

Date Fall 1969

Memo

From The Desk of

Rabbi NORMAN LAMM

Gave Ontological Argument (so named by Kant) in 2 forms:

A) Anselm's original form: even a fool can understand that God = a being greater than which nothing greater can be conceived. Such a being can exist in mind only, or also in reality. Now real existence > something only in mind. Then, if this Being-than... exists only in mind, it's analogous in reality is greater than it - which is an inner contradiction. Hence it exists in reality.

B) Anselm's second form: all that exists is either necessary (can't be thought of as not existing) or contingent (can be...). Now necessary > contingent. If then the Being-than-which... is in contingent class, we can conceive of greater being, namely the same being in necessary. But that is contradiction. Hence - is necessary existence.

(See James F. Ross, Intro. to the Philos. of Rel.)