

Q#1: Discuss Kant's moral proof for the existence of God.

Ans:

## Introduction:

Immanuel Kant was one of 18th century German philosophers. Kant is famous for his synthesis between two extremes, namely empiricism and rationalism. Born and lived in Königsberg, Kant was a mathematician. Furthermore, his famous works include A Critique of Pure Reason, and The Perpetual Peace. His contributions to philosophy include, a paradigm in epistemology, transcendental idealism in metaphysics and categorical imperative in ethical branches of philosophy. Moreover, Kant proved existence of God through his arguments based on rationality and ethics.

## 1- Kant's Arguments For the Existence of God:

Following are the arguments of Kant that prove existence of God:

## 1.1: It is a Moral Duty to follow the Supreme Moral Law:

According to Kant there is a supreme moral law. Thus, it is the duty of every rational human being to follow that law. Here, Kant equates supreme moral-law with the existence of God. Furthermore, he necessitates the upholding of moral-law with the help of his 'categorical imperative'. He notes, "act only according to that maxim that when you will it at some point in time should become a universal law."

## 1.2: Highest Good Lies in the fulfillment of Moral Law:

Kant believed that human beings strive for happiness and doing something which is good. Here Kant uses the concept of 'Highest good', which is following the Supreme moral law. Thus, if anyone wants to do good he should follow the supreme moral

law, which is also the highest good.

1-3: Moral virtue does not always result in happiness:

Kant takes a sceptre position here, he believed that although, following moral-law result in happiness and virtue. However, it is not always the case. There is dearth of evidence that following moral virtue may result in happiness in this world.

1-4: Existence of God is necessary for fulfillment of happiness:—

As already explained, Kant believed that there is no stone-hard guarantee that following moral law and doing good will result in happiness or reward in this world.

Thus, Kant presumes the existence of God becomes an imperative to renew moral virtue in hereafter.

1-5: Immortality of soul is an argument for the existence of God and Supreme being:

According to Kant, immortality of soul is an argument for the existence of God. For instance, if the soul is immortal then it will continuously strive for moral good and excellence, as attainment of happiness is impossible in this limited life-time of an individual.

### 1.6: Free will is another argument for the existence of God:

Kant believed that human beings have a free will. There is no pre-ordained destiny, man is free to choose either wrong or right. Similarly, humans have free-will to follow supreme moral law to attain happiness. Thus, God is the guarantor of reward for following categorical imperative and supreme moral law or virtue.

### 1.7: Why human reason cannot prove existence of God? :

According to Kant there are limitations of human mind, which cannot <sup>be</sup> comprehended by mere rational interpretation. This is

called as Kant's philosophy of Transcendental Idealism. Kant divides ultimate reality into two; noumena and phenomenon. Things which lie within time and space and that can be explained with rationality, is called phenomenal understanding of things. On the other hand, things which lie beyond time and space, and which cannot be explained with the help of human reasoning is called noumena. Thus, God is an noumenal being, which cannot be understood or explained by human intellect.

### 1.8. Why God's existence cannot be explained with senses or perceptions?

In his 'Critique of Pure Reason', Kant explores the nature and limitations of human knowledge. In this, Kant questions the intricate relationship between reason and experience. Kant divided knowledge into two types, a-priori and a-posteriori knowledge. The a-priori knowledge is the knowledge prior to experience and a posteriori-knowledge is derived from experience.

However, God cannot be explained with the help of either sense or perception. Thus, human intellect and knowledge remain utterly fail to explain the existence of God.

### Conclusion:

Immanuel Kant was a 18th century German philosopher, who synthesized both rationalism and empiricism branches of philosophy, by explaining limitations of both. Thus, ultimate reality lies beyond both. Kant criticized empiricists with his theory of epistemology and criticized rationalism with the help of Transcendental Idealism. According to Kant human experience and human intellect can only discern things which lay between time and space. Similarly, Kant argued, God a supreme being is a noumenal phenomenon, that is incomprehensible through reasoning. Thus, Kant, gave practical reasons and arguments on the existence of God, which were derived from his ethics and moral philosophy.