

Does God Exist?



A Moral Argument

Aaron J. Werner

A Christianity which will bear witness to God's Word . . . will not be afraid to engage in an intellectual and philosophical contest with the prevailing dogmas of its day.

--Oliver O'Donovan, University of Edinburgh

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Does God Exist?

The question of God's existence is, in my opinion, the greatest question in the history of great questions. Since one's answer to this question will influence nearly every aspect of life, prudence demands one consider the evidence diligently. In my opinion, some of the most effective arguments for the existence of God are ones based upon the moral values found in nearly every culture. Philosophers refer to these arguments as "moral arguments." In short, moral arguments claim that the existence of a moral law proves there must be a moral law giver—God. If successful, this argument will not necessarily prove the existence of the God of the Bible. However, the God of the Bible seems to be a good fit for the evidence.

An Argument from Morality

My arrangement of the moral argument is relatively simple.¹ One can visualize my argument with the following syllogism:

- (1) If objective moral values and duties exist, then God exists.
- (2) Objective moral values and duties do exist.
- (3) Therefore, God exists.

Since this is a logically valid argument, *modus ponens*, if the premises are true, then the conclusion is *necessarily* true. The

¹My arrangement of this argument has been influenced by the writings of William Lane Craig in *Reasonable Faith*, C. S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*, Norman Geisler & Frank Turek in *I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist*, Paul Chamberlain in *Can We Be Good Without God*, Paul Copan in various articles, and many others whom I cannot remember.

argument's strength, therefore, depends on the truth of its premises. Since many philosophers are uncomfortable with the conclusion, many have attempted to reject one of the two premises. Let us, then, evaluate the strength of these premises.

Defending Premise (2)

The second premise of my argument claims, "Objective moral values and duties do exist." In order to defend this proposition, I must first explain what I mean by an objective moral value. Then I will contrast such values with subjective moral values.

Objective Morality Defined

When I say that there are objective moral values and duties, I mean that certain actions, attitudes, or values are either right or wrong for all people, in all places, in all times, despite of how anyone might feel about the issue. For instance, actions such as rape, mistreating people because of their skin color or gender, acting selfishly, or torturing innocent children for entertainment are always wrong even if some people do not believe these things are wrong. Likewise, values such as fairness, justice, compassion and altruism are always good, while greed, selfishness, gluttony, and unjustified killing are always wrong.

Objectivism. I refer to those who believe certain actions or values are always morally wrong—and others are always morally right—as "moral absolutists" or "moral objectivists." Moral objectivists claim that there is a moral law, or a moral standard, which was not invented by us humans. Rather, this moral law was discovered.

Mathematic illustration. One-way to understand the discovery of a moral is to consider the mathematical truth three times four equals twelve. Humans did not invent this truth. Instead, humans discovered this truth. However, suppose that the average human being had the intellectual ability of a three-year-old child. In that case, no one ever discovered the truth that three times four equals twelve. This truth would be true despite whether any human knew its truth. Another example is Einstein's famous equation $E = mc^2$. This truth would still have been true even if Einstein never discovered it. Although there are probably many mathematical truths we have yet to discover, these truths are still true. In the same way, moral objectivists believe there are moral truths, which are true regardless of how any feels about them.

Degrees of certainty. Moral objectivists do not claim that all moral truths are easily recognizable. Just as some mathematical truths are evident to those with Ph.D.'s in Mathematics but not to the average ten-year-old, some moral truths are easier to recognize than other moral truths. The fact that some moral truths are harder to grasp than others does not suggest that they do not exist. Although the idea that certain values—such as justice fairness—are always good seems obvious, no all philosophers agree with me concerning this issue. Those who disagree with this position believe that moral values are subjective.

Subjective Morality Defined

Some people reject the notion that morality is objective. Instead, they believe that morality is subjective or relative. I call those holding this view “moral relativists” or

“subjectivists.” Moral relativists believe there is no such thing as objective moral value. To them, objective right and wrong does not exist. In fact, moral relativists often claim, “It is sheer intolerance to think we somehow have a lock on moral truth so we can impose it on others.”² Instead, moral truths are, simply, matters of taste or social constructs. For instance, the claim “Lobster tastes good” may be true for one person but not true for another. Relativists often maintain, “Just as the tastiness of lobster is relative to the eater, the morality of actions is relative to the person.” In other words, something like, say, homosexuality might be morally wrong for a person in a particular culture, but morally right for a different person living in a different culture.

Moral subjectivists also believe that many morals are social constructs—agreed upon principles created to help us survive. For instance, the social construct that a red traffic light means “stop,” and a green one means “go.” Another example is the social construct of driving on the right-hand side of the road in America, but on the opposite side in other countries. Hence, morality is relative to the culture in which one is living.

Arguments for Objective Moral Values

A successful demonstration of the truth of premise (2) requires that I show that that morality is objective and not relative. Both moral objectivist and the moral relativists claim to have to have good reasons for their positions. Logically, however, they cannot both be right. If some moral values are

²Chamberlain 23.

Unless there is an actual United States of America, and you have knowledge of it, you cannot call any depiction of it more or less accurate. So, unless there is a standard, a real thing called America, we cannot know if any of these maps represents progress in accuracy. In the same way, we cannot call any social reform an improvement unless there is some kind of moral objective moral standard on which to base our claim. For instance, we cannot say that the United States has progressed morally by banning slavery, providing the rights of women, and prohibiting child abuse unless there is a moral standard. In short, if you are going to claim that moral progress is possible, then, you must also believe in an objective moral standard.

Two: Human bickering becomes nonsensical. I derive my second reason morality's objectivity on the notion of human bickering. If there is no objective moral standard, then human bickering is pointless. But, the fact that we humans bicker or quarrel, suggests that we actually believe in an objective moral standard. When people bicker they say things like: "Hey, you shouldn't do that," or, "Give that back, I had it first," and "That's just wrong." They also say things such as, "How would you like it if someone did that to you?" They might even say things like, "but you promised," or "leave him alone, he isn't hurting anyone." Chamberlain observed,

Think carefully about what each of these statements is saying. They are not merely saying that we don't like what the other person is doing. Of course, that is included, but they are saying much more than that. They are appealing to a standard of conduct, which we are saying the other person has violated. What's more, we expect the other person already to know about this standard, don't we? Never do we ask, 'By the way, have you heard of fairness?' ...Never does the other person ...say 'But who

cares about fairness' ...Rather, she usually tries to show that their conduct really did somehow conform to the standard...[and that] if you really understood the whole situation ...you would know that."³

In short, if people did not believe in an objective moral standard, then they could not argue as they do. The fact that people certainly do argue, and impose moral standards upon others, reveals that they do believe in a standard that is binding upon all. In short, if you are going to bicker, you must also believe in an objective moral standard.

Three: Human judgments not possible. I obtain my third reason for believing in an objective moral law from the notion of human judgments. If there is no objective moral standard, then no action, no matter how vile, can be judged as any less moral than any other. For instance, if there is no moral standard, then there is nothing wrong with selfish behavior, gluttony, slavery, torturing children, gay bashing, or the killing Jews. Deep down, though, most people know that these things morally wrong. The fact that some humans do not think all of these actions are wrong, is not a good argument against the idea of an objective moral standard. Just as some humans are born with various degrees of colorblindness, some humans are unable to recognize the moral standard. Nevertheless, most humans recognize that certain actions are always wrong.

This inescapable pattern of thought caused a young C. S. Lewis eventually to question his atheism. He explained, "My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A

³Chamberlain, 59. Here Chamberlain is following C. S. Lewis' argument in *Mere Christianity*.

man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.”⁴ Lewis continued, “If there were no light in the universe and therefore no creature with eyes, we should never know it was dark. Dark would be a word without meaning.”⁵ In other words, Lewis realized terms like *evil* and *wrong* are meaningless unless there is an objective moral law.

Four: Subjectivism Cannot Be Lived Consistently. My fourth reason why morality must be objective is based on the fact that subjectivism is not livable. In other words, even moral subjectivists become moral objectivists when they are wronged. For instance, consider to the way professing moral relativists respond when mistreated or harmed without reason. According to Chamberlain, “The same person who denies there is any objective moral standard one moment goes back on her word the next. She will immediately accuse you of acting unfairly or indecently or dishonestly toward her.”⁶ The only way a moral relativist can act consistent with moral relativism is to say nothing when wronged. Yet, the fact that moral relativists respond as if there is an objective moral standard when they are wronged, suggests that relativism is false. For an amusing illustration of this point consider the amusing account of a student who wrote a paper arguing for moral relativism.

A professor at a major university in Indiana ... told the students to write on any ethical topic of their choice, requiring each student only to properly back up his or her thesis with reasons and documentation. One student, an atheist, wrote eloquently on the topic of moral relativism. He argued, “All morals are relative; there is no absolute standard of justice or rightness; it’s

⁴C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (San Francisco, CA: Harper Collins, 2001), 38.

⁵Lewis, 39.

⁶Chamberlain, 61. [Add California Starbucks Story here.](#)

all a matter of opinion; you like chocolate, I like vanilla,” and so on. His paper provided both his reasons and his documentation. It was the right length, on time, and stylishly presented in a handsome blue folder. After the professor read the entire paper, he wrote on the front cover, “F, I don’t like blue folders!” When the student got the paper back he was enraged. He stormed into the professor’s office and protested, “‘F! I don’t like blue folders!’ That’s not fair! That’s not right! That’s not just! You didn’t grade the paper on its merits!” Raising his hand to quiet the bombastic student, the professor calmly retorted, “Wait a minute. Hold on. I read a lot of papers. Let me see . . . wasn’t your paper the one that said there is no such thing as fairness, rightness, and justice?” “Yes,” the student answered. “Then what’s this you say about me not being *fair*, *right*, and *just*?” the professor asked. “Didn’t your paper argue that it’s all a matter of taste? You like chocolate, I like vanilla?” The student replied, “Yes, that’s my view.” “Fine, then,” the professor responded. “I don’t like blue. You get an F!” Suddenly the light bulb went on in the student’s head. He realized he really *did* believe in moral absolutes. He at least believed in justice. After all, he was charging his professor with *injustice* for giving him an F simply because of the color of the folder. That simple fact defeated his entire case for relativism.⁷

In short, the actions of most relativists betrays their commitment to relativism. In other words, most relativists are actually closet objectivists.

Five: Ubiquitous human consensus. My fifth reason why morality must be objective is based on the ubiquitous human consensus concerning morality. For instance, nearly every culture believes that that selfish behavior is bad and altruistic behavior is good. The civilized world considers cultures that do not value selflessness, as immoral cultures. A good example of human consensus concerning morality is the UN declaration of human rights.⁸

⁷Geisler 173-74.

⁸<http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr>

Answering Objections to Objective Morality

Despite the previous five convincing arguments, not everyone agrees that objective moral values exist. Their case against objective moral values typically includes the following objections.

The Eskimo Objection

Moral relativists often reject the idea that there is a universal moral standard transcending all cultures and societies. They contend, since various societies around the world have noticeably different moral practices, there is no generally accepted moral standard. For instance, consider the Eskimo people. According to anthropologists, “in the past infanticide was quite common. They would leave their infant children, especially girls, out to freeze to death. This was permitted completely at the parents’ discretion. No social stigma was attached to it.”⁹ Since most modern westerners would abhor such a practice, moral relativists claim that is no universally accepted moral standard.

Given the differences in history, climate, technological development, education, social development, financial prosperity, and the like, “the remarkable thing is not how different various peoples’ moral practices are, but how similar they are.”¹⁰ For instance,

⁹Chamberlain, 82.

¹⁰Chamberlain, 78-79.

imagine living among a group of people where you were commended for deceiving your friends and neighbors without cause...Or for making a promise to your neighbor with the clear intention of breaking it. Or for withholding from your friend what was clearly his for no reason at all.¹¹

In short, it's hard to imagine such a society. Nevertheless, the "Eskimo" objection seems to be a clear example that morality is relative.

How then, do we answer the "Eskimo" objection? I think we must ask not only what the culture does, but why the culture does this thing. According to Chamberlain, "We have to realize that a difference in moral practice may not always be because of a difference in moral values or principles held by the people."¹² There are at least two reasons why a people group may appear to have a different moral standard, when they really do not. **First**, they may find themselves in different circumstances or life conditions. **Second**, they may have different beliefs about reality.

I think that one can explain the Eskimo objection with the first of these two reasons. Eskimo infanticide, at first glance, seems to indicate that Eskimos do not have the values that we have. But, if we consider why they euthanize some of their children, maybe we can see that they do value human life and do love their children. Why, then, do Eskimos kill their babies—especially their girls. They do it to survive. The Eskimo mother has no other options—it's her or the baby. **First**, since fathers need to hunt, and mothers can only hold one child in their parkies, only one child could live. **Second**, given the fact that their children are breastfed until the age of four, and given their nomadic lifestyle, even during the best

¹¹Chamberlain, 79.

¹²Chamberlain, 82.

times, only some children would survive. **Third**, Eskimos have no means to give the child to someone else in the society. **Fourth**, Eskimos have no access to birth control. And, since they have no internet access or cable TV, there is very little else do to in a cold dark igloo other than actions that lead to more babies. In short, the Eskimos may value life just as much as we do—they are in a different circumstance than us.

But, if Eskimos do value life, why do they freeze their children? The simple answer is that freezing is the most painless death possible in their culture. If they didn't value life, they would use their children for leopard seal bait, or spear them, or drown them, or eat them. But why do the Eskimos kill more girls than boys? Doesn't that show a genuine moral difference? Not necessary. Since many males die while trying to provide food for the tribe, more boys are needed. In short, they don't kill more girls because they love them less—they kill more girls so that they can survive.

The Witch Objection

Another example often used to argue that moral values change is the issue of burning witches. Since we once sentenced witches as murders, but now do not, our moral values have changed. Therefore, relativists claim that morality is historically relative. But perhaps there is a better explanation. According to Turek, "What has changed is not the moral principle that murder is wrong but the perception or factual understanding of whether "witches" can really murder people by their curses."¹³ Since we no longer believe they can, we no longer accuse them of murder. The moral value

¹³Turek, 182.

that murder is wrong has not changed.

The Sacred Cow Objection

A third example used to argue that moral values are relative is the fact that in some cultures revere cows while others eat them. For instance, many Hindus in India will not kill a cow—even when children are starving to death.

Relativists insist, “Doesn’t that prove that different cultures have different moral values?”

In my understanding, Hindus do not have a different moral values, but different beliefs about reality. According to Turek,

The reason people in India consider cows sacred has nothing to do with a core moral value—it has to do with their religious belief in reincarnation. Indians believe that cows may possess the souls of deceased human beings, so they won’t eat them. In the United States, we do not believe that the souls of our deceased relatives may be in a cow, so we freely eat cows. In the final analysis, what appears to be a moral difference is actually an agreement—we both believe it’s wrong to eat Grandma! The core moral value that it’s wrong to eat Grandma is considered absolute by people in both cultures.¹⁴

In other words, the aversion for eating sacred cow in India does not prove relativism.

The Abortion Objection

A fourth objection is the abortion debate. Since some feel that abortion is murder and others think aborting is morally acceptable, relativists claim there is not general moral consensus. However, the opposite is actually true. Since both sides agree that murdering humans is wrong, the debate

¹⁴Turek, 182-83

centers on the issue of whether or not the fetus is a human. Hence, both sides agree with the moral value that murdering humans is wrong—they just disagree over when a person becomes a person. Consequently, instead of proving that morality is relative, the abortion issue actually demonstrated that moral values actually exist.

The Judas Objection

Suppose we discovered a culture that valued lying and deception. For instance, consider the account described in Don Richardson's book "Peace Child." When missionaries explained the life of Jesus to the Sairi tribe of head-hunters in Irian-Jaya, the natives that thought Judas was the hero of the gospel account since he was able to deceive Jesus. In that culture, they valued and revered the ability to deceive and betray. Hence, relativists seem to have a clear case that a general morality is not ubiquitous.

However, even in this culture, lying was considered right only under certain circumstances. For instance, one could only lie to feed your starving family, gain victory over your enemies, or some other cause that they deemed just. We do similar things. For instance, we condone killing and lying when done in the name of national security. For example, undercover drug agents often befriend drug dealers only to betray and arrest them later.

The Lobster Objection

Many reject the idea of objective morality by arguing that morals are personal matters of preference, not objective matters of fact. For instance, consider the tastefulness of lobster. One person may say, "Lobster tastes great" and

another may say, “Lobster tastes awful.” Therefore, the tastefulness of lobster is relative to the taster. In the same way, moral preferences are relative to individuals as well. Just as the tastiness of lobster is relative to the eater, the morality of certain actions is relative to the person. For example, homosexuality might be morally wrong for a person in a particular culture, but morally right for a different person living in a different culture under different circumstances.

I believe the taste objection and lobster illustration is flawed. The claims “lobster tastes great” and “lobster tastes awful” say nothing about lobster. These claims do something about the person eating the lobster, but nothing about lobster. If, however, a person claimed, “Lobsters are edible sea crustaceans inhabiting the coastal waters of New England and Canada. Lobsters have two large claws—one for ripping and one for crushing, five pair of legs, and two long antennae. Some people find the boiled flesh of lobster tasteful and others do not,” then the person would be saying something either true or false about lobsters. In fact, the statement makes several truth claims about lobster. These claims could be true or false. But, they cannot be true for one person and false for another. In short, the “Lobster” objection fails to support moral relativism.

The Social Construct Objection

Some object to the idea of an objective morality and claim that morality is a mere social convention or construct. In other words, morality is something akin to on which side of the road we, as a culture, choose to drive. However, if morality is a social construct, then we could change it at any time without any moral objection. We may have a social objection, just as

we would have if we decided to change the side of the road we drive on, or the color of our traffic lights, but it would not be a moral objection.

Defending Premise (1)

Some atheists, such as Yale professor Shelly Kagan,¹⁵ concede the truth of premise (2), which states, “Objective moral values and duties do exist.” Therefore, if they are going to reject truth of the conclusion that God exists, they must reject the first premise which states, “If objective moral values and duties exist, then God exists. In other words, atheists who accept the idea of an objective moral standard must explain how such a standard exists without appealing to God. Such individuals often appeal to one of the following objections.

The Euthyphro Objection

Perhaps the most sophisticated way to dismiss the dependence of God on the moral standard is what philosophers call “Euthyphro’s Dilemma.” In one of Plato’s imaginary dialogues between Socrates and Euthyphro, Socrates inquires, “Is what is holy, holy because the gods approve it, or do they approve it because it is holy.”¹⁶ In other words, is, say, kindness good because God decreed it to be good, or did he decree it because it is good? If the first scenario is true, then morality is relative—and there is no real moral standard. Instead, we just have an infinitely strong enforcer of a law that could have been otherwise. This is like allowing the strongest bully on the block to determine what is right and wrong. Or,

¹⁵Craig/Kagan debate, February 24, 2009, Columbia University.

¹⁶Paul Copan in *Passionate Conviction*, 90

like the nation with the most largest army telling the others what is good, and what is bad.¹⁷ In short, this is an example of “Might is right.” According to this scenario, God could have called meanness good, and kindness bad. If this scenario is true, then morality is not objective—it was randomly chosen by a being, albeit a very powerful one. If kindness is good because God decreed it to be good, then God have decreed the opposite—that kindness is evil.

If, however, the second scenario is true—that God decreed kindness to be good because it is good—then God isn’t necessary for there to be a moral law. In other words, the law exists apart from God. He could not have decreed anything otherwise. In short, God is subordinate to this moral law, and, therefore, a moral law does not depend on his existence. If God commands things because they are good, then there must be some standard for goodness which God is subordinate. Therefore, he is not the basis of the moral law. Instead, he is merely the herald of it. It’s a standard to which must conforms. God is not the source of good, it exists independent of him.

So, we are presented with a serious dilemma. Either morality is relative, and there is no moral standard, or God is not necessary for there to be a moral standard. Either way, we seem to have a defeater for our moral argument for the existence of God. In short, the “Euthyphro Objection” appears to indicate that premise (1) is not true.

Is there any way to defend premise (1) from the Euthyphro Objection? Can we answer Socrates? I answer Socrates by pointing out that it is a false dilemma. I believe

¹⁷ **Insert Greek army illustration here.**

that God did not decree the moral law, nor is he subordinate to it—he *is* it. God is the moral standard. Moral truth is part of his essential character. He did not create it, and he is not subordinate to it, he is it. Just as roundness is an attribute of all spheres, and squareness is an attribute of cubes, so morality is an attribute of God. He is more than the moral standard—he is also personal—freethinking, but he is no less. Hence, anyone who believes in a moral law, actually believes in God, for God is the moral law. This God is not necessarily the God of the Bible. However, the God of the Bible seems to be the best fit for the evidence.

The Evolutionary Objection

Some moral relativists take a more sophisticated approach to refuting moral objectivity. Rather than denying that there is a moral standard, they propose that there is one. However, they say, it is independent of any God. Instead, it is the product of natural selection. In other words, our morality evolved as a survival adaptation. For instance, consider a mother's affection for her child. If a particular mother did not have such affections, and instead, had the desire to eat her child, then her DNA would not be preserved and passed down to subsequent generations. Hence only the mothers who had a certain level of affection for their children passed on their affection-genes.

Naturalistic evolutionists suggest that all of our morals developed in this fashion. Perhaps moral awareness is a biological adaptation no less necessary than opposable thumbs

and superior eyesight. In short, morality is part of our herd instinct.¹⁸

Is it possible that our morality is nothing more than an evolved herd instinct? Lewis argued that we humans do have many instincts.¹⁹ For instance, we have an instinct to suckle, and an instinct for sexual reproduction. However, humans have competing instincts. Lewis argued, we have an instinct to preserve our lives. However, we also have an instinct to protect our young. Sometimes, however, these competing instincts come into conflict. For instance, suppose you hear a cry for help from a burning house. What happens next is that two of your instincts instantly come into conflict. Your instinct to help conflicts with your instinct to protect yourself. If our moral sense is purely instinctive, then the strongest instinct should win. But, it does not. Instead, something must help us choose between these competing instincts. Lewis called this struggle our moral sense. It's the ability to follow our weaker instinct when we feel it is the right thing to do. This sense makes us feel that we ought to do one thing even if we want to do something else. Consequently, I do not think that our moral sense evolved. Those who believe that morality evolved must answer the following six objections.

First, if our moral sense evolved, and is a mere instinct, then when competing instincts interact, the strongest instinct should win and should not produce a feeling of wrongness when we do not follow the weaker instinct. For instance, there is not sense of “ought to” among fish who have competing

¹⁸For a visual representation of this herd instinct, perform an internet search for the short video “Battle at Kruger.”

¹⁹The following argument is adapted from Book One of Lewis' *Mere Christianity*.

instincts to eat smaller fish *and* an instinct to stay in the lake. If, in their instinctive pursuit of eating smaller fish, they end up on the beach, their instinct to eat is put on the back burner and their stronger instinct to stay in the water becomes the most important.²⁰ **Second**, if our moral sense evolved as a survival mechanism, then we should have evolved the moral sense that it is our right, and duty to eliminate the handicapped, the sick, the weak, and the elderly. Since such persons hinder the survival of the herd, natural selection should have selected herd behaviors against their survival. Such people consume resources needed for the herd to survive. In fact, such this was Hitler's attitude toward the weak. In his 1924 book, *Mein Kampf*, argued that modern humans have been subverting natural selection by allowing weaker humans to thrive. Hence, he decided to help nature by elimination handicapped persons and anyone he identified as inferior. Hitler wrote, "If nature does not wish that weaker individuals should mate with the stronger, she wishes even less that a superior race should intermingle with an inferior one; because in such cases all her efforts, throughout hundreds of thousands of years, to establish an evolutionary higher stage of being, may thus be rendered futile. But such a preservation goes hand-in-hand with the inexorable law that it is the strongest and the best who must triumph and that they have the right to endure. He who would live must fight. He who does not wish to fight in this world, where permanent struggle is the law of life, has not the right to exist."²¹

Third, if morality evolved, then it could have evolved on another planet differently. In other words, suppose a human

²⁰ Add pogie and bluefish illustration here.

²¹Turek, 189.

like species evolved on Mars with the belief that rape is morally good. Suppose also that these beings came to earth to spread their good will by systematically raping all human females. Would their evolved belief that rape is good be true here on earth, where we evolved the opposite belief? If your answer is no, then you believe in a moral standard that exists apart from any evolutionary influence. If you answer “yes” then you are a moral relativist, and there is not objective morality. Hence, rape is not wrong on earth either.

Fourth, if a moral sense evolved, then there is no reason why any one particular individual should feel obligated to obey it. As Craig has argued, going against such a moral standard is not any more wrong than, say, belching at the dinner table—it’s unfashionable, but not morally wrong. In fact, in some cultures or situations, such as a fraternity party, it would be praiseworthy.

Fifth, if morality evolved, then why suppose that we are the most valuable creature. Why are not the whales, with their larger brains, the most superior and valuable creature? Why not the cheetah, with its incredible speed the most worthy creature? Why should all of our moral actions not center on the survivability of the mountain gorillas, rather than the survivability of the human race? Furthermore, suppose a spurious race of aliens came to earth to harvest us, the way we harvest fish—would their actions be wrong? If so, why? What would be the basis of that wrongness? Moreover, why suppose that human survival is a good thing? Humans seem to be destroying the world. Perhaps the best thing for the world’s survival would be for a disease to wipe out the human race. If the world’s survival is our standard for morality, then killing every human would be a good thing.

Sixth, if we are merely animals, why is it wrong for us to, say rape, when it is not wrong for sharks to do so?²² Elephant seals and deer fight and sometimes kill weaker males for the right to pass on their superior DNA. Why would it be wrong from humans to do the same? Would not this seem to help ensure that the smartest and strongest humans survived while the weaker ones died off?

In short, there are serious problems with the evolutionary answer to morality.

The Science Objection

In his book, *The Moral Landscape*, atheist Sam Harris argues that there is an objective moral standard. For instance, he claims, “The more we understand ourselves at the level of the brain, the more we will see that there are right and wrong answers to the questions of human values.”²³ However, he does not believe this moral standard requires God. For example, he writes,

people who draw their worldview from religion generally believe that moral truth exists, but only because God has woven in into the very fabric of reality; while those who lack such faith tend to think that notions of *good* and *evil* must be the products of evolutionary pressure and cultural intervention.²⁴

However, Harris states, “my purpose is to persuade you that both sides in this debate are wrong.”²⁵ In short, he rejects the

²² Add shark-riding story here.

²³Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

²⁴Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

²⁵Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

idea of God being the moral standard, as well as the notion that the moral standard is the product of evolutionary natural selection. So what does Harris propose as the source of this moral law? He writes, “questions about values—about meaning, morality, and life’s larger purpose—are really questions about the well-being of conscious creatures.”²⁶ In other words, “good” is whatever promotes the well-being of conscious creatures, and “bad” is whatever hinders their well-being. The remainder of Harris’ book argues that science can determine what promotes this well-being and what hinders it. In fact, he claims, “morality should be considered an undeveloped branch of science.”²⁷ Harris argues, “Science can, in principle, help us understand what we *should* do, and *should* want—and, therefore, what other people should do and should want in order to live the best lives possible.”²⁸

The primary problem with Harris’ contention is that it commits the logical fallacy of question-begging. In other words, in his attempt to prove that science can determine morality, Harris smuggles in the premise “well-being of conscious creatures is good.” But, why should we grant that premise when the very nature of the question is the search for a moral standard? Obviously science can reveal what sort of actions promote well-being and what sort hinder it—but science cannot say that human well being is good. Harris must smuggle the truth of that premise into his argument without defending it. Rather than assuming the truth of this premise, Harris must first show why well-being is good—

²⁶Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

²⁷Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

²⁸Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

something he knows he cannot do for he admits, “Science cannot tell us why, *scientifically*, we should value health. But, once we admit that health is the proper concern of medicine, we can then study and promote it through science.”²⁹ Hence, by his own admission, Harris’ argument is logically flawed—science cannot determine morality. In fact, science must, by faith, presume morality for science to work. For instance, science requires that scientists present their research with integrity, honesty, and accuracy, even though science cannot prove these things exist. Hence, science, in order for it to work, must rely on faith—faith in a moral law. But, there cannot be a moral law with a moral law-giver. Hence, science requires God.

The Atheistic Moral Platonism Objection

Atheist Yale professor Shelly Kagan concedes the truth of premise (2), which states “objective moral values do exist.” Therefore, in order to reject truth of the conclusion that God exists, he must reject the first premise which states, “If objective moral values exist, then God exists. Hence, Kagan argues that this moral law “just is.”³⁰ According to Kagan, it is simply a brute fact of the universe—no different that the laws of logic or mathematics. William Lane Craig refers to this view as “Atheistic Moral Platonism.”³¹ Since God is this moral standard, then those who believe in this standard, actually, already believe in God. This God who exists, may not care about people, but if he does not, then we are not

²⁹Harris, *The Moral Landscape*.

³⁰Craig/Kagan debate, February 24, 2009, Columbia University.

³¹William Lane Craig, *On Guard* (Colorado Springs: David C. Cook, 2010), 136.

obligated to keep this moral law. In other words, if there is no personal, transcendent God, then we are under no obligation to keep the moral law.

Conclusion

I have attempted to argue for the existence of God with the following deductive syllogism:

- (1) If objective moral values exist, then God exists.
- (2) Objective moral values do exist.
- (3) Therefore, God exists.

Since this is a logically valid argument, if the premises are true, then the conclusion is *necessarily* true. Therefore, the majority of my argument has involved defending the truth of premise (1) and premise (2). Since I have given good reasons to accept them, and I have refuted the most common objections to these propositions, I think we are intellectually obligated to accept the truth of my arguments conclusion—God exists. This God is not necessarily the God of the Bible. However, the God of the Bible seems to be the reasonable fit for the evidence.

