



David Roemer <david@dkroemer.com>

4th comment about God

1 message

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To: Uri Nodelman <editors@plato.stanford.edu>

Dear Uri,

All the religions of the world summon human beings to believe that perfect fulfillment comes to us after we die when we become united with a transcendent reality. The Near Eastern religions use the terms *God*, *Heaven*, and , but the Chinese and Indian religions use a different terminology.

This means that everyone should know and understand the arguments for God's existence. Aristotle said there had to be a "prime mover," and Thomas Aquinas said there had to be a "first cause." Aquinas also gave us the argument from design, which was promoted by William Paley (18th century) and refuted by Richard Dawkins (20th century). With the discovery that the universe did indeed begin to exist as an infinitesimally small particle 13.7 billion years ago (Big Bang) and with our increased knowledge of genetics and epigenetics, many people consider these arguments persuasive and side with Paley against Dawkins. Another God-of-the-gaps argument (fine-tuning) is based on the inability of physicists to explain why the mass of an electron and the gravitational constant are exactly what they are. This causes some of the Dawkins folk to think there are an infinite number of universes and the Paley folk to think there is an "infinite being."

An idea closely related to the question of God's existence is the idea that human beings "have souls," which are given to us at conception and continue to exist after death. There is no evidence for this nonsense and it conflicts with the Christian doctrine of Original Sin and the Second Coming. Many people who think human beings "have souls" think the Big Bang is evidence of God's existence. In my opinion, the Big Bang is evidence that God does not exist because it is evidence that the universe is not intelligible.

There is a rational concept of the human soul. It is based on the observation that human beings have free will and the conscious knowledge of human beings as opposed to the sense knowledge of animals. That animals can see, hear, and solve problems is a scientific observation and part of evolutionary biology. Our knowledge of free will and conscious knowledge arises from our ability to make ourselves the subject of our own knowledge and is not part of evolutionary biology. In other words, human beings did not evolve from animals. What evolved from animals are homo sapiens, which are hypothetical creatures without free will and conscious knowledge.

Morality and civil law, however, concerns human beings. Slavery is wrong but it is okay to own animals and do with them whatever we want because we are indeed human beings. But this gives rise to a paradox. How can all humans be equal to one another and different from one another at the same time? According to metaphysics, a human being is a composition of body (matter) and soul (form). The soul is the principle that makes humans equal, and the body is the principle that makes humans different. The human soul is spiritual because we can comprehend free will and conscious knowledge, but we can't define these terms.

This is the kind of reasoning that provides a rational argument for God's existence. The decision we have to make, however, is not whether or not God exists, but whether or not He cares about our welfare and and revealed to us that our past will somehow be gathered up when we die and become the defining point of our lives. One of the reasons to believe this is that people who don't refuse to admit that human beings did not evolve from animals.

Very truly yours,
David Roemer