numeration is not equated.³⁷

Al-Ghazali pointed to this concept in the philosopher's doctrine of the soul. Affirming that there are an infinite number of souls does not match with necessity of reason, in that there cannot be a numerated infinity. Some philosophers, according to al-Ghazali, have resorted to the Platonic theory of souls, that there was one primordial soul that was divided into each human, and all these separated souls will be reunited one day. This idea was "repugnant" to al-Ghazali, for, according to rational necessity, one could not say that the soul of one person is the same as another,³⁸ in that each person necessarily knows that their soul is unique to them and that they are not similar to another. Moreover, if all souls were identical, then they would be equal in regard to their attributes and cognition, which experience witnesses that they are not. Furthermore, how can an infinite one, here a single infinite soul, be divided into two or one thousand? An infinite cannot be divisible. As such, philosophically speaking, asserting that the universe is infinite and eternal is illogical.

Second, later in the same proof, al-Ghazali turned to a second objection to the philosophers' doctrine. "You deem the occurrence of a temporal event through an eternal improbable when it is incumbent on you to acknowledge it. For in the world there are events which have cause. If temporal events

were to depend on [other] temporal events *ad infinitum*, this would be impossible.”³⁹ If this were so, there is no need to acknowledge a Maker.

Al-Ghazali recorded that the philosophers might reply that their rejection was not the improbability of the temporal event proceeding from an eternal, rather, they

Deem improbable the proceeding from an eternal an event that is a first event. For the state of coming into existence does not differ from what precedes it with respect to the preponderance of the direction of existence, whether in terms of the presence of a temporal moment, an organ, a condition, a nature, a purpose, or any cause. But if the event is not the first event, then it is possible [for a temporal event] to proceed from [an eternal] with the temporal occurrence of some other thing, such as a preparedness in the receptacle, the presence of suitable time, or something of that sort.⁴⁰

Al-Ghazali responded that putting aside ideas of preparedness, suitable time, and something coming anew, the question remained that these temporal events are either infinite or finite, ending at the eternal.⁴¹

Al-Ghazali then commented that philosophers will appeal to their theory of emanation, stating that the basis of all temporal events is the “perpetual, eternal circular of the heavens...[based in] the souls of the heavens.”⁴² For just as the human soul moves the human body, so too do the heavenly souls move the heavenly bodies. It is these movements that cause temporal events to occur. In response, al-Ghazali asked if these circular motions of the heavens are temporal or eternal themselves. For if they are eternal, “how does [this foundation] becomes a principle for the first temporal event? If temporal, it would require another temporal event, [and so on,] regressing [*ad infinitum*].”⁴³

Third, in Proof 2a, al-Ghazali assessed that when the philosophers spoke of God as prior to the universe, it was a priority of essence, not time.⁴⁴ Being a priority of essence and not time means that the universe can exist co-eternally with its cause - God. Similar to the movement of a ring by the hand’s movement, or the movement of the water by a boat, the cause is co-existent with the effect. For if the Creator’s priority to the world was temporal, the philosophers argue, then “God would have preceded the world by a lengthy duration.”⁴⁵ And if one asserts a concept of finite time, then it seems contradictory to say, “before the existence of time, infinite time would have existed,” especially since time is a measure of motion.

Al-Ghazali replied that “time is originated and created, and before it there was no time at all.”⁴⁶ Thus, God was prior to both the universe and time, meaning that the essence of the Creator existed when the essence of the world did not exist. Furthermore, there is no difference between asserting that God was and the world was not, or stating that God will be and the world will be not - the future tense, as the philosophers might uphold. For this statement is relative, since the “future itself can become a past and be expressed in the past tense.”⁴⁷ The problem in not seeing the timelessness of God is a problem of imagination not logic, for argument or hypothesis cannot demonstrate this argument to the “estimative faculty.”⁴⁸

The Remaining Question of Divine Will

For al-Ghazali, all of this is to say, that the philosophers cannot affirm the eternity of the world and thereby deny the connection between an eternal will and a temporal creation. The philosopher's question, however, remained: what "would have differentiated a specific time from what precedes and succeeds it when it is not impossible for [any of] the prior and posterior [times] to have been willed [as the beginning of creation]?"⁴⁹ Another instance was the theological position that an object receives whiteness or blackness from the divine will, though the object is equally open to receiving either whiteness or blackness. What was it within the divine will that determines this object to be either white or black? How are white and black differentiated in the divine will, if the object is equally receptive to either and there is supposedly no difference between the two? Much like in the creation of the world, what differentiated one time from another, when there is no difference between periods of time or between the existence and non-existence of the world?

Craig notes that, in response, al-Ghazali used the "principle of determination," which is found in the theology of the *mutakallim*. "Since prior to the existence of the universe, it was equally possible for it to be or not-to-be, a determinant whereby the possibility of being could prevail over non-being was required; and this determinant was God."⁵⁰ The problem in understanding what the *mutakallim* mean by this principle is whether or not it spoke of a determinant as an efficient cause or reason.⁵¹ Craig states: "according to al-Ghazali, the principle of determination, in the sense of sufficient reason, is simply invalid with regards to God."⁵² Thus, for al-Ghazali, God as determinant was believed to be God as an efficient cause of the existence of the universe.⁵³ As such, al-Ghazali replied that the world came into existence when it did, through the divine will (the efficient cause).⁵⁴ The will is an attribute of the divine and like the attribute of knowledge, which possesses particular characteristics, the will is "an attribute whose function is to differentiate a thing from its similar."⁵⁵ This, however, may seem contradictory to the philosopher, who might respond that the definition of two things being "similar" is that there is no way to discern between the two.⁵⁶

Al-Ghazali answered that the philosophers might be confusing the fact that human will and divine will are not analogous, that in fact, there may be a problem with language at this point.⁵⁷ Since there is an attribute of God that is able to choose between two similar things, the term "will" may be problematic. Since religious law, however, permits the use of the word "will" to apply to this attribute, it is sufficient for use.⁵⁸

Ibn Rushd highlighted this in his response to al-Ghazali; in his *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, he noted that there is a difference between will and action.⁵⁹ Providing a possible solution to al-Ghazali's dilemma, Ibn Rushd proposed that

To suppose that the world, willed by God eternally, has come into being after a certain lapse of time is logically admissible, but not that it has followed His action after such a lapse of time, unless we assume that He was impeded by some defect or impotence, which is absurd.⁶⁰

The universe, therefore, was a product of God's power and action, not a product of the will. This is important since, Ibn Rushd, according to Fakhry, stated that the notion of an "eternal will" is contradictory, just as a square circle or a married bachelor would be a contradiction. Since "human will" is a force or state of compulsion, and even free will is a force of desire, God cannot have will, for it would involve change in the divine essence. As such, one can only speak of an "eternal will" in an analogous sense.⁶¹

Problems of Time and Divine Immutability

Al-Ghazali's first discussion contained two problems, also found in medieval philosophical theology in general: divine immutability and timelessness. Based on al-Ghazali's theological arguments, this portion of the paper will discuss these problems within al-Ghazali's discussion, and suggest a possible solution to them.

The medieval concept of divine immutability was clearly articulated by the Islamo-Aristotelian influenced Christian theologian, Thomas Aquinas, in which he noted that God cannot have potentiality, change, movement, addition or extension to his being, because he is the first being.⁶² Though vehemently against all ideas Aristotelian, al-Ghazali did not question the immutability of God. This, even though his dialogue partner accused the theologians' position of promoting it. Stating that if the world came into existence temporally, God would have "come into anew," or the world would remain in the realm of possibility, led to a promotion of divine mutability. If this were so, there would be change in the eternal, which never changes.⁶³

In reply, al-Ghazali stated that God had willed from all eternity that the creation of the universe would occur at a specific point in time. The philosophers, however, would respond by saying that to have an event delayed after all conditions for existence have been met, would still imply change in God, because there would be a difference between states of affairs and being before and after creation, along with the need for these causes to come into existence anew.⁶⁴ The philosophers wondered if, then, one could invoke the idea of "resolve," in that, God could have resolved from eternity to create the world at a particular point. The problem was, however, that when the time came for creation, a "renewed intentional upsurge" would have had to occur within God to have a cause for creation - which would entail divine change once again.⁶⁵

Though, according to Fakhry, al-Ghazali's assertion that the creation of the universe as an act of divine will is sufficient and bypasses "the objection of the Neoplatonists that creation in time would entail necessarily a change in the divine."⁶⁶ Al-Ghazali's only explicit response to the accusation of divine change was to say that the philosophers held the same problem in their doctrine of divine knowledge.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the problem of divine immutability remains for al-Ghazali. William Hasker comments that

In the philosophical lineage stretching from Parmenides to Plato to Plotinus, there is a strong metaphysical and valuational preference for permanence over change. True Being, in this tradition, must of necessity be changeless; whatever change, on the other hand, enjoys a substandard sort of being if any at all.⁶⁸

Al-Ghazali had agreed with the philosophers on this doctrine of immutability when such an agreement was unnecessary. Hasker argues that Plato's argument was faulty, setting up a false dichotomy, in that Plato falsely assumed that change was either change for the better or worse. Change, however, is not always for the better or worse. A clock, for example, registers a particular time (say 3:30 PM) at one particular point of the day, and at another point it registers another time (say 4:00 PM). There

has been change within the clock, but such change was not better or worse, it was simply a change.⁶⁹ Affirming the possibility of divine mutability, then, requires one to re-define what is meant by divine perfection.

Al-Ghazali, despite upholding divine immutability and having shown from natural science and philosophy that the universe was temporally finite, did not answer the charge of the philosophers.⁷⁰ If the universe is finite, and there was a time when God existed but the universe did not exist, then God must be mutable. The philosophers, in al-Ghazali's words, commented that before the existence of the universe,

...infinite time would have existed, and this is contradictory; for the reason of the affirmation of the finitude of time is impossible. If then, time, which is an expression of the measure of motion, is necessarily pre-eternal, motion is necessarily pre-eternal, and that which is motion and through duration time endure is necessarily eternal.⁷¹

Al-Ghazali responded by saying that "time is originated and created and before it there was no time at all."⁷² Interestingly, al-Ghazali, again, as Michael Marmura has pointed out, follows an Aristotelian understanding of time being a measurement of motion.⁷³ Therefore, God was prior to both the universe and time, neither existed until they were created. This was a natural conclusion from al-Ghazali's affirmation of the temporally finite creation and the immutability of God. Brian Leftow comments, "God's being immutable would entail God's being timeless,"⁷⁴ as seen in the following diagram:

- 1- Necessarily, if anything is God, it acts.
- 2- Necessarily, every temporal act is of finite duration. Therefore...
- 3- Necessarily, every temporal agent changes in every act from acting to not acting or vice-versa. Therefore...
- 4- Necessarily, if God does not change, God is not temporal. Therefore...
- 5- Necessarily, if God cannot change, God cannot be temporal.⁷⁵

Therefore, "if God is not located in time, it follows that God does not change. In fact, as whatever is timeless is necessarily so, if God is timeless, God cannot change."⁷⁶ To assert God as timeless would force a theologian to additionally assert that God was immutable. For, as Garrett DeWisse has pointed out, a timeless being would be immaterial, necessary and immutable.⁷⁷ If, then, al-Ghazali held to a doctrine of divine timelessness, his theory that God eternally willed the creation to occur could be sound. For any immutable being would be bound by its past choices and could do no other than what this being has intended to do from the beginning.

The problem of God's immutability, however, remains even with the doctrine of timelessness. As Leftow indicates, the classical doctrine of God in Judeo-Christian-Islamic theology holds that God is also omnipresent. Since the world and time were created at the same moment, space, like time, would be temporally finite. Thus, how can God be omnipresent when space is not existent? Change in the divine, therefore, would have to have taken place when the universe was created.⁷⁸

Furthermore, "no immutable being can be aware of change occurring. If no object of an immutable God's experience can change, God must have a changeless experience of the world."⁷⁹ "The notion that deity is 'Absolute'

has meant that God is not really related to the world.”⁸⁰ As Hasker points out, “temporal events exist in time as the medium of temporal succession, so it would seem that a being which experiences them directly must itself exist in time and experience succession - but of course, this is just what a timeless being cannot do.”⁸¹ Hasker outlines the problem as such:

- 1- If God is directly aware of a thing, that thing is metaphysically present to God. (Premise)
- 2- If God knows temporal beings, God knows all their temporal stages. (Premise)
- 3- If God is directly aware of temporal beings, all of their temporal stages are metaphysically present to God. (From 1-2)
- 4- If the temporal stages of a temporal being are metaphysically present in God, they are present either sequentially or simultaneously. (Premise)
- 5- If God is timeless, nothing is present to God sequentially. (Premise)
- 6- If God is timeless and is directly aware of temporal beings, all their temporal stages are simultaneously, metaphysically present to God. (From 3-5)
- 7- If the temporal stages of a temporal being are simultaneously, metaphysically present to God, those stages exist simultaneously. (Premise)
- 8- The temporal stages of a temporal being do not exist simultaneously. (Premise)
- 9- If God is timeless, God is not directly aware of temporal beings. (From 6-8)⁸²

Such an idea would counter al-Ghazali’s criticism of the philosopher’s doctrine of divine knowledge of particulars. It is obvious from Discussion One of the *Tahafut*,⁸³ as well as Discussions Eleven, Twelve and Thirteen, that al-Ghazali wants to avoid saying that God is not aware of particulars.⁸⁴ Al-Ghazali, therefore, is caught in a dilemma, either he affirms that God is timeless and ignorant of particulars or that God is not timeless and is personal.

From the *Tahafut*, along with his sufi tendencies, it would be likely that al-Ghazali would wish to affirm the personal nature of God in relation to creation. As such, al-Ghazali could have given up his premise that God is timeless, instead holding to some notion of absolute or metaphysical time. Gregory Ganssle outlines this logic:

- 1- If God is personal, God is temporal.
- 2- If God is temporal, time exists.
- 3- God is necessarily a person.
- 4- God is necessarily temporal.
- 5- Time, therefore, exists necessarily.⁸⁵

This affirmation that God and time are necessary would have allowed al-Ghazali to reject the Aristotelian notion of time that was held by the philosophers. The philosophers, however, in al-Ghazali’s representation of them, seemed to be implicitly aware of some notion of absolute time, in their question of how God determined one moment over another, in time, to create the world. They, no doubt, wanted to show that the world needs to be

eternal, yet in granting al-Ghazali the possibility of a temporally finite universe, a notion of absolute time, time that exists before and after creation, may have been admissible. It is this notion of absolute time that can make al-Ghazali's argument consistent once again.

This would then divide our notion of time into two concepts, physical time and metaphysical (or absolute) time. DeWisse defines physical time as referring "to time in any temporal world containing physical objects;" and defines metaphysical time as "the succession of moments or events through which concrete objects persist, but since concrete objects need not be material objects, metaphysical time is not identical to physical time."⁸⁶ If absolute time exists, God need not be timeless, for God could be, in DeWisse's terminology, omnitemporal. In other words, God's divine eternity is not timeless, but infinite and everlasting temporal duration.

By definition, the same relation that constituted by any other type of time - causation, constitutes metaphysical or absolute time. Since, as Michael Robinson states, "time devoid of events is meaningless,"⁸⁷ for there is need for some movement or change. As it relates to God, according to DeWisse, it is the "causal succession of mental states in God's conscious life [that] grounds the flow and direction of metaphysical time."⁸⁸ This involves denying any doctrine of immutability, for it would entail that God's mind, anthropomorphically speaking, could move from successive foci of thought. Additionally, if God is considered the Creator of this universe, then it is absolute time that forms the ground of physical time in the universe.

An entity that is metaphysically temporal, existing at all times, therefore, exists necessarily. Also, the omnitemporal entity would exist in a temporal stream where the metaphysical "now" relates to the physical "now." Thus, "an omnitemporal entity will be temporally present at every present moment of any possible physical time."⁸⁹ This, then, alleviates the denial of God knowing particulars and the implication of an impersonal God. A temporal notion of God, therefore, allows: a period of metaphysical time to pass before the creation of the universe; for divine action in the physically temporal universe; and for theology to allow God to have a pre-existing determination of when the world will come into being (though not necessary if Platonic notions of change are disregarded).

The problem of asserting absolute time, according to Robinson, "is that it is allegedly incompatible to Einstein's Special and General theories of relativity."⁹⁰ Craig answers this criticism, in his article "The Elimination of Absolute Time by the Special Theory of Relativity."⁹¹ Focusing on the distinction made between absolute (metaphysical) time and relative (physical) time in Isaac Newton's cosmology, Craig suggests that philosophers and scientists have often overlooked the close attachment between God and absolute time in Newton's writings.⁹² God constitutes absolute time and "because God is eternal, there exists an everlasting duration" - hence absolute time is contingent on God.⁹³ Physical time, however, is relative and relativistic, being dependent on physical motion. Einstein's positivistic theory, therefore, can only correct Newton's notion of physical time, not absolute time that is not empirically detectable, but philosophically grounded.⁹⁴

If absolute time, therefore, is logically coherent, and establishes a foundation for the *kalam* cosmological argument, as seen in Craig's contemporary defense of the argument, al-Ghazali would have been able to deny Aristotelian and Neoplatonic notions of the eternity of the world, and have developed a new philosophical foundation for his theological affirmation.

Conclusion

Al-Ghazali's *kalam* cosmological defense for the world's finite existence proved a challenge for Islamic philosophy, one that even Ibn Rushd was unable to put to rest. In the history of the cosmological argument in Islam, al-Ghazali's presentation demonstrates a high point. Fakhry concludes that

Al-Ghazali's major contribution to the discussion of the problem was twofold. In the first place, he brought out in a very forcible way the radical opposition between the teaching of Islam and the Aristotelian conception of the universe developing itself eternally and everlasting; and in the second place, he gave added point to the arguments already advanced by the Mutakallims, by amplifying and perfecting them.⁹⁵

Nevertheless, this paper has shown that al-Ghazali did not effectively answer the charge of divine immutability. That, in fact, his solution of asserting the timelessness or atemporality of God only served to make the charge more severe.

As a possible solution, this paper suggests that al-Ghazali needed not to deny divine mutability or divine temporality. That, in fact, if he promoted similar positions to the ones outlined above, his argument of the temporal finiteness of the universe would have laid on a more solid foundation.

To say this, however, is not to deny al-Ghazali's powerful impact on Western philosophy. As Rahman comments

He was thus destined to prove the first and greatest reformer of Sufism, for which at the same time he secured a place in the structure of Islamic orthodoxy. And, what is even more important, he brought the formal, dogmatic formulation of the orthodox *kalam* into contact with the living religion, thereby revitalizing them and infusing into them the original spirit of Revelation. He thus dealt a powerful blow to pure scholasticism, softened the dogmatic character of the creed and established a vital nerve between the inner and the exterior aspects of religion.⁹⁶

Al-Ghazali, therefore, is highly commended for his ingenious foray into philosophical arguments in favor of the existence of a finite universe that responds to the act of a sovereign God.

Notes

1 Richard C. Martin, Mark R. Woodman, with Dwi S. Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997) 1, 35.

2 For a fuller biography on al-Ghazali, see Majid Fakhry, *A History of Islamic Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983) 217-219; and W. Montgomery Watt, *Muslim Intellectual: A Study of Al-Ghazali* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1963). Also see al-Ghazali's biography, *Deliverance from Error*, Richard Joseph McCarthy, S.J. (ed.) (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1980).

3 For discussion on al-Ghazali life, works, sufism and religious reform, see Ignaz Goldziher, *Introduction to Islamic Theology and Law* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1981) 217-233.

4 Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 58.

5 Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 59. Note also that Fazlur Rahman agreed that although al-Ghazali overall rejected the Neoplatonic and Aristotelian philosophies, since they could not provide religious certainty, he did adopt the dualism of body and soul found in sufism. See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979) 95.

6 Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 59.

7 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, Michael E. Marmura (trans. & ed.) (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000) 12.

8 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 12.

9 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 2.

10 Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 60.

11 Al-Ghazali also invokes other arguments for the existence of God. Binyamin Abrahamov writes, "the argument from design figures also in the writings of al-Ghazali (d.1111). This argument, says al-Ghazali, being acquired, since it is taught by the Kur'an, shows the right way to know God and achieve certainty with regard to divine matters." See Binyamin Abrahamov, *Al-Kasim B. Ibrahim on the Proof of God's Existence* (The Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1990) 5.

12 Majid Fakhry, "Classical Islamic Arguments for the Existence of God," *Muslim World* 47:1957, 133-145. Fakhry points briefly to the existence of the argument, in two different forms, in philosophers like Aristotle, Ibn Sina, and Ibn Rushd along with a second formulation found in Islamic, Jewish and Christian theologians.

13 See William Lane Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz* (London, Macmillan, 1980).

14 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 27. For a contemporary defense of the *kalam* cosmological argument, see William Lane Craig, "The Finitude of the Past and the Existence of God," in William Lane Craig and Quentin Smith, *Theism, Atheism and Big Bang Cosmology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1993) 3-76.

15 For a clear example of the concept of causality in Islamic philosophy, see Michael E. Marmura, "The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality in Avicenna," in Michael E. Marmura (ed.), *Islamic Theology and Philosophy: Studies in Honor of George F. Hourani* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1984) 172-187. Marmura states that while rooted in Aristotelian discussions of efficient causality, Ibn Sina's theory of efficient causality has been modified and expanded with a Neoplatonic flavor, since it occurs in his very un-Aristotelian theory of emanation. For Ibn Sina, divine efficient causality is based in the otherness of the divine, for it is a cause that bestows existence on that which differs from itself. It is broader than simply a motion from potentiality to actuality, which is secondary causality, for it is a cause coming from something other than itself. Ibn Sina's theory of divine efficient causality, therefore, is contingent on his emanation doctrine, in which the heavens are moved by their souls and the souls are moved by their reflection on the divine. Thus, God becomes the supreme cause, being that it is from God that the first emanation occurs. When emanation occurs in the sub-lunar world, it achieves a level of plurality unseen in other emanations. Al-Ghazali's problem with emanation, and thereby with an infinitely temporal universe, is the assertion that within this scheme of emanation, cause

and effect are co-existent and co-eternal. God, therefore, is prior to the universe only in the sense that his essence is prior to the essences that emanated from him.

16 Fakhry, "Classic Islamic Argument" 136.

17 Craig, *The Cosmological Argument from Plato to Leibniz*, 98.

18 The Mu'tazilah and Ash'arite were two schools of theologians in the history of Islam, the former held primacy in early Islam and the latter held primacy from the eighth century until the present. Al-Ghazali was an Ash'arite, a school committed to the divine sovereignty of God. Some made the claim that Mu'tazilah theology, with its focus on human reason, is rising to prominence once again in post-colonial Muslim countries. See Martin, Woodman, with Atmaja, *Defenders of Reason in Islam: Mu'tazilism from Medieval School to Modern Symbol* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1997)

19 William Lane Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (London: Macmillan, 1979), 7-8. Craig lists the six arguments typically employed by the *mutakallimun* for this demonstration: the argument from the contrary nature of simple bodies; the argument from experience; the argument from the finitude of motion, time and temporal objects; the argument from the world's composition of finite parts; the argument from contingency; the argument from temporality. Craig notes that the first and second arguments were not influential, and that the third and fourth arguments come from the Alexandria Christian theologian John Philoponus (Yahya al-Nahwi). See also Fakhry, "Classical Islamic Arguments," 135.

20 Fakhry, "Classical Islamic Arguments," 136.

21 For a further discussion on the *mutakallim* doctrine of change with atoms and accidents, see Andrey Smirnov, "Causality in Islamic Thought," in E. Deutch and R. Bontekoe, *A Companion to World Philosophies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997) 493-503.

22 Peter Kreeft & Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994) 58. This syllogism is based from al-Ghazali's works, the *Iqtisad* and the *Jerusalem Letter*.

23 Craig, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 44.

24 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 13.

25 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 13.

26 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 13.

27 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 14.

28 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 15.

29 Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 12.

30 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 15.

31 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 16. Al-Ghazali offers the analogy of a man pronouncing divorce from his wife. Once a man makes the legal pronouncement of divorce, and separation does not occur, "it is inconceivable for it to occur thereafter." For the actual pronouncement is the "cause of the judgment." The only way a delay in the affect of the pronouncement could occur is if the man affixes some condition to the utterance (e.g. the divorce will occur upon the coming of the next morning), making the judgment relate to a future expected event.

32 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 17.

33 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 18.

34 Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 45.

35 Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 44-46. Craig concludes that this is a premise al-Ghazali grants to his opponents for the sake of the argument.

36 Al-Ghazali states, in *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 18: "for the sphere of the sun rotates in one year, whereas Saturn's rotates in thirty, so that the rotations of Saturn are a third of a tenth of the sun. [Again,] the rotations of Jupiter are a half of a sixth of the rotations of the sun; for it rotates once in every twelve years. [Now,] just as the number of rotations of Saturn is infinite, the number of solar rotations, although a third of a tenth [of the latter], is [also] infinite. Indeed, the rotations of the sphere of the fixed stars, which rotates [once in] every thirty-six thousand years, are infinite, just as the sun's movement from east to west, taking place in a day and a night, is [likewise] infinite. If one then were

to say, ‘This is one of things whose impossibility is known by the necessity [of reason],’ how would your [position] differ from his statement?’

37 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 19.

38 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 20.

39 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 21.

40 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 27.

41 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 28.

42 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 29.

43 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 30.

44 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 30.

45 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 31.

46 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 31.

47 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 32.

48 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 35.

49 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 21.

50 Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 10ff.

51 Craig comments that the problem is linguistic, in that the *mutakallimun* use the word “determinant” interchangeably for either cause or reason. For example, al-Ghazali uses the terms *murajjih* and *takhsis* in three different senses. First, he uses it as a principle, when determining or choosing without any motive one of two similar objects to establish a distinction between them through choice. Second, as a principle that determines or chooses without the motive being known, the existence of one or two opposites that seem equally purposeful. Third, some dissimilarity that gives a motive for choice. Craig concludes that the first and second usages are efficient causes, while the third can be seen as a sufficient reason. See Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 10-11.

52 Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 12.

53 Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 13. Craig adds that al-Ghazali’s use of the principle of determination is not simply the principle of efficient causality, which al-Ghazali rejects.

For the cause of the world to which the argument concludes is conceived by the Muslim thinkers to be, not just the mechanically operating, necessary and sufficient conditions for the production of an effect, but a personal agent who by an act of will chooses which equally possible alternative will be realized. God is the *sabab* of the world, but not its *‘illa*. Otherwise, the universe would exist from eternity (See Craig, *Kalam Cosmological Argument*, 14).

For an explanation on the philosopher’s argument for efficient causality, see Michael E. Marmura, “The Metaphysics of Efficient Causality in Avicenna,” in Marmura, *Islamic Theology and Philosophy*, 172-187.

54 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 22.

55 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 22. R. M. Frank comments that al-Ghazali sees God’s eternal attributes as “distinguishable from His essence and are eternal and are subsistent in His essence.” According to al-Ghazali, there are no ontologically distinct “states” for God and his attributes. Rather he follows a position closer to al-Juwayni. See R. M. Franks, *Al-Ghazali and the Ash‘arite School* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994) 48.

56 Al-Ghazali notes that his dialogue partners, the philosophers, might use the example of a thirsty man who is given the choice between two similar glasses of water. Each glass is exactly the same, and so the man chooses one glass over the other through some internal differentiation (the man is right handed, one glass appears clearer, one is closer to him, etc.). (*Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 22).

57 Watt explains that al-Ghazali “has little difficulty in showing that this [analogy] is merely hypothetical. He is, of course, no crude anthropomorphist. The question at issue between him and the philosopher is whether the ground of all being is not adequately described by human analogies or by analogy to natural forces.” See Watt, *Muslim Intellectual*, 60.

58 Al-Ghazali's idea, however, of the divine making a dispassionate choice between two similars of existence and non-existence of the world, or whiteness and blackness, or shape and form of the world, seems contradictory to his theodicy, where God seems to create particular forms for a purpose. Al-Ghazali affirms a "best of all possible worlds" theodicy that states "God has arranged creation so well that not a speck of dust or the subtraction of a gnat's wing is undesigned. All aspects of the human life, pleasure and pain or sickness and health are given in justice. This is so that the value of all things might be realized. "For if it were not for night, the value of day would be unknown. Were it not for illness, the healthy would not enjoy health. Were it not for hell, the blessed in paradise would not know the extent of the blessedness." See Eric Ormsby (ed.), *Theodicy in Islamic Thought: the Dispute over Al-Ghazali's "Best of All Possible Worlds"* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1984), 38-41.

59 Ibn Rushd, *Tahafut al-Tahafut*, Simon van der Bergh (trans. & ed.) (London, Luzac, 1954) 36.

60 Fakhry, *Averroes*, 18.

61 Fakhry, *Averroes*, 19.

62 Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Volume 1 (Allen, TX: Thomas More, 1941) Q. 9, A. 1. "God is altogether immutable. First, because it was shown above that there is some first being, whom we call God; and that this first being must be pure act, without admixture of any potentiality, for the reason that, absolutely, potentiality is posterior to act. Now everything that is in any way changed is in some way in potentiality. Hence it is evident that it is impossible for God to be in any way changeable. Secondly, because everything which is moved, remain as it was in part, and passes away in part...thus everything which is moved, there is some kind of composition to be found. But...in God there is no composition, for He is altogether simple. Hence it is manifest that God cannot be moved. Thirdly, because everything which is moved acquires something by its movement, and attains to what it had not attained previously. But since God is infinite, comprehending in Himself all the plenitude of perfection of all being, He cannot acquire anything new, nor extend Himself to anything whereto He was not extended previously."

63 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 13.

64 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 16.

65 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 17.

66 Majid Fakhry, *Averroes (Ibn Rushd): His Life, Works and Influence* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2001) 14-15.

67 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 18. As stated above, "Ghazali replies that the philosophers resort to saying that divine knowledge is different than human knowledge when it comes to the philosopher's belief that God's knowledge does not necessitate any change in the one divine essence. That is there is no multiplicity in knowing multiple universals or addition because of knowledge."

68 William Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," in Clark Pinnock et al, *Openness of God* (Downer's Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1994) 129. It is interesting to note that Alfred North Whitehead felt that if philosophy was true to Plato, that there would be a "philosophy of organism," where the temporal participated in the divine. See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Macmillan, 1978) 39-40.

69 Hasker, "A Philosophical Perspective," 132.

70 Dean Zimmerman puts the problem this way: "God's infinite past has been characterized by constant change. If both God and the other thing existed during an interval, the change may not have involved God [e.g. world's eternal co-existence]. But if there were periods during which only God existed, then God himself must have been undergoing constant intrinsic change during those times." See Dean Zimmerman, "God inside Time and before Creation," in Gregory E. Ganssle and David M. Woodruff (eds.), *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 78.

71 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 31.

72 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 31.

73 Michael E. Marmura, "The Logical Role of the Argument from Time in the Tahafut's Second Proof for the World's Pre-Eternity," *Muslim World* 49, 1959. Since temporal phenomena have an origin, then time itself must have an origin.

74 Brian Leftow, *Time and Eternity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1991) 79.

75 Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, 79.

76 Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, 299.

77 Garrett DeWisse, "Atemporal, Sempiternal, or Omnitemporal: God's Temporal Mode of Being," in Gregory E. Ganssle and David M. Woodruff (eds.), *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 52-53. DeWisse concludes that timeless, or atemporal beings contain three characteristics: they are abstract, unlike concrete temporal entities; they must exist necessarily; and they are immutable. DeWisse, however, adds that no theologian would want to uphold that God is abstract.

78 Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, 302.

79 Leftow, *Time and Eternity*, 342.

80 John Cobb and David Ray Griffin, *Process Theology* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1976) 8.

81 William Hasker, "The Absence of a Timeless God," in Gregory E. Ganssle and David M. Woodruff (eds.), *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 185.

82 Hasker, "The Absence of a Timeless God," 186.

83 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, 18.

84 Al-Ghazali, *Incoherence of the Philosophers*, Discussions Eleven, Twelve, and Thirteen. God's knowledge can never hold a present knowledge of presently occurring events. God's knowledge of present events can only take place in his divine determinism and foreknowledge of said events from infinite past.

85 Gregory E. Ganssle, "Introduction," in Gregory E. Ganssle and David M. Woodruff (eds.), *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 8.

86 DeWisse, "Atemporal, Sempiternal, or Omnitemporal," 49-50.

87 Michael Robinson, *Eternity and Freedom: A Critical Analysis of Divine Timelessness as a Solution to the Foreknowledge / Free Will Debate* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1995) 67.

88 DeWisse, "Atemporal, Sempiternal, or Omnitemporal," 56.

89 DeWisse, "Atemporal, Sempiternal, or Omnitemporal," 56.

90 Robinson, *Eternity and Freedom*, 69.

91 William Lane Craig, "The Elimination of Absolute Time by the Special Theory of Relativity," in Gregory E. Ganssle and David M. Woodruff (eds.), *God and Time: Essays on the Divine Nature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) 129-152.

92 Craig, "The Elimination of Absolute Time," 130.

93 Craig, "The Elimination of Absolute Time," 130.

94 Craig, "The Elimination of Absolute Time," 131. Craig adds that the scientist and natural philosopher have come to deny absolute time, because it is empirically unidentifiable. Einstein's rejection of absolute time is based on logical positivism of Machian providence. Since logical positivism is a defeated philosophical method, the logic of absolute time can be observed since absolute time transcends physical measurements of it.

95 Fakhry, "Classical Islamic Arguments," 139.

96 Rahman, *Islam*, 95.