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If I may deem rationality insane,

I chose this sentence from the chapter on God in *This is Philosophy* by Steven Hales: “According to Pascal, if there is no God, then it doesn’t matter what you believe - you gain nothing by being right and lose nothing by being wrong” (89). On the other hand, there is God, *because* of what you believe - you gain everything by being right and lose everything by being wrong. This belief isn’t, as Hales describes, “just some harmless, abstract add-on to your life” (89). It is the actualized, scientific driving force that leads to final liberation. In this essay, I will offer something that is unexplainable and can only be affirmed by the individual’s direct experience. This essay may be taken seriously, or may be taken as an interesting art piece, or in any other preference of understanding. Either way, to more easily perceive the unexplainable, it is helpful to suspend the belief that God is of human qualities (e.g. suffering is bad vs. suffering is bliss, the statement “I am the body” vs. “I am not the body”, etc.); all rationality is deemed insane. With this illogicality in mind, consider the deductive argument:

1. The goal of humanity is the end of suffering and the attainment of bliss (God).
2. By striving for God, you inherit the qualities of God.
3. By inheriting the qualities of God, you affirm the existence of God.
4. Thus, there is God because of what you believe.

Pascal's argument essentially draws a Punnett square for believing in God. If you believe in God and God exists, you go to heaven (the end of suffering and the attainment of bliss). If you don't believe in God and God exists, you go to hell (continued suffering and unattainable bliss). If you believe in God and God doesn't exist, nothing happens. If you don't believe in God and God doesn't exist, nothing happens (Hales 85-93). In this essay, I will make the argument that something of great importance *does* happen according to your beliefs; but for this, we must put aside the materialist belief that death is the end.

Why death is not the end:

Many scholars of theology and mysticism share the belief that death is not the end. For example, "Death is certain for one who has been born, and rebirth is inevitable for one who has died" (B.G. 2.27). There is much synchronization in the Truth of the mystics. One might exclaim, "They can't all be crazy!" and accept the Word from their lips. However, it takes a rare being to accept God completely by the pure testimony of others. A deep internal acceptance (via scientific self-reflection and direct experience) is beneficial. Consider nature: It is autumn now; the beautiful golden leaves litter sidewalks for you to step on and participate in the natural course of infinite decay and rebirth seen in the changing seasons. Should we be any different?

If death is not the end, it is possible and beneficial to get to know God "better" in this lifetime, even if you do not know God fully in this lifetime. This can be known as being a good person, or gathering good Karma. Perhaps you will know God in the next lifetime. However, those who want to know God will not be completely satisfied until they achieve the goal. Even if the goal is not reached before the mortal body gives up its form, their drive for freedom will carry on into the next incarnation. The Bhagavad Gita says, "The unsuccessful yogis, upon death,

go to the abodes of the virtuous. After dwelling there for many ages, they are again reborn in the earth plane, into a family of pious and prosperous people” (B.G. 6.41-42).

Point one: The goal of humanity is the end of suffering and the attainment of bliss (God).

What is the source of all your desires? It is natural to wish health and happiness on your family, loved ones, and self. Material, mental, and spiritual wellbeing characterize our every motive. Furthermore, there are many sources that describe God (or Truth, universal consciousness, etc.) as the one goal shared by all beings. In most religious depictions, the experience of knowing God is characterized as final emancipation, or, the goal to be achieved. For example, the Bible says, “So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’... But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you” (Matt. 6.31-33).

Point two: By striving for God, you inherit the qualities of God.

One can strive for God in the same way one strives for any goal or objective. However, being a metaphysical concept, the work is done with the mind rather than the body. One example of a helpful metaphysical practice to this end are affirmations: powerful thoughts which upon repetition and deep concentration manifest as a reality in our lives. It is entirely possible to will a thing into existence and to influence your beliefs with the power of the mind. But how do these beliefs affect your experience of God? Affirmations can be used to manifest the desired qualities of God in one’s human life, such as infinite love, light, peace, joy, etc. Note that when the ray of awareness is impossibly directed onto the pure Self within, or, that Self which is beyond birth and death, mind, and metaphysics, the self which describes the Self is only a reflection and not the actual conceptualization; in other words, a paradox. Consider the statement: “A flashlight

cannot point at itself.” Further steps to actually knowing God are beyond my descriptive capabilities and the purposes of this paper.

Point three: by inheriting the qualities of God, you affirm the existence of God.

In affirming the existence of God, the striving mind has reached the goal of humanity through knowing God (the end of suffering and the attainment of bliss). Thus, there is God, and it matters what you believe because your beliefs can help you achieve the goal of humanity if applied with right knowledge and determination. Consider the story of the man who lost his keys and is looking for them under the streetlamp. A passerby asks him, “Why are you looking under the streetlamp?”

The man says, “I am looking for my keys.”

The passerby replies, “Where did you lose them?”

The man says, “Why, I left them in the park, but it was light here.”

By shining the light of inner awareness on that impenetrable darkness which lies beyond rational thought, the human being ascends to higher and higher planes of consciousness. As Jesus Christ said, “If therefore Thine Eye be single, Thy whole body shall be full of light” (Matt. 6.22).

Point four: Thus, there is God because of what you believe.

In Pascal’s argument, if you believe in God and God exists, you go to heaven (the end of suffering and the attainment of bliss). If you do not believe in God and God exists, you go to hell (continued suffering and unattainable bliss). However, over a lengthy period of incarnations, it is possible for a stubborn human being whirl-pooled deeply into different hell realms to grab hold of the rope of awareness and draw themselves up to freedom. Therefore, over time, suffering eventually becomes the gateway to liberation. With this in mind, perhaps Pascal’s argument can be modified to read “if you don’t believe in God and God exists, you go to hell (continued

suffering and unattainable bliss) *for only a lengthy period of incarnations until the scientific effort of awareness propels the being straight to heaven.*” The difference is time. How long will you let this incarnation use up its life force running in circles chasing after intangible, ever-changing wisps of dream-smoke? The Buddha says, “Seeking but not finding the house builder / I hurried through the round of many births / Painful is birth ever and again / O house builder, you have been seen / You shall not build the house again” (Thera).

“According to Pascal, if there is no God, then it doesn’t matter what you believe - you gain nothing by being right and lose nothing by being wrong” (Hales 89). Otherwise, there is God, and it matters what you believe - you gain everything by being right and lose everything by being wrong. What do you lose? You lose by experiencing many incarnations of suffering and delusion. But paradoxically, you lose nothing, because eventually your suffering will be the doorway to self-reflection. Thus, suffering can be called “grist for the mill” of spiritual awakening (Dass). However, to most humans, “getting a move on” is desirable to waiting lifetimes for the Truth. What do you gain by seeking the Truth now? You gain the end of suffering forever, and the infinite bliss of God-consciousness. If, and only if, rationality is deemed insane, the eternal quest for Truth may end within our lifetime.

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