

John Arthur: Religion & Morality

Review Questions

1. According to Arthur, How are morality and religion different?

John Arthur believes that morality and religion is different because morality involves our attitude toward to different types of behavior, usually expressed by rules, rights, and obligations. On the contrary, religion normally involves worship, beliefs of the supernatural, prayer, institutional forms, and authoritative texts.

2. Why isn't religion necessary for moral obligation?

Religion isn't necessary for moral obligation for the reason that we were born and raised by our parents to do what is right to become civilized people. Most of the people are too worry to be blamed and being criticized by others. We do what is right, fair and just because we know it is the right thing to do. Overall, we just do what is right so we can't hurt other people and can't make ashamed by our family and friends.

3. Why isn't religion necessary as a source of moral knowledge?

Religion isn't necessary as a source of moral knowledge since we have to consider how much we would want to know about religion and revelation in order for religion to give moral guidance. Also, it is depending on which religion we believe in a person deems the necessity for moral knowledge. So religion cannot be a source of moral knowledge. It is in our perspective on which we choose to be right.

4. What is the divine command theory? Why does Arthur reject this theory?

The divine command theory means that God himself can say what is right and wrong and that it is the only right and wrong. Meaning, without God's commands there would be no moral rules, just as without a legislature there would be no statutes.

Arthur rejects this theory because of what the divine command theory means. We wouldn't know what was right and wrong to our actions. Presume we were to allow that the divine command theory is right, so that actions are right just because they are commanded by God. The same as the deeds that we believe are wrong. If God hadn't commanded us not to do them, they would not be wrong.

5. According to Arthur, how are morality and religion connected?

Morality and Religion are connected because without religious motivation people could not be expected to do the right thing. Religion has changed as time goes by, also that they have been influenced by history, politics and law. Also, religion is necessary to provide guidance to people in their search for the correct course of action. Furthermore, morality has also influenced religion because it provides guidance to people in search for the correct course of action.

6. Dewey says that morality is social. What does this mean, according to Arthur?

According to Arthur, this means that if Dewey is right, so it looks evident there is an essential logic in which morality not only can be trained but must be. As well as, early moral training, moral thinking depends on our skill to visualize others' reactions and to put ourselves into their shoes. Moreover, morality is inherently social, in a variety of ways. It depends on socially learned language, is learned from interactions with others, and governs our interactions with others in society.

Discussion Questions

1. Has Arthur refuted the divine command theory? If not, how can it be defended?

Yes, he refuted the divine command theory by saying to the people that they should not believe in it; that they should not believe in a God who is the only authorized person to say what is right or wrong. What is right and wrong is not directly stated in the Bible but the Bible itself builds our own instinct of right and wrong. Hence, it is right to say that inherently what is right and wrong comes from God's words.

2. If morality is social, as Dewey says, then how can we have any obligations to nonhuman animals?

Mankind has the right to have a comfortable shelter with food and water as well as the nonhuman animals. From the Bible says that we are to be good stewards (care takers) of the earth God gave us. Meaning all living things on earth are our moral obligations to take care of. Socially, we have personal relationship with animals. As of now, people are more aware of how to give importance to animal welfare.

3. What does Dewey mean by moral education? Does a college ethics class count as moral education?

According to Dewey, moral education means we can learn about it by our own idea or imagination since habits are formed and changed almost constantly and any values which are desirable in education are themselves moral. So, college ethics class is considered moral education.