

## WHY SCIENCE NOT GOD IS THE BEST FOUNDATION FOR MORALITY

### GOD IN THE LIGHT OF THE SAM HARRIS BOOK THE MORAL LANDSCAPE

The main point made in Sam Harris' book the Moral Landscape is that good is real and wrongdoing is real. They are so real that science can teach us about morality. In this approach, it is wrong to destroy the wellbeing of a say a child for no reason no matter who says it is right or at least not wrong. He is careful to redefine good as being about wellbeing.

It is said that he does not define it in moral terms. But it depends on what you mean by moral. Moral for believers in God means law - God decrees that something is evil and to be punished or that something is good and therefore to be rewarded. Good and moral good have a lot of overlaps but they are not the same thing.

The God arguments then make good depend not on itself but something else. So something needs something added to it to make it good for it is not truly good in the first place. If you need to ground morality then you need science of some description for that is about things as they are. The alternative is to ground morality on a lie, "Lying is bad because some rule says so and that is the only or main reason it is bad." That is just a lie itself for it is calling lying bad when it is not if something needs to be done to make it bad. The rule then becomes the real evil.

Morality is so important that it needs the firmest grounding imaginable. No weakening is permitted. The strongest morality is one that is valid in itself and whose standards are there and do not need to be made. In fact there is a moral principle here, "They should not need to be made and we should not need to make them." In fact this strongest morality is really the only real kind.

The idea that God does not bother with bad deeds but just rewards good deeds is not considered for they want to bring in punishment - punishment for wrong is portrayed as being one half of what morality is while the other half is about the reward for goodness.

Strangely enough a schizophrenic who thinks that poisoning the water is good for the populace will not be rewarded by God or man for heroically pouring the poison in. Morality is more about dogma than it pretends. It dishonestly poses as being about moral facts and about treating the person as a moral fact.

Science regards evolution as central. Evolution in science means that some things are able to get more functional. It does not go with the notion of making things better. It is luck if things improve but that is not what evolution is about. But for believers in God, evolution has a divine and ultimate purpose, especially for humanity, so it does good. That means it does good through war for evolution is really just a war within nature that will never end until the day all life ceases. That is a heinous idea! It is dangerous and means worshipping a being who deliberately set this up. It is obvious from this example that attempting to make God a reason for morality utterly fails.

The atheist sees evolution being just what it is and sees us has having to make the best of it and remember that we are at war with it even as it feeds us and develops us. There is no approval of it at all as in saying that some nice god set it up.

Now critics say Sam Harris talks nonsense in saying morality is wellbeing in a universe that does not care. What are they doing? They say he is right after all! The universe cares so morality can be equated with wellbeing! They don't want to think that for it makes science the word of God and the only word that matters.

Does trying to make science a form of morality backfire for you cannot prove it with science?

Christian writer Keller says that if we should not believe something unless we can test it by using our senses, the problem is we end up with no way to show from testing that that is all we should believe. But we show it indirectly and every test has indirect implications. If it is a problem how you cannot test then that doesn't mean you should give up trying. Just get as close as you can to testing. A semi-test has value for you cannot be asked to do the impossible. If you cannot see or hear then get the next best thing. If there is no test then keep wishing there were one. Value testing as much not less. The harder it is to test the more value there should be put on testing. So if we cannot always use empirical tests and proofs, that does not mean that the view that the ideal is to believe only what is testable is wrong. It means the ideal is as valid as ever and more.

If morality is not objectively true or cannot be known to be, what then? Scientist Jerry Coyne says it becomes merely advice as to the rational thing to do. It is a guide. If the content of the guide is not objective morality, it is still objectively

moral to have a guide. Science certainly tests as a means to being guided so in that sense Harris is right that morality and science can relate to one another.

If there is a God and you say he grounds morality then are you trying to separate harm and suffering from moral questions? You are putting more or less distance between them and that shows a cruel streak.

If you believe in abortion you may have a problem with it if you feel the foetus suffers and is hurt. Science can certainly tell if it is in pain. If pain is a consideration when something is to be judged moral or immoral then pain and immorality are somehow linked. You cannot have one without the other.

Some ask how you can say morality can come from and be grounded by science when science cannot prove that you are better or more important than a brick. But it does prove that. Science shows you can have experiences and to say different is to say that you and the brick have no differences.

Many believe that science helps us discover morality but morality is not based solely or mainly on science. So it must come from God.

If science does not ground objective morality but grounds its discovery then at a stroke religion is eliminated as having any moral value.

What if morality is not based solely or mainly on science? A link of some kind is enough. Morality is not based solely on what your parent tells us but their direction suffices if there is nothing else. You still cannot have morality without science.

Morality has to involve several concerns. One could be stress. Stress is always bad in the sense that it feels bad. It can be bad in other ways too. Science does not measure and test stress just for computer readings. It presupposes that it is worthy of attention for it affects people - that is a moral stance. Stress is a moral issue just because it feels bad. Science can measure stress. Science even if it is not about ethics is still tied to it and needs it. If stress is a moral issue or even a bit of the issue then ethics can be built on science. And we need not be able to produce the perfect ethics. Having enough will do.

Harris gives us a morality that arises from the authority of science. God does not come into it and God is only degrading it. If we can work out a moral authority without bringing in God as Harris is trying to do, then clearly the religious doctrine that God exists is advocating a religious perception and a perception can be close to the reality but is not the reality. That means that what people think about God is substituted for God.

Morality comes from science so God is only an obstacle. God is immoral if Harris is correct. And so is any religion that loves God.

Question:

Is pain that will do you no good or not enough good a problem or is it only a problem because an authority such as God or some moral code decrees it is?

There are two parts:

# part one asks if such pain is bad in itself

# the other part denies it is bad in itself

In other words something outside of it has to define it is bad. God has to decide that it is bad in itself. He in reality sounds like he is MAKING it bad itself. A God who wants x to be evil and who has to make it evil so he can condemn it is an evil God.

In other words it is in fact not bad at all and we need a moral authority to make it bad for us. This is pure magic and has no logic.

If it is not bad itself and God makes it bad in itself then that is magic or the impossible. I'd rather call it a lie.

Sometimes something is condemned not because it is bad in itself so much as the bad results it leads to. The results condemn it. Pain for example is fine if it does not last - its power to stick around that is the problem. If pain is a sort of good thing the threat aspect that it brings with it is definitely not.

God condemning you for doing what is not that bad in itself but which results in bad things seems unfair and harsh. You

need compassion and help and guidance not criticism for that. Punitive action only makes sense if the act is bad in itself. So if he condemns an act for the bad results then he is telling you its bad in itself though it is not.

Variants of the question can include, is pain that will do you no good or not enough good a problem or is it CHIEFLY a problem because an authority such as God or some moral code decrees it is?

You can ask if pain that will do you no good or not enough good is a problem. If so then is part of the problem how an authority such as God or some moral code decrees it is a moral problem?

These also involve saying that nothing can be that bad unless some authority adds something to it to make it bad. That is as unethical as saying drinking poison is not unhealthy enough so you add more poison it to make it harmful and therefore immoral. That is not morality but trying to catch people out. If that concept is buried under religious devotion then the religion is to blame when its members do evil things in its name EVEN IF it forbids them.

Pain asks to be removed and is that not moral mandate enough? To say some authority must condemn is as bad as saying that needing water is not warrant enough for taking a drink and you always have to wait until you get told to take it.

The objection that knowing that x causes pain unnecessarily does not imply, "You should not and ought not to do x" is hiding something. It is hiding that it is in fact morally irrelevant so you need some tyrant in the form of a God or moral code to make it morally blameworthy. It explains why moralistic people are so unpopular and why we hate being corrected on our morals.

CONCLUSION: If morality is redefined as the avoidance of pain and the pursuit of feeling good and happy in the best way then what more do you need? And it follows that as science can test for pain it follows science not religion is morality's only true and good friend. If science is not living up to its duty that it science's problem not morality's. Science is the reason it is objectively wrong (that is wrong no matter how many are convinced it is right) to kick a baby around for fun. Any other kind of morality is just objective evil in disguise.

Morality can be made a science matter and that is enough. God deprives us of the chance to make morality about science. This is a suggestion that robs us and gives us the wrong basis for morality in return. What we have then is not a morality but an ideology pretending to be one.