

Doctrine of God

Immanuel Kant's Moral Argument

1. God has revealed His moral character, only to be dismissed by those who are filled with all unrighteousness.
 - *Romans 1:28 And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient; 29 Being filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, wickedness, covetousness, maliciousness; full of envy, murder, debate, deceit, malignity; whisperers, 30 Backbiters, haters of God, despiteful, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things, disobedient to parents, 31 Without understanding, covenant breakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful: 32 Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.*

2. Because God has revealed Himself, in general, and special revelation to mankind, individuals know that God is holy, just, and good. Individuals know about God, and they know right from wrong. But the natural man hates God.
 - *1 Corinthians 2:14 But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned.*

3. The natural man does not want God in their mind. The natural man will suppress the truth, and invite other individuals to join their revolt against reason.

4. The human revolt against God is to no avail. Death awaits those who oppose the Lord.
 - *Romans 2:12 For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law; 13 (For not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. 14 For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves:*

5. God has given His Law to men through Moses, and in the heart of men, manifested by the conscience. In this way God bears witness to Himself.

6. The main problem with the natural man who rejects the Law of God, is that it leads to anarchy and chaos. Structure is needed for social interaction if civilization is to survive. At the moment, American culture is Neo-barbaric, because society has embraced the propositions that God is dead, man is derived from the animals, and there is no accountability after death. Colleges produce little more than pseudo-educated barbarians.

7. Despite man's attempt to dismiss God, or suppress knowledge of God, there is still, what Immanuel Kant called, a sense of "oughtness" in the soul. This sense of moral "oughtness" to behave in a certain manner is Kant's categorical imperative. The sense of "oughtness" cannot be erased, illustrated in Lady Duncan trying to rub the blood off her hands saying in guilt, "*Out damn'd spot, out*" (Macbeth, Acts 5, Scene I).

Special Note.

Immanuel Kant (April 22, 1724 – February 12, 1804) was a German philosopher who argued that reason is the source of morality. His most famous work is the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) which sought to explain the relationship between reason and human experience. Emphasis was given to reasoning being the ultimate source of truth.

8. The biggest problem people cannot deal with, is guilt.
- *Romans 3:10 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.*
9. When Kant came to the question of knowledge, he asked, "If knowledge is possible, what would it have to be?" "What are the necessary ingredients needed in order to have knowledge?" In this manner, Kant transcended the problem to answer the question. When it came to God, Kant began with the presupposition of the existence of a moral "oughtness".
10. Other philosophers, such as Friedrich Nietzsche (October 15, 1844 – August 25, 1900), scoffed at the concept of a moral "oughtness", and said it does not exist, and humanity should get rid of it.
11. Kant went on to argue, that without a Categorical Imperative implanted in the soul of individuals, civilization would be impossible. Without a moral "oughtness", then the law of the jungle prevails, and might, makes right. Civilization is destroyed, and humans rise no higher than the animals.
12. Fyodor Dostoevsky (November 11, 1821 – February 9, 1881), the Russian novelist, said that if there is no God, then all things are permissible. If there is no objective ground for what is right, there is no objective ground for what is wrong. Life becomes a battle over preferences. That creates conflict and warfare between individuals.
13. Kant argued, that for the Categorical Imperative to be meaningful, there must be justice. If ultimately crime pays, then there is no practical reason to be virtuous. There is no practical reason not to be selfish. There must be justice, where right behaviour is rewarded, and bad behaviour punished.
14. Kant then asked, "What is necessary in order for there to be justice?"
- First, in order for there to be justice, there must be life after death, because it is painfully obvious that in this world there is much injustice. In this world not ever wrong is made right. There are innocent people who perish at the hand of the guilty.

- Second, in addition for justice to be rendered, there must be a judge in the life after death, who himself is just, and morally righteous, lest he be corrupted through bribe, or corruption.
 - Third, in order for justice to be just, the righteous judge must be omniscient so that the judgment he renders is without error, and without blemish.
 - Fourth, in addition to life after death, and a final judgment presided over by a just judge who is perfectly righteous, and who knows everything, the judge must be omnipotent, he must have power to enforce his judgment. If he were powerless, or restricted in any way from bringing justice to bear, there is no guarantee that justice shall be served.
15. In summary, Kant argued, that if justice is to matter, then you, the individual, have to matter. That means that you have to be held accountable for your every attitude, and action, by a just judge.
16. If morality is true, then it makes the existence of God an absolute necessity. Kant insisted that we must live as if there is a God, because if there is no God, there is no hope for civilization.
17. Most people, who do not want God in their life, want to live on borrowed capital. They do not want God, but they do want significance, and meaning, for human existence. Kant said, “You cannot have both. You cannot have a life without God, and have justice, and morality.”

Supplemental Material

Special Note.

Kant made a distinction between the noumenal realm and the phenomenal realm. In the noumenal realm, Kant placed three concepts. First, the idea of God, the idea of self, and the idea of the “thing in itself”, or essences in the noumenal realm.

The word noumenal is based on the Greek word for “mind.”

When Kant talked about the “thing in itself”, he is speaking on the metaphysical level, that is beyond the ability of our senses to receive. He talked about the “essence” of a thing which we do not see. We see only the outward appearances. We see a tree, not the “treeness”. We only see people, not the soul. That is what is meant by “meta” physics, or “beyond” the physical. Kant asked, “How do we know there is a self?” “How can you measure the self?”

Kant was not saying there is no such thing as “God”, or “self”, or “a thing in itself.” For Kant, it was an epistemological question. Kant was merely asking, “Can we know with finality anything about God, self, or the essence of a thing through scientific, or rational inquiry?”

His answer was, “No.” He said that all of our knowledge is known by the phenomenal, or that which can be perceived by the five senses. It is the world of appearances. It is the world that can be studied scientifically. But there is an unbridgeable between the world we see, and the world of essences.

Even the thought that the law of causality works in the phenomenal world, we cannot be assured it works in the metaphysical realm. We cannot use the reasoning based upon cause and effect to fully explain, or understand the connection between the cosmos and God, or the relationship between this world, and the supernatural world.

Kant went on to say that, for practical reasons, we must live as if there is a God. We must believe there is a God in order for civilization to function. The “God-Hypothesis” is necessary for meaningful ethics. Without meaningful ethics, it is impossible to have an enduring civilization. Without morality, or law, based upon objective virtue, society will disintegrate to the law of the jungle where only the strongest survive, and the weak are at their mercy. The Russian novelist said, “If there is no God, all things are permissible as law is reduced to preferences” (Fyodor Dostoyevsky, November 11, 1821 – February 9, 1881). What “ought” to be done, gives way to what is done.

After Kant’s assault on Natural Theology, and its traditional defense of God, many turned to “Fideism.”

Fideism is based upon the word for faith, in Latin, and simply means that we take the idea of God on faith. It was argued that there had to be a “leap of faith” into the unknown. There was to be a “leap of faith” that God does exist, because the notion of God cannot be known rationally. We certainly cannot prove the existence of God.

God is merely the “First Principle” upon which everything is built, but God Himself cannot be verified by any scientific method. God cannot be proved by any rational data.

Kant persuaded many people to abandon their faith, which is not really hard to do, because of a natural proclivity of the human heart to not want to believe in God. By nature, people do not want to be afraid of God, or be accountable to Him. The natural man welcomes any philosophical dismissal of God.

However persuasive Kant may be to some, the apostle Paul, in Romans, does appeal to nature, to assert that God does exist, and that He can be known through nature.

Romans 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:

The Biblical response to the concerns of Immanuel Kant is this. God’s eternal power and deity are known through the things that are made. A person can get to the noumenal, from the phenomenal, contrary to what Kant asserted. That which is revealed in nature, clearly testifies to the Creator. That which is designed, has a Designer. That which is caused, has a First Cause, the Creator.

There is a general revelation which can be known and is known through His creation. That knowledge is so manifest, it is so clear, the world is left without an excuse. There is no barrier between this world and the next. Therefore, the unbeliever has no excuse for not believing in the truth of God. The excuse of ignorance is taken away.