

DISCUSS: "MORALITY IS JUST TRUE AND ASKING WHY IT IS TRUE IS LIKE ASKING WHY SPACE HAS LENGTH HEIGHT AND BREADTH"

ESSENTIALS

We all want want morality to justify itself. That is safer than having it depend on anything else such as faith in God. A morality that holds it own and does not need a God is denying God because God means that which should be the be all and the end all in life.

A king who depends on himself is the strongest possible one. A weaker one will need to depend on others. So if you want morality to be fact it has to depend on itself and derive its authority from itself. To say authority has to be always given to something is odd - who gave the other authority its authority? It has to start somewhere without being given.

Love by itself does not mean or indicate that there is a God. It certainly does not prove it or point us to look for proof. So whatever way you want to give authority to moral principles such as love then trying to ground them in God is futile and immoral in itself! You only need this argument in relation to love. That means by default it takes care of justice for you cannot have real justice without real love. So love is its own authority and God is only an extra perhaps for discarding. The argument that God hides himself from us for he wants us to find him through others and how they love us is wrong.

There is nothing wrong with something justifying itself as long as another way to justify it is not being ignored. If there is no evidence that you are truly innocent of a crime then you have to justify yourself and ask people to take your word for it. In that case, morality is justifying itself.

We see each other in some way as creators of love. There can be no real morality without that concept. It does not matter how accurate we are about them being creators.

Relativism - the view that whatever you want to think is moral is all that matters for morality is not factual - is plainly ridiculous. That shows that morality justifies itself even if we do not know how. It is just somehow a fact that setting the cat on fire is wrong. Whether invented or real, we make sure our moral ideas hurt those who flout them. It is not a trivial matter.

Religious attempts to ground morality in God's commands or nature fail for what if God is a relativist? Believers treat him as if he is.

Using God as prop to bolster up morality and its authenticity is objectifying God. Or perhaps more accurately, it is objectifying faith for many when they talk about God mean faith. Faith can simulate a connection to a real God. Faith in God is not God but is often treated as if it is.

Morality is really a collection of moralities. Each moral precept is a mini-morality. Collectively each bit is justified.

MORALITY COMES FROM COMMUNITIES JUST BEING COMMUNITIES

Nature has many creatures form groups. Even a man and a few dogs can make a group. Some level of committing is needed. How can people committing to each other be not enough to ground morality on? Critics say the answer is that you can bond with others and form an evil and nasty group. So loving those in the group can lead to you and the group doing terrible things to outsiders. So love can be bad. These people will swear that their love is good so being convinced you are loving does not prove you really are good. Only the facts can show that. Clearly the problem is in how people are not lining up to truth.

The argument that love can be bad, and by implication justice as well for love and justice are inseparably connected, is supposed to prove that only an all-loving God can ground or decree morality. Anything else is just bad. That is actually a lying manipulative and nasty argument. Belief in God is about its alleged moral import but in fact it offers hypocrisy not moral import.

If it is not the love that is the problem but its abuse then the critics are proven wrong. Love is good regardless of God or society or anything else.

MORALITY IS GOD?

Religion denies that morality is just true so you need a God to make it true. That overlooks the fact that if it is not true then nothing can make it true.

Nothing can be more important or irrevocable than a morality that is so true that even if God contradicts it makes no difference.

People try to say morality is made by God's commands. Something becomes moral not because it is but becomes moral because he commands it. What if God commanded you to believe morality was independent of God? This proves that morality is just true and that God is only a diversion.

Sometimes we are told that God is morality so that if there is no God there is no true morality and we are left to invent it. If morality is God then that is tantamount to inventing God even if you say you do not recognise a God! It would be a recipe for evil and turns the moralist effectively into God! So they say they need to invent morality if there is no God. For all we know inventing is what they could be doing!

So far the problems with objecting to, "Morality is just true", show that even if we do not know how or cannot explain how we know by a process of elimination that morality really is just true.

Let us go on and look at more arguments for morality as being that which needs no justification outside of itself.

If morality is not real then it is arbitrary. But arbitrary implies a non-arbitrary. So even calling morality arbitrary implies that there is non-arbitrary morality. Morality is enforced by reality and even God cannot change that. It is thus supreme even over God.

Some say morality can be real and still arbitrary. What do they mean? They seem to mean we can make it real so we can make it right to use live babies as footballs if we so decree! Morality is to be discovered not made or created. The people are talking rubbish.

NECESSARY EVIL OF MORALITY

If morality is arbitrary or relative then it is based on power. It is the product of power not of reason. But surely if morality is objectively true it is also based on power? Or more so! The answer is that it is based on power but as something has to be there is nothing too much wrong with that. Arbitrary morality is just plain evil.

Relativists usually are relativists because they think the notion of objective morality is about power and that is enough to make it a bad thing. The fact that objective morality is needed means the power objection does not refute it for anything else leads to worse power-mongering. Objective morality warns us to be as liberal as possible without watering down moral principles.

The view that objective morality defends itself and needs no assistance accuses those who disagree that what you have really is objective morality of blindness and bigotry.

Morality is a necessary evil in the sense that it binds us and threatens us if we refuse to obey it. Morality is self-justifying.

If morality is a necessary evil then its self-justification would be one too.

ARISTOTLE

Aristotle said that the definition of good is whatever will make you reach your potential. This reminds us that morality is not about theory or doctrines but about putting respect for people and their potential into practice. It is not about God and indeed God has achieved his potential so we cannot really be moral to him. Yet for religion God is the end goal meaning that you cannot be good without God. The definition of evil is choosing a good that is not as good as it can be.

PURPOSE AND DIGNITY

Religion says the alternative to saying there is no God is that we are just animals so it does not matter what we do. But if there is a creator it does not follow its purpose has anything to do with how we treat one another. God would not

automatically mean we have dignity. That is why the doctrine of God or existence of God is not intrinsically good for us. Religion tries to make it intrinsically good for us which is cruel and manipulative. It seems degrading to imagine that the human being is just another thing nature has produced like a lizard or a jellyfish and which has no built-in worth or ultimate hope or eternal worth. But who says built in self-worth means a creator has to build it in?

To get dignity from assuming there is a God that gives you purpose is a strange way to get dignity!

Christians say morality for an atheist is just opinion for it has no real or ultimate meaning. What do they mean by ultimate? It is a way of saying morality in the end is all that matters and to be all that matters. Morality can have real meaning without ultimate meaning. Morality cannot have ultimate meaning without having real meaning. Ultimate value of morality is a way of saying that morality is absolutely important. It opens the door to bringing in rules about things that are supposedly absolutely wrong – that is wrong in all circumstances.

Morality can have ultimate meaning even if death is the end. One suspects that by ultimate Christians think morality should be worthless unless it has eternal consequences. They do not however have the decency to take responsibility if somebody does harm and thinks or feels that morality has to be eternally important.

CONCEPTS NOT ENOUGH?

They insist that mere concepts cannot supply a, “You ought to do x” or “You should not do y”. But read what they are saying. A concept should not tell you “You ought to do x”. So there is a should in there after all! Even concepts have a should.

A LITTLE JUSTIFICATION GOES A LONG WAY!

What if atheism instead of having no basis for morality actually has a little? That is fine if a little is all that is possible. Morality is so good that a little is enough to make it justifiable. Believers never mention that.

WHAT DO YOU WANT JUSTIFICATION FOR?

A decent person will think morality justifies itself. You will see a baby needing your help as showing you need no justification. You will not want it either if you are really good. The baby does not know what morality is but that does not stop him needing your help. The needing is real no matter what you think of morality. In any case morality is more important to the victim not the helper. It is the victim who needs morality to be.

If good cannot be good unless somebody sees it is or decides it is then it does not matter if that person is perfectly good enough. It only matters that someone is good enough to assess the action. To see something as good is to be good in the first place. Now if it is not good in itself you cannot see it as good. Even if you wrongly see it as good it is because you fail to see that it is using good to mask its evil side so it is still the good you see. If good cannot exist unless somebody decides it is good then perhaps the being should not bother deciding.

EVIL BEING ABSENCE OF GOOD

Evil being the absence of good cannot make evil evil. It turns it into a form of neutrality. But then neutrality needs to be neither good or evil which is the same as it being both. Neutral if defined as good is balanced by a lack of good.

To say something is as good as it is bad is to say it is morally neutral. If murder is merely the absence of respect for life or stealing merely the absence of respect for the property rights of another then is that no better than saying every “bad” act is really just morally neutral. It is bad one way but good in every other. Given how morality directs us to see the best in actions we certainly cannot call any action bad. If you think the idea of moral neutrality is bad then the seeing of evil as the mere absence of good is worse. At least moral neutrality still calls evil evil.

What is worse? The absence of good or neutrality? Probably the absence of good for it is so easy to take it for good. The absence of real good means the presence of that which looks good but which is not. Plus people have more motives than they realise for their actions so they can be fooled by motives that they think are neutral. This can and will lead them to

justify evil by seeing it as good as it is bad.

WHY DO PEOPLE WANT TO BELIEVE EVIL IS UNREAL?

Do believers who want evil to be a non-thing but just a lack think that God is good therefore that must be what evil is for he has nothing at all to do with evil? Or do they think evil would be a lack whether there is a God or not? The ONLY justification would be if evil really is an absence of good. It has to be a fact that even a God cannot change. A fact does not care and should not care what you want it to be or what God wants it to be. To not give a damn about it being a fact that evil is a lack and to care only about defining evil in a way that will fit a creator God would be evil itself. It would mean you have an evil motive and are not concerned about evil really being a non-thing. It is about distorting your head so you can believe in God.

If evil is a lack regardless of whether there is a God or not then there is no need to get a God to rub it in. God gives you an extra reason for declaring evil a lack. What is wrong with that? It is that it is not a reason for you have the reason. It is one thing to say a person is making good absent but another to say they are making a good God absent. It is overkill. You do not have the slightest right to accuse somebody or yourself of more than what you need to accuse.

The good works done by religious people have nothing to do with showing that the religion is good for God by default causes a disconnect with real goodness and brings suspect motives in.

NEUTRAL

Religion that argues for a totally loving God will rarely admit that it considers suffering no matter how unbearable to be neutral – neither good or evil or both if you like. What is neither good or evil is also both good and evil.

Now if suffering is neutral then why battle to stop it? Why bother?

Not all neutrals are equal in value. It is better to be neutral about whether to have tea or coffee than to be neutral about whether babies should be saved from certain death. So religion is advocating neutrality for something very bad and that is warped. It contradicts what we need to believe about neutrality.

Religions that see suffering as neutral still argue that causing suffering deliberately is evil. But it makes no sense to see a world where somebody causes mild suffering to many to be worse than a world where everybody suffers terribly and it is nobody's fault. Those religions are well on their way to leading people to feel that freely causing suffering is neutral.

Many argue that harm and suffering are not enough to justify or lead to moral principles. But look at what is being said. It is being said it is non-moral or immoral to try and make it enough!!

WHY BE MORAL?

The philosopher David Hume noticed that if you say argue that murder is wrong and that it is a duty not to murder you are assuming other duties which this one reflects and depends on. So it becomes-

Murder is wrong

Why?

Because we have a duty to protect life.

Why?

Because people need to be given the chance to be happy.

But happiness is not morality. Morality is not an end in itself if happiness is the goal.

So to justify morality that way only leads to it contradicting itself.

Interestingly, morality can be a bitter pill and always threatens to be and yet people say morality is God and worship it joyfully. The only way that can be explained is if they think they are so superior and moral that they have nothing to worry about.

IS GOOD GOOD BECAUSE IT SAYS SO OR BECAUSE GOD SAYS SO?

There is a dilemma about whether acts are good or good just because a God says so. Those who face this dilemma sometimes say the starting point is to define what you mean by good. But that refuses to admit that the dilemma itself is about the definition! However, one side says good is whatever God says it is and the other side says good is good no matter what God needs or wants or commands or thinks. Notice that the first side is defining good and the other is not defining good yet.

The question, "Is good good even if God disagrees that it is good?" can be asked without a definition of good. You can ask if

If God decrees what is good and that makes it good then it follows that God needs it to be good which means it is good to have a need fulfilled. Good is about needs. God has a need which means there is something independent of God. If God needs good then good is independent of God.

MORALITY IS A MASK FOR ETIQUETTE

Morality and what you have to do to fit in with other people may have overlaps but they are not the same thing. It is certainly no mistake to hold that morality is only a social set up though people pretend it is more than that. That is why moral people can be very vicious to those who they class as being outside the fold.

CONCLUSION