

**BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY • FALL 2014**  
**PHIL 1A: INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY**  
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**What Sign or Discovery Would  
Convince You That God Exists?**

*A Sign from God? . . . .*

Much philosophy of religion in the West has focused on different versions of theism. Theism, common to traditional Judaism, Christianity, and Islam takes the position that the cosmos or universe (however you wish to characterize the whole business) is created and kept in existence by an omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, supremely good being. Sometimes God is also characterized as the most perfect possible being. There have been many attempts in the history of Western philosophical thought to prove the existence of God and to prove it in some knock-down, conclusive fashion. Imagine that God was aware of these attempts and slightly amused by it all. Say God decided to help these philosophers out by sending a sign, by sending some signal, that would prove God's existence beyond a shadow of a doubt. What sign or signal might that be? Imagine yourself to be in God's shoes and you wanted to send folks on the planet, here on earth, a convincing sign of your existence. Not just any sign, but a "convincing" sign, a sign that would prompt folks to say, here on earth: "Yup, no doubt about it, God exists" or "I was never quite convinced that God existed, but then I saw that the other day, that did it for me. I may not have been convinced before, but I am now!" Whatever sign it is, it obviously cannot be a sign that is easily created by human beings themselves such as, say, skywriting in which the words "I exist, love God" appear, since it would be assumed to have been made by ordinary folks, i.e., by some skywriters playing some prank. Think of a sign that God could send that would be convincing and that could not easily be given some natural or alternative explanation. What then might a convincing sign be?

