

Mr. G Video – The Moral Argument for God’s Existence

Today we’re talking about the moral argument for God’s existence. First let’s talk about what the argument is NOT – it’s not saying that people who don’t believe in God cannot do the good, moral things that believers do, nor is it saying that atheists are generally worse morally than believers. What the argument says in a nutshell is that God is necessary for there to exist moral values or duties. Values means an idea of what is right and wrong, and duties means the idea that people should do certain things or act in certain ways, and that not to do so would be wrong.

So there are two ways to formally state the argument, which are basically saying the same thing. You could say:

1. For an objective moral standard to exist, God must exist;
2. An objective moral standard does indeed exist;
3. Therefore, God must exist.

You could also put it in negative form:

1. If there is no God, then an objective moral standard does not exist;
2. An objective moral standard does indeed exist;
3. Therefore, God must exist.

All people recognize that some things are right, and some things are wrong. When we argue over what’s right and wrong we’re referring to a higher law out there somewhere that we assume other people are aware of and hold to, and we assume we can’t just randomly change it. This seems to be something beyond just biology, and also something unique to humans. Animals can do stuff like kill other animals, steal other animals’ food, etc., and we don’t say they are evil for doing it; they’re just following their instinct. But if people did those same things, most normal people would say that’s wrong, that’s evil. Where does that come from? The moral argument would say, from the existence of God, and the laws of morality that He has put in place, and put in us humans somehow.

Someone might object to this argument by stating that objective moral standards do not exist, that morality, or right and wrong, is something that human society came up with, created, because it was useful as a tool to maintain order and make society possible. But, they would say, there’s nothing real about morality beyond what humans make it. Nothing is actually good or evil inherently, or in and of itself. But this contradicts what we all know and see around us every day. An atheist can say there is no objective morality, but he or she will live life as if there is. Richard Dawkins famously said “This universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, **no evil and no good**, nothing but pitiless indifference”. And yet he himself makes moral judgments about things he sees in the world that he believes are wrong, or evil, and condemns those things. Where does his

standard of judging something as wrong come from? If there is truly no such thing as evil or good, who is he to say that killing, stealing, lying, etc. is wrong?

Some might object that different cultures have different moralities, different ideas of what is right and wrong, and so that proves that morality is just a cultural construct, or something that each culture makes up for itself to suit its own needs; there's no one morality from some Higher Power. But we can respond to this that there is actually a core of basic values, basic moral principles, that all cultures possess, that all cultures affirm as true. It's just the expression of those basic principles that can differ from culture to culture, how they're applied might vary. Anyway, even if some cultures did get morality wrong in some areas, that doesn't mean that it isn't a basic universal thing, recognized by the majority of people and cultures.

Another common objection to this argument is that morality can exist on its own without God. Things like murder and stealing are wrong even if God doesn't exist. They might say that something like murder, for example, goes against our natural instinct to keep the species going, and so we naturally consider it wrong. But it's hard to see a reason why this would be. It doesn't seem like it could come from biology. If it were just our instinct, then it's no longer objective; it depends on the person and could be changed or done away with. Also there's the difference we mentioned between humans and animals. What makes humans different? Where does the idea of universal human rights come from? Furthermore, consider that humans, unlike animals, have the ability to make the choice to act according to reason, rather than their natural instincts. So purely natural, biological reasons for morality apart from God don't make sense.

Some might object that morality just comes from other people, like a government giving orders for how people will behave or the majority in a society believing and acting a certain way. But this doesn't work either. In Nazi Germany, the government believed that killing millions of Jewish men, women and children was necessary and right, and so did some citizens. But most people around the world condemned that as wrong and we would all believe that the German people would be morally obligated to say no to that, to refuse to go along with it.

The existence of these objective moral values, that everyone basically agrees on, and that distinguish humans from animals, shows that something else has to be going on beyond just biology, beyond instinct, and that something, by the way, rules out evolution of humans from animals. Morality could only come from God.