

Moral Absolutism - Conceptually sophisticated ethics and the break down of Moral Absolutism

The assignment that follows has been written by Dr. Dominic F. Dixon, and is entirely the work of the author unless otherwise cited.

In this world of sophisticated secular philosophy, we still debate on what is right and wrong and we debate on the metaphysics and the epistemology of morals. Perhaps our sophistication is not in line with ethics of the absolute thought but of a superficial and self knowledge, subjective and convenient understanding of morality.

Argument #1: Morality cannot be *sans God*. A society that draws its precepts of morality from God and then disconnects itself from God, will eventually crumble under the burden of depending solely on the minds of thinkers now dwelling in a cut-flower society. America was built on the precepts of God but now, even a Bible is not permitted in schools but awaits the visitation of Americas' children in jails where Bibles are readily available.

Will Herberg writes "The attempt made in recent decades by secularist thinkers to disengage the moral principles of western civilization from their scripturally based religious context, in the assurance that they could live a life of their own as "humanistic" ethics, has resulted in our "cut flower culture." Cut flowers retain their original beauty and fragrance, but only so long as they retain the vitality that they have drawn from their now-severed roots; after that is exhausted, they wither and die. So with freedom, brotherhood, justice, and personal dignity — the values that form the moral foundation of our civilization. Without the life-giving power of the faith out of which they have sprung, they possess neither meaning nor vitality." [1]

Argument #2: In post-modern societies moralists are termed as moral police and advocates of morality are frauds in the eyes of the liberalist. To the post-modern mind, the truth of absolutes is irrelevant but s/he still necessitates an absolute foundation for forming his/her truth, even if subjective. This view will have no sure foundation. To the post modern architect, s/he designs a building that is incoherent, yet the foundations are coherent for if the foundations were structurally incoherent, the entire building would come crashing down. This is the plight of morally incoherently societies - it is crashing!

Political Science Professor, Robert Fitch said "Ours is an age where ethics has become obsolete. It is superseded by science, deleted by philosophy and dismissed as emotive by psychology. It is drowned in compassion, evaporates into aesthetics and retreats before relativism. The usual moral distinctions between good and bad are simply drowned in a maudlin emotion in which we feel more sympathy for the murderer than for the murdered, for the adulterer than for the betrayed, and in which we have actually begun to believe that the real guilty party, the one who somehow caused it all, is the victim, and not the perpetrator of the crime." [2]

Argument #3: Morality was not a human invention but an order of God as John Locke calls it the "law of nature" "state of nature" or "God's Law." Neither Morals nor Laws are inventions of societies, but societies only echo those laws. And these laws tend to be amended based on the uprising or down sliding of worldviews of each society. In certain Islamic nations, people were ruthlessly executed for certain crimes but that was almost eliminated in GCC nations due to the institution of democracy. In India, a Hindu nation where even speaking of sex and sexuality was once taboo, have now decriminalized homosexuality. Therefore, morality is not the invention of societies but the institution of God and disposed to humankind. Humankind then takes those sets of moralities such as "Thou shall not kill" Ex.20:13 or "Thou shall not steal" and turns it into a law, until society then decides to amend that law and tolerate killing (abortions, euthanasia) as it tolerates sexual orientations.

God demonstrated a moral law to the first man Adam *Genesis 2:16-17* “*You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die.*”. God also instituted laws on Labour, Exodus. 21:2-11. God instituted laws on Justice, Exodus. 21:12-36. God instituted laws of Sociology, Exodus. 22:16-31. God instituted Laws of Justice and Mercy, Exodus. 23:1-9. God even commanded that business owners should give Rest to their employees, Exodus.20:12 so that we may be refreshed.

Conclusion: No one is above the law for no one is above the law giver: Though God has created everything and instituted the Decalogue so that we are without excuse; each man for himself invented their subjective line of debased thought while being mindless about God Himself. The Catechism of the Catholic Church #398 states “*In that sin man preferred himself to God and by that very act scorned him. He chose himself over and against God, against the requirements of his creaturely status and therefore against his own good. Constituted in a state of holiness, man was destined to be fully "divinized" by God in glory. Seduced by the devil, he wanted to "be like God", but "without God, before God, and not in accordance with God"* [3]

When Lord Macaulay eventually became President of India's First Law Commission, and drafted the IPC [Indian Penal Code]. While submitting the draft of the IPC, Lord Macaulay maintains in his covering letter: *'It is an evil that any man should be above the law, it is still a greater evil that the public mind should be taught to regard as a high and venerable distinction the privilege of being above the law.* [4] The Indian Penal Code inspired counterparts in most other British colonies, and to date many of these laws are still in effect in places as far apart as Pakistan, Singapore, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nigeria and Zimbabwe, as well as in India itself.

According to Lord Macaulay and according to every governmental constitution, no one is above the law, then it would be consistent to proclaim that no ideologies of personal laws are above the laws of God. All ideologies are only subjective while Gods' thoughts are absolute and moral!

[1] Will Herberg, “Judaism and Modern Man”

[2] Robert Fitch, “The Obsolescence of Ethics” 1959

[3] Cf. DS 1510-1516

[4] Lord Macaulay's Speech in the British House of Commons. The House was debating the Bill, which was enacted as The Charter Act 1833, or, The Government of India Act 1833, which sought for the establishment of a Law Commission for consolidation and codification of Indian Laws.