

# Raef meditations is to suspend judgement about

[Science](#), [Astronomy](#)



RaefTahaPhil3: 30            Descartes goal in Meditations is to suspend judgement about any belief that is even slightly doubtful. This includes everything that he believes about the physical world as well as himself. He wants to build his knowledge on more certain grounds. The Meditator recounts the number of falsehoods that he believed over the course of his life. He wants to sweep away the faultiness of the body of knowledge that he has built up from these falsehoods.

Instead of thinking that he can find any shred of doubt in all his opinions, the Meditator turns to doubt the foundations and basic principles on which the opinions are founded. He begins by saying that the bulk of his knowledge was gained from or through his senses. This leads the Meditator to acknowledging that the senses can be deceived but only with objects that are tiny or faraway. The Meditator also acknowledges that insane people might be more deceived by their senses than most, however, he puts his worries to rest by saying he is not insane.

Another problem arises when the Meditator feels that his dreams are real. He feels certain that he is awake and sitting by the fire, but remembers that he has often dreamed this very sort of thing and been wholly convinced by it. He then says that dreams and their contents are drawn from waking experience. He explains further by saying that painters who paint new objects, such as mermaids are still pulling from real, composite things: a fish and a woman. Thus, the Meditator concludes that while he can doubt composite things, he cannot doubt the simple and universal parts they are constructed from such as shape, quantity, and size. While he can doubt studies based on composite things, like medicine, astronomy, or physics, he concludes that he cannot

doubt studies based on simple things, like arithmetic or geometry. The Meditator realizes that even simple, basic things can have the shadow of doubt cast on it. An all-powerful God could possibly make the conception of mathematics false.

It could be said that God would not deceive him; that God is supremely good. If the Meditator supposes there is no God, then there is even greater chance that he is being tricked because his imperfect senses would not have been created by a perfect being. He supposes that instead of God, but some evil demon has made it their duty to deceive him so that everything he thinks he knows is false. By doubting everything, he can at least be sure not to be misled into the lies told by this evil entity. Descartes cannot doubt his own existence for the very reason that to doubt or to think, there must be someone doing the doubting or thinking.

In this case, he is the one thinking about the doubts there are in the physical world. While he may be deceived about other things, he is forced to establish the fact that he exists. Since his existence is a result of the fact that he is thinking, Descartes concludes that he knows at least that he is a thing that thinks.

He further comes to an agreement that he comes to know this fact by means of his intellect. Since it was said that wax was determined to be what it was through the intellect, then the same must be of people. The self, is not determined by what people sense of themselves such as the body parts: the hands, feet, and nose, but by simply the things one thinks. Thus, Descartes says that one cannot grasp anything as easily or plainly as their

own mindshowing proof that he exists. Descartes provides an argument of the mind's intellectand distinction from the body by using a block of wax. He realizes that waxisn't wax because of its color, texture, shape, or smell because these thingscan change, and yet the substance will still be wax.

Rather, he understandsthat wax is perceived by the intellect alone.

Descartes can change the waxesshape and structure and physical appearance in his imagination, so it wouldappear to be more likely that his imagination is the cause of recognizing thewax as wax. However, he believes that it is more accurate to say that the waxis acknowledged as wax with his mind alone; his mind judges the wax to be whatit is. It becomes apparent here that the senses of the body are not nearly ascrucial to the understanding of something as the intellect is.

This is becausethe senses are how the body gain knowledge. So, when the concept ofmathematical principles of the substance is understood, such as the waxesexpansion under heat, figure and motion, the knowledge of the wax can be clearand distinct. Descartes wants to prove that God exists, so he can besure that his clear and distinct are not misplaced. His solution to thisproblem is brought about by including God in his thoughts. By showing that Godis the cause of his clear and distinct perception, and that, further, God isperfect in every way, he will be able to secure lasting certainty for clear anddistinct perceptions. Therefore, he is determined to prove that God exists.

Descartes proposes that there are three types ofideas: innate, fictitious, and adventitious. Innate ideas come from within us, it has always been and

always will be that way. Fictitious ideas are inventive ideas and come from the imagination; adventitious ideas come from the experiences of the world. He argues that the idea of God is an innate idea and was placed there by Him. This way of thinking rejects the possibility that the idea of God is fictitious or adventitious. Descartes begins by saying how nothing comes from nothing.

It is not possible to create something when there is nothing to create it from. He continues by saying that what is more real cannot come from something that is less real. In other words, if a line were created to be five inches long and another line was ten inches long, the line that is ten inches could not come from the five-inch-long line because the other five inches are not accounted for. Thirdly, Descartes states that he, as a substance, is as real as his finite ideas of substances and accidents and no substance or accident has more reality than the mind.

He is who he is because he thinks. This is basically saying that he is real because he is a being that can think and a being that can think is a being that exists. One's consciousness implies one's existence. He then elaborates further by saying that he can be the cause of his ideas of substances and accidents.

This means that he can create these finite ideas of substances and accidents because he is a finite being. Afterwards, he says that his idea of God has infinite "objective" reality and how he cannot be the cause of that, only God, an infinitely perfect being, can be capable of creating the idea of himself and putting into the minds of finite people. Thus, God must exist. Overall,

The main points are that people are finite beings and can think of finite things. However, the idea that God is infinitely perfect cannot have come from a finite mind because it was proven that something more real cannot come from what is less real. The idea of infinite could not be conjured up by a finite mind.

Therefore, someone must have put it there: in this case, God.

Descartes goes further and proves that God is benevolent and not a deceiver. By stating that God is an infinitely perfect being, it can be said that perfect in every way means perfectly good. Thus, the agreement is formed that God is benevolent and would not deceive Descartes or not permit him to err without giving him a way to correct the errors he made.