

Medieval philosophy st. anselm, an archbishop of canterbury

[History](#), [Middle Ages](#)



Born in Aosta, in a town off Lombardy, St. Anselm grew up with his mother and father. His mother spoke of the greatness and power of God often. She would describe him with very high regards and Anselm assumed he lived somewhere nearby considering they lived in the mountains already. St. Anselm believed that he witness the greatness of God. He dreamt of his servants and a feast of bread with the King. The servants consisted of women and worked just as servants do. As they were all off gathering the harvest he and the Lord ate a meal of bread together. When St. Anselm woke from his dream he told everyone that he sat with the lord and how immense it was. This sparked his interest in God even more.

As a young child he was a quick learner (Eadmer, 1972). When he reached his teenage years St. Anselm was loved by many; even those that opposed authority, He was also still hungry for wisdom. He attempted to join the missionary and become a priest but was denied. The monk would not let him in because they did not think his father would approve. St. Anselm's mother died some time afterwards. His father was a very strict man and was hard on him. He was so tough on St Anselm that the boy decided to set out on a journey of his own. He looked to learn and he found it in ateacher near Avranches. St. Anselm was a devoted scholar who later became Archbishop and doctor of his church.

To the claim: To me God does not yet exist; but there is a creative force constantly struggling to evolve godlike knowledge and power, every man and woman born is a fresh attempt to achieve omnipotence and omniscience.

This bluntly means that no current God exist. That everyman and woman is a mold attempt to attain total power and knowledge in an image imitating what he or she believes to be of God. The creative force that is being described is used as a synonym to what God's power would be in this sentence. Considering that the statement is one without belief then the power and knowledge of a superior is describing a goal man is trying to reach when reproducing him or herself. He has not yet achieved it; therefore he continues to reproduce. Man attempt to create the ultimate human being by mating with those that offer the most beneficial offspring. That is the natural instinct of man; to create flawless images of him; to duplicate his positive qualities into another being.

With this being said St Anselm would disagree with the statement that God didn't exist. God existed in the days of Medieval without question. Philosophers just knew he existed and St. Anselm used the Ontological argument as his own translation. The main problem in the eleventh century was not only if God existence was real, it was proving the theory. Many felt that it was just something in the Bible and others felt there was more answers, St. Anselm being one of them.

St Anselm felt that a fool says there is no God. When he or she thinks of this image they contradict themselves. They perceive something that is not real to them. He believes it is possible to be because man is created in the image of him and no other. There is no other animal or being that replicates the image of God. St. Anselm considers that we can imagine things but only

those that are true will be defined. The definition of God is one being superb to all; he is thought to be just that, even by the imagination of nonbelievers.

St Anselm was a philosopher that wanted to analyze the words of the Bible and put proof behind them. His definition of the relationship between man and God requires that you have a somewhat religious background and or belief. (2002). He feels that there is one great thing or many that is created through that one. One thing that is greater than all things.

There is a being that is good and that creates and receives goodness through itself. He feels that all things that are good receive their good either through themselves or through another. At the highest level all things are either identical or one thing is significantly different than the rest, giving it distinct God-like qualities and making it superior to all else.

St. Anselm believes that God does exist in reality. All things that are real exist in reality and all things that are not exist indreams. Dreams are not reality and all things through God go beyond man's dreams. St. Anselm would change his opinion to make no one happy but won the hearts of many. He stood behind what he believed. His Ontological argument says that the existence of God can be proven through intuition and reason alone and no physical evidence is necessary.

Although many philosophers have disagreed with this argument, St. Anselm insists that if a person can conceive of God, then God does exist. He argues that if someone states " God does not exist" then he or she is contradictory of his or her self. Since they are made in what he thinks to be the image of God himself.

Many theorist and philosophers felt that God was a being that common man was incapable of communicating with. They felt that he had given them the knowledge to learn of him but not to go beyond that. Meaning that we will only know what he wants us to know and we will only learn of him what he allows us to. Some felt that they were not going to ever talk with God or get the answers that lead to his existence.

St. Anselm believed “ sin has so darkened our minds that we cannot hope to reach the truth unless God graciously leads us to it. He does so by offering us the truth through revelation and by inspiring us to accept that revelation in faith. Once we accept the truth on that basis, however, we can hope to reason out proofs for what we have already accepted through faith. God is rational, and what he does is rational, and we ourselves are blessed with reason. Thus we should be able to discover the rationality of God's actions, at least to some extent. We are like students who, unable to solve a mathematical problem, are given the answer to it and then discover they can reason out why that answer is correct (1996).” With this belief strongly embedded into St. Anselm’s way of thinking he would change the way that we look at religion today.

This theory is still in existence today. Theologians that studied later on after St. Anselm found it hard to accept this wisdom from such a young philosopher. St. Anselm felt that God spoke to him very clearly. He was taught of this God as a child and as he got older he studied this God. As a man he became to know this God and have an intimate relationship with him. He learned that while in the struggles of life’s journey that God was the

not only a philosophy but he was also a reality. God was of concrete power and understanding while all others were temporary. His relationship with his father and many peers were not solid and caused him great grief. The encounters with God were reality to him and they were permanent. He realized that God controlled all that was. St Anselm intriguingly realized that his life was apart of God's plan, a part of his story.

History in this case defines God's story. It included St. Anselm's life plan. He wanted to learn as much as possible about God. St. Anselm was a very wise young man for seeking the wisdom of God and that is why he was given the gift of knowledge.

His gift was the ability to spread the word of God and his faith in him. He believed in a mighty God that from his testimonies gave him all that he needed. He was hungry for the knowledge that others may have feared. He was not afraid to die on his deathbed because he was sure that he would go to be with God. He was rumored to have asked the Lord if he could stay long enough to find out where our souls started and their purpose. He felt that after him there would be no one else so competent to do his work.

St. Anselm was not only a miracle of his time but ours as well. He proved that nothing could stand in the way of knowledge by not allowing his challenges to lower his power to believe. Believe in what he knew to be. He made history not just for his argument but also mostly for his courageous journey through discovery with his own beliefs.

Reference:

<https://assignbuster.com/medieval-philosophy-st-anselm-an-archbishop-of-canterbury/>

Eadmer and translated by R. W. Southern. May 1, 1972.

The Life of St. Anselm: Archbishop of Canterbury. New York. Oxford University Press.

Paul Halsall (Jan 1996). Anselm on God's Existence. Medieval Source Book.

April 26, 2006. <http://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/halsall/source/anselm.asp>