

THE ABSURD NOTION THAT YOU NEED GOD TO VALIDATE MORALITY BY COMMANDING OBEDIENCE TO IT

Religion says that the reason morality exists and is real [objective morality is the term] is because God exists and is real. They mean his commanding us to do fair and loving things gives us genuine morality instead of us depending on mere opinion.

THE CONTRADICTION

Objective morality contradicts itself because it poses as commands. Suppose it is objectively moral to save a toddler who runs out in front of a lorry. What if you don't do this because it is objectively good but because you are commanded by God or think morality in itself commands you? That is not morality but obedience. It is not obedience to objective morality because it is morality. It is just obedience. Surely it is best to just save the child and not think about laws or obligation.

If there is no objective good unless it is commanded, that does not mean you care about it being good. You could care only that it is commanded.

The contradiction is that we want to be able to say that morality as in helping others is objectively good and real. We cannot if we bring commands into it - into the centre and core of it.

Believing then that God commands you to help people in trouble makes the problem far worse for God supposedly comes first or alone matters.

MORALITY AND PUNISHMENT

The God concept destroys morality in many ways. If God exists you will be punished for doing evil. If God does not exist you still have to do good though you will not have him to punish you. You should not do good to avoid punishment but because it is good. So if you need to believe in God it is so that you and others might be punished. The doctrine then is vindictive for it is unnecessary.

MIGHT IS RIGHT

The God belief produces many monsters in how it implies that God should be obeyed just because he is powerful which sanctions the might is right fanaticism. We don't need to obey him just because he is good for good has its own authority and you cannot obey a person just because they are good.

You obey because it is good to obey not because they are good. Being good doesn't necessarily mean you always get it right. You obey your own perception of what good is and which therefore says good should be done – the perception that the person inspired. God's authoritarianism has been a cancer in the world and has fomented bigotry and resentment in his worshippers for you come to resemble what you adore. God cannot then give meaning to life for the God concept is evil. God is evil if he made us for himself. If he didn't, then we can make our own decisions.

THE FEAR

Some believers in God want to make God and morality inseparable. One way they do that is by claiming that whatever God commands is good. They are afraid of the notion of a God who makes murder wrong today and who makes it good tomorrow. They want murder to be wrong objectively. They are using God as a safeguard against moral relativism. Moral relativism holds that if polygamy is right in one culture it is not right in one that forbids it. Relativism says polygamy really is immoral when your culture bans it. One fear is that if you do not see morality as "real" then you will violate it as long as you get away with it. It will change how you feel about hurting others.

So God is used to make people more controllable. The believers cannot get their wish. If you fuse God and morality, you will hold that you will only consider something moral if God commands it. Thus you are left doing it either totally because it was commanded or mainly. You are not doing it because it is good at all or mainly because it is good.

To act morally just because God says you must or because a religion or scripture says it, is not acting morally at all. Obedience and being moral are not the same thing. The motivation is blind conformity and that is degrading. If you do

something because it is commanded and not because it is moral or ethical then you are not being moral. Obedient yes but not moral.

"God doesn't give himself commands". So says William Lane Craig. If commands are good as morality suggests then that is a pity. Anyhow, the Bible has God commanding us to love him and each other. Love is free and spontaneous and it cannot be commanded. But the Bible says he commanded it and he is perfect. So it follows that commanding love is a perfection. So if God is perfect, God must command himself to love! That God commands us to love actually proves that the popular notion that you cannot really believe in morality unless you believe in God is incoherent.

It may be replied that morality demands obedience. But even if that is the case, if you obey God that is not the same as obeying morality. If you have to obey one or the other then obey morality. Obedience is degrading and you don't want to do it any more than you have to. It is better to do good even if you are told to do it NOT because you are told to. And as our nature is to love good though we often love it wrongly "obeying" morality is not really obeying but just keeping in line with our nature.

This commanding God rather than safeguarding the notion of good diminishes it. Religion no doubt loves it because it wants obedience and does not really care about goodness as it does about getting obeyed. It only leads to hypocrisy and resentment.

It is repugnant to keep moral rules just to get a reward from God or to avoid his punitive justice. That is worrying about the reward and not about what is right or good. But when morality is about forcing you to obey by threatening punishment it is clear that morality is about control and not what is right or good. It wants you to behave for the benefits and falsely claims that it cares about real goodness. It only uses goodness as an excuse to bully.

FINALLY

Morality and authority have problems but trying to ground morality in God's commands adds to those problems. The end result is a hypocritical and deceitful "morality". The argument cares about morality and rules and not good as it is. It turns good into a weapon of power - morality is a weapon. Nobody wants to believe that it should be your spontaneous choice to embrace a code of moral rules. Instead they command you to accept it. While you can be forced to keep the rules you have signed up to you cannot be forced to sign up in the first place.

