

**Insight & Beyond II, Lecture 14, Part I: Chapter 19: “General Transcendent Knowledge” §10
Chapter 20: “Special Transcendent Knowledge,” Introduction**

[0:00]

- Recapitulation of the simple version of the argument for the existence of God from previous class
- Recapitulation of things that can be said about the unrestricted act of understanding and theism

[4:26]

- Expanded argument for the existence of God: inclusion of “and there is at least one contingent being”
- Is this a convincing argument to you? Do you have further pertinent questions?

[5:47]

- The simple version of the argument makes sense. So why is it necessary to add the premise about a contingent being?
 - Suggestion that the inclusion of the contingent being needed in order to avoid pantheism
 - A series of further attempts to answer the student’s question
 - Patrick Byrne admits he has not previously considered the question as posed, and is not entirely satisfied with his answers
 - (See beginning of Class 5/5/2010, Part 1 for further discussion)

[17:37]

- Student question about the relevance to this problem of the discussion of the intrinsic intelligibility of being, and the primary and secondary components in the idea of being
 - The relation of the primary and secondary components is relevant, because all elements in the secondary component are contingent beings
- Follow-up suggestion that because the unrestricted act of understanding lies beyond proportionate being, this is why the premise regarding a contingent being needs to be added
 - It is instead the other way around
- Follow-up comments about the contingency of our judgments, and contingency of the facts about the universe of proportionate being

[26:25]

- If there are contingencies, and being is completely intelligible, then why must there be more to being than proportionate being?
 - Suggestion that it has to do with the non-systematic
 - But there could be a contingent systematic universe
 - Suggestion that it has to do with potency
 - Potency has to do with enough space and time needed for the universe to be as it is
 - Prime potency is not just difference; it is difference with a dynamism headed toward
 - Suggestion that there has to be an intelligent reason that the contingency is as it is
 - Because there cannot be mere brute matters of fact, and this means that all contingencies must somehow be made intelligible, which is done by the unrestricted act of understanding
 - Suggestion that without a contingent fact, the universe would be deterministic
 - The issue isn’t that the universe would or would not be deterministic, but that the contingent does not explain itself

[35:42]

- Student question about the meaning of Lonergan's phrase, "apart from being there is nothing."
 - A "grammatical" reading – that nothing exists separate from being that also exists
 - But Lonergan's actual meaning – all there is, is being, period.

[38:30]

- Student question about the integral heuristic structure of proportionate being – way we can talk about the non-systematic universe as a unity?
 - But the unity of the universe is not yet; the heuristic structure does anticipate that as yet unrealized and unknown unity

[40:03]

- A still further expanded version of the argument: adds "is self explanatory and also explains the contingent"
- For, if there were no ultimate explanation for some contingency, that would be incompatible with the complete intelligibility of being
- Lonergan's argument is that the unrestricted act of understanding meets both criteria – that it explains all contingencies, and also is self-explanatory
- Observation that the explicit claim – "being is completely intelligible" – is not explicit in Aquinas' five proofs in the *Summa Theologiae*, but it is made explicitly in *Insight*
- How crucial it is to come to a virtually unconditioned judgment that, indeed, being is completely intelligible
- This affirmation is the sign of the achievement of "intellectual conversion"

[45:44]

- On the basis of it being an unrestricted act of understanding, we can make other affirmative judgments about it (i.e., the primary being, God)
- Question for the class: *Is* the unrestricted act of understanding explanatory of everything else?
 - What is the meaning of "explanatory" in this context?
 - Previously in *Insight*, explanatory has meant understanding things in relation to one another
 - Here explanatory means "all the reasons for why something is"

[48:05]

- God in Lonergan's sense is not Bette Midler's sense of a detached observer
- The unrestricted act of understanding would understand everything about everything, including why they are, why it is appropriate that such things should be, as well as how *It* could make those things be
- Explanation in this richer and fuller sense is characteristic of the unrestricted act of understanding

[51:19]

- Student question about whether the unrestricted act of understanding also grasps why the universe is not some other way
 - The unrestricted act of understanding understands all possible universes, and also grasps the reason why for the empirical residue
 - Any question that it seems the unrestricted act of understanding could not understand, it can understand – otherwise it would not be the unrestricted act of understanding – would not be God

[53:09]

- Pascal on the God of the philosophers vs. the living God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob
- *Which* is the God of the unrestricted act of understanding?
- Pascal mainly had in mind the God of Descartes' *Meditations*
- Versus the God of history, a personal God, the God of Revelation, the God who liberates the oppressed
- Is the unrestricted understanding *personal*?
- Student response: Lonergan argues ("In the twenty-sixth place") that it is personal: "what humans are as unrestricted desire and limited attainment, God is as unrestricted act"
- Student response: the spiritual is what is intelligible and intelligent has implications for personalness.
- A human self is an intelligible unity, identity whole characterized by acts such as understanding; the divine self is a unity, identity whole of an unrestricted act of understanding.
- We distinguish between our understanding and our subjectivity because our subjectivity is never exhausted in any one of our finite acts, but the unrestricted act of understanding is identical with divine subjectivity.
- It is therefore possible to show that the primary being (which is self-explanatory and other-explanatory) is also personal, because it is an unrestricted act of understanding

[1:02:04]

• Student comment about whether speaking of God as the unrestricted act of understanding Lonergan limits God to the intellectual, missing the dimension of the human heart symbolized by Pascal's image of fire.

- This criticism has been expressed
- Lonergan argues further that the unrestricted act of understanding is simultaneously an unrestricted act of loving
- The word "intellectual" is a difficulty, insofar as it connotes things that lack the passion expression in Pascal's symbol of fire
- But the reason Lonergan can say that unrestricted act of understanding is "eternal rapture" is because he has sharply distinguished insight from conceptualizing
- Insight has an ecstatic dimension
- The argument from the ecstasy of finite human understanding, to the ecstasy of unrestricted understanding, to the ecstasy of unrestricted loving is not simple

[1:05:00]

- After *Insight* Lonergan rethought the phenomena of feeling and loving, making loving primary
- Lonergan quotes Pascal on love having reasons that the love of reason knows not

[1:05:47]

- So there are dimensions to Pascal's quote that are not addressed in Chapter 19 – historicity, liberation, etc. – that are addressed in Chapter 20.

[1:06:56]

- The structure of Chapter 20:
- Four main parts: the problem, the heuristic structure of the solution, the existence of the solution, and the identification of the solution

[1:08:32]

- The unmistakably Christian elements of Chapter 20
 - The three theological virtues – charity, hope, faith – inversion of traditional order
 - Bringing good out of evil; returning good for evil
 - Repentance

- But this chapter is not Christian apologetics; it is what a philosopher can know about grace
- Whereas a theologian will ask what can be known because of grace

End of Part I.