Moral Arguments for the Existence of God

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**Introduction**

Moral arguments around the existence of God constitute a diverse group of arguments that reason from a certain angle of moral life or morality to God’s existence, with the general understanding of God as a morally good creator. It is important to note that moral arguments are interesting considering the fact that one has to give attention to all the philosophical issues that are handled under Metaethics in order to effectively evaluate the soundness of such arguments. On the other hand, they are important considering their dominance in famous apologetic arguments in support of religious belief. The connection that apparently exists between religion and morality tends to uphold the claim that there is need for a religious foundation that can define moral truths, or that such truths can be best elaborated by the existence of God, or some actions or qualities of God. This essay focuses on the various types of moral arguments, with the intention of drawing on the distinction between practical and theoretical or pragmatic moral arguments. As such, this paper asserts that from the moral perspective, mortal obligations constitute of rules that are imposed by a supreme being that can only be explained by a Godly figure.

**Moral Arguments for the Existence of God**

There are various moral arguments that have been established in support of the existence of God, some of which will be discussed in this section. One of the theistic moral argument versions that is easily understandable relies on the analogy between moral laws and the human laws that are developed and enforced by nation-states. Sovereign laws develop and enforce laws that forbid or permit certain acts. Case in point, if one is a citizen of the United States and they earn a limited amount of tax income, they are obligated to file for income tax returns on an annual basis. Most countries have also established laws that forbid employers from discriminating people on the basis of race, age, or gender during the hiring process. On the other hand, just like political laws, most of the moral laws bind individuals (Kwan, 2011). Case in point, the moral principle obligates individuals to remain truthful in everything they say to others, and to keep many promises that they make to other parties. Stephen Evans argues that just like political laws are developed and enacted by legislators, who have been given the ultimate authority to pass such laws, moral laws are enacted by an entity that wields moral authority, with God standing out as the only candidate that is plausible enough to fit such a role (Kwan, 2011). This argument has encountered various criticisms form some of the philosophers, who believe that it is crude considering the obviousness of its force, such that an individual does not require any special philosophical training for one to see its appeal and understand it.

J. L. Schellenberg strongly argued against this take in his book titled, Divine Hiddenness and Human Reason (1993). Schellenberg maintains that considering the unobvious nature of God’s reality to those who want to believe in him, then it is problematic to believe that God really exists (Cuneo, 2013). As such, he added that a God who is construed as being perfect in nature, is nothing less than perfectly loving, and hence he would always be in support of a conscious relationship with individuals who are hold the capability of taking part in such a relationship. According to Schellenberg, if a God really exists, he would allow any finite individual to be part of such a relationship. Nevertheless, such a case cannot be unless all the persons who fit the description of being finite believe in the existence of God. For one to engage in a conscious relationship with another individual, they have to start by believing that the latter actually exists. With such a take, Schellenberg argues that if God exists, then there is no person that fits the finite description and does not believe in God’s existence, meaning that there are no nonbelievers who are nonresistant (Cuneo, 2013). Considering the fact that such individuals exist, then there is no God. Steve Evans’ argument on moral obligations counters Schellenberg’s argument. According to Evans, if being aware of moral obligations means that one is aware of divine laws or God’s commands, then any individual who holds any sort of awareness of moral obligations is aware of God. This argument postulates that such persons may hold awareness of God’s laws without recognizing that such laws are from God. Such an individual may be defined by religious apologists as having *de re* know-how of God, given that moral obligation is an expression of the will of God (Kwan, 2011).

The question of conversion of such awareness into the full belief in the existence of God is one that has also formed a major source of argument. One of the approach that can be adopted in this case involved helping such individuals to develop the skills that they need to properly recognize moral laws and what they constitute, as divine laws, or divine commands (Kwan, 2011). In a case where one experiences moral laws, then they could view moral experience as a form of religious experience. In this case, an individual who has experienced God in such a way does not necessarily require a moral argument to believe in God’s existence. This forms the foundation based on which Alvin Plantinga (2000), together with the ‘Reformed epistemologists’ argue that the belief that individual have in God could be “properly basic” (Meister, 2009). In such a case, it is then worth noting that one could have knowledge of God embedded in moral experience yet such knowledge is not consequence of a moral argument. However, even in such a case, Plantinga argues that a moral argument may still be valuable. Such an argument may be important in helping individuals understand that divine laws and commands and moral obligations (Meister, 2009). Even in the cases where it is considered true that ordinary persons are aware of the existence of God without the need for arguments, such arguments remain important in supporting such a claim. Metaethical theorists offer content that can be used to develop such an argument.

Robert Adams (1999) and Philip Quinn (1979) developed the divine command theories (DCT) in view of defining the divine nature of moral obligations (Meister, 2009). The moral obligations developed upon by Adam’s argument are highly distinctive from other social obligations including financial obligations, legal obligations, etiquette obligations, and obligations that associate individuals with a certain club by virtue. Adams aimed at distinguishing his view from the popular “voluntarist” views concerning ethics, which seem to consider other moral properties as relying on the will of God. Adam limits his theory to obligations to evade the “Euthyphro” objection that holds that ethics are reduced to arbitrariness by divine command views. It is important to note that obligations cannot be simply reduced to normative claims concerning what one is justified to do. John S. Mill (1874) postulated that normative principles can be explained without referring to God (Meister, 2009). Mill argues that when one feels obligated, it originates from something that is born witness by the conscience to its nature. As such, Mill emphasized that unlike human laws, moral law does not stem from the legislator’s will or pieces of legislation that are external to the mind. In this case, Mill referred to the normative logical principles including one that considers it wrong for one to both in “m” and “not-m”. According to Mill, such normative principles do not require any form of authority for them to hold (Kwan, 2011). Nevertheless, even if what Mill suggest about normativity is correct, it does not mean that his perception of the obligations is the same as the obligations have a unique character. According to Adams, obligations bear a unique and special form of force that individual out to be careful to comply with and blame is appropriately incurred if obligations are violated.

**Conclusion**

It is evident that proponents of the existence of God have gone to greater lengths to establish the link between moral obligation and divine command. It is clearly represented in the various arguments presented in the essay that moral laws constitute a form of Godly commands, which wish to impose the laws and moral principles that the entity of God as a figure of perfect love stands for. In as much as opponents of the existence of God have attempted to discredit the divinity of mortal obligations, proponents of God’s existence have been keen to establish the lack of awareness that individuals may have that they are aware of God, but remain practically aware of God through their interactions with the various moral obligations that define Godliness. As such, the findings of the paper reflect the pre-established thesis that from the moral perspective, mortal obligations constitute of rules that are imposed by a supreme being that can only be explained by a Godly figure.