

12-11-2017
Sunday

God, Meaning & Purpose

Does human life have a purpose?

Introduction

1- The fundamental question

- Loren Eiseley: "Cosmic Orphan"

He described humans as cosmic orphans, and by that he means if we know what our source is we are orphans.

- Viktor Frankl:

"The truest expression of the state of being human"

only humans ask this question and if you don't you're not a human.

- Albert Camus: the first question

"There is but one truly serious philosophical problem, and that is suicide. Judging whether life is or is not worth living amounts to answering the fundamental question of philosophy.

All the rest, whether the world has three dimensions, whether the mind has nine or twelve categories, come afterwards"

is life worth living?

2- Two Alternatives

Atheist → • If god does not exist, there is no meaning, purpose and worth to life

Theist → • If god exists, then there is meaning, purpose and worth to life.

3- "The meaning of life"

- Subjective VS Objective
- Purpose and worth

4- The issue

- Does objective meaning purpose and worth depend on God?
or
- Could we have objective meaning purpose and meaning without God?

14-11-2017
Tuesday

Consistent Naturalism: Nihilism

1- Nietzsche: "God is dead", truth, purpose, value

God doesn't exist so then there is no truth, objective truth, nothing is valuable ~~and~~ and there is no one to create purpose for the humans.

2- Naturalistic view of man vis-a-vis the world

- Man vis-a-vis the immensity of space

Whatever we do is not important or meaningful in the big scale of the universe

- Death as the final destiny: the universe and man's life
- Purpose and value

the professor ~~thinks~~ thinks nihilisms can't have meaning because they have no purpose or value

3- Evolutionary view of man

- Jacques Monod

"Man finally knows he is alone in the indifferent immensity of the universe"

"Pure chance, absolutely free but blind, is the very root of the stupendous edifice of evolution with the result that man at last knows that he is alone in the unfeeling immensity of the universe... Neither his duty nor destiny have been written down"

- ~~Man~~ Richard Dawkins

"in a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good. Nothing but blind pitiless indifference. DNA neither knows or cares. DNA just is, and we dance to its music."

4- Meaninglessness of life in Naturalism

• Albert Camus : ~~the~~ absurdity of life

The Stranger ← He wrote this book

Camus' dilemma

- Man cannot live without meaning
- There cannot be meaning without God
- God does not exist

Life teaches us that we need meaning but that's a joke

• Samuel Beckett : "Waiting for Godot"

A play about mindless chatter

in the big scream of things everything we do is like mindless chatter

Myth of Sisyphus

Sisyphus was a greek character punished by Zeus to push the rock up the hill and each time he gets to the top it falls back down, and that what life is about whatever you do there there is no big difference.



• Jean Paul Sartre : "No exit" - "Nausea"

5- Consistency VS Livability

if Nihilism is true that we are a random product of matter, time and chance then it is very consistent, we have no purpose or value, and no meaning but can you live like that?

16-11-2017
Thursday
Inconsistent Naturalism : Relativism

- 1- Modern atheists' recognition of meaning
- Dawkins: "Do they really think atheists have no purpose?"
 - Shermer: Love, work, relationships, transcendence -- doing good

2- Freely create meaning

- Meleau-Ponty:
- Sartre: "life makes no sense, but it is ours to make sense of it"

"to say that we invent values means nothing except this: life has no meaning a priori. Before you live it, life is nothing, but it is for you to give it a meaning. Value is nothing other than this meaning which you choose."

- Subjective meaning in the place of objective meaning

3- Meaning & objective value

- Meaning and value
- meaning in life has to connect to value
- Subjective and objective value

4- Incompatibility of objective purpose and value in naturalism
There is no room for purpose and value in naturalism but instead of suicide LD Rue has an answer

5- LD Rue :

"The madhouse option" and "Noble lie"
We can only escape the mad house option through the noble lie.

6- Aesthetic Dilemma

- Man cannot live happily without purpose
- No room for the objective purpose in naturalism
- So, create subjective purpose
- But purpose must be linked with objective value
- No room for value in naturalism
- Therefore, there's no meaning, purpose or value, in naturalism

19-11-2017
Sunday

Theistic View

- 1- Design/purpose and value in things/lives
- 2- The ~~the~~ ultimate purpose: Aristotle's eudaimonia
 - The ultimate truth, goodness, beauty, and meaning (Significance)
 - Communion with God
 - Toward the ideal of the great souled person

→ Connected with god, and that what religion teaches and helps us with.
- 3- Not an argument for truthfulness of theism
- 4- Livability between the two alternatives

21-11-2017
Tuesday

The Problem of Evil

if God exists, why is there so much evil?

Introduction

1- The most serious argument against the belief of God

2- No complete answer to satisfy all

3- There are 2 aspects to the problem of evil

- Emotional
 - Theoretical
- ↳ Philosophical & Logical angle

4- Two aspects to evil

- Moral Evil
Pain and suffering from madness and cruelty
- Physical Evil
Suffering from the laws of nature

The Problem of Evil

1- The Logical Problem of Evil

- The argument

Premise 1: God is all good, all knowing, and all powerful

Premise 2: There is evil

Conclusion: God does not exist

- The hidden assumption: An all good, all knowing and all powerful being would never create a world with evil
- Theistic Response: is ~~this~~ this assumption necessarily true?

2- The Evidential Problem of Evil

- The argument

Premise 1: God would eliminate all unnecessary evil

Premise 2: There is unnecessary evil in the world

Conclusion: God does not exist

- Theistic response: is premise 2 obviously true? Ambiguity of premise 2.

3- Questions to explore

- Why would God create evil? - the nature of evil
God did not create evil
- Where does evil come from? - the source of evil
- Why are there so much unnecessary evil? - the status of evil
- Why does God allow evil? - the purpose of evil
- Is this world the best God could do? - the plan of God
- How could a merciful God send people to hell? - the goodness of God
- Is there a problem of evil? - ~~this~~ the argument for God

Why would God create evil?

1- Is God the cause of evil?

Premise 1: God is the creator of everything

Premise 2: Evil is a thing

Conclusion: Therefore, God is the creator of evil

2- Theistic response

- Rejection of Premise 2 *Evil is not a physical thing*
- The nature of evil
 - * Reality of evil
 - * Evil is a privation, corruption, misuse, abuse, etc. of good
- God created all things good

23-11-2017

Where does evil come from?

1- Beings with free will

humans being corrupt ~~and~~ and mis use the good things and that leads to evil.

- Abuse of free will
- Value of free will
- Necessity of a possibility to choose wrong
Once someone does something wrong then the times after that will be easier.
- Other free beings?
Jin, angels....

2- Physical laws of nature

- Conflict with physical laws of nature
- Value of consistent physical laws
We need the consistent laws of nature, because if it was random things won't work and we wouldn't survive.

26-11-2017

Does God Allow Unnecessary Evil?

1- Causing .VS. allowing evil

God didn't cause evil, but he allows it sometimes.

2- Could it be that God is preventing all unnecessary evil?

3- What does "unnecessary evil" mean?

4- Evil that could bring about greater good

- Reality of not all evil bring about actual greater ~~good~~ good
- Purpose and potential to bring about greater good
- Importance of free beings' responses

They should respond wisely to get to the good part

5- Evil that is necessary for good structure

(e.g. free will and its misuse; consistent physical laws and coming into conflict with them, etc.)

Why would God allow evil?

1- Free will

with free will people are free to choose so they might choose wrong that's why humans have to be responsible with the free will.

2- Punishment

- Justice
- Care

He punishes us because he cares, he wants us to learn and be better.

3- Prevention

~~to prevent~~ He lets small harm get to you to prevent an even greater harm.

4- Warning

Related to prevention, pain and suffering could be a warning system.

5- Soul making

- God's ultimate purpose to put us in heaven

- ~~to~~ • Acquiring virtues

this world makes us better people and prepare us to have amazing virtues before going to heaven

6- Mystery

We don't always know the reason



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3-12-2017

Is This the best world that God
Could Create?

1- Necessity for a best possible world

2- Not a best possible world

3- The best way to the best possible world *This world is like a boot camp for
heaven...*

4- Two essential components for the best way

- Free creatures
- The consistent physical laws of nature

3-12-2017

Why would God Send People to Hell?

1- Sending .VS. choosing hell

Their actions leads them to hell

2- The nature of hell... choosing to remain in hell

They know they were wrong so they don't want to face god and choose to stay in hell.

3-12-2017

CS Lewis on Atheists' Dilemma ((a judo move))

1- The strongest argument against belief in God
The Problem of Evil

2- Is evil an objective reality?

- if yes → Objective standard → the source of that standard
- if no → no problem of evil

5-12-2017

Conclusion

1- The nature of the problem

- Charge of inconsistency
- The burden of proof

2- Reasonable consistency of theism

- The initial good from god
- The simple evil created experienced by free creatures
- The exploitation (use) of that evil by God
- The complex good that results in the end

3- The strongest/sole argument against belief in god → an argument for belief in God

5-12-2017

Religious Pluralism & Dialogue

How can we make sense of so many religions?

Plurality of Religions

1- Atheism VS Theism

- Atheism: all religions are fundamentally wrong
- Theism: one or more religions have at least partial truth

2- Religions East & West

- Eastern: Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism
- Western: Judaism, Christianity, Islam

3- Ambiguous, complex, dynamic nature of religious traditions & individuals.



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5-12-2017

Approaches to Religious Diversity

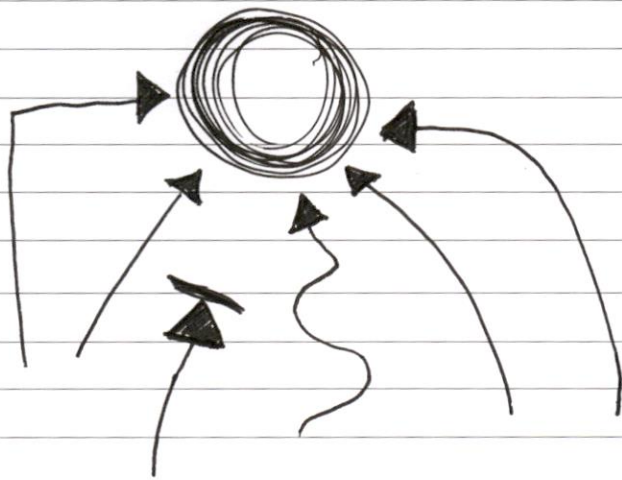
- 1- Atheist: all religions are objectively mistaken
- 2- Subjectivism: each religion is true for each individual; none is objectively true.
- 3- Exclusivism: only one is objectively true, all others mistaken.
- 4- Pluralism: all religions are ultimately true, each offer different/partial truth.
- 5- Inclusivism: only one is fully true; others offer partial truth.

6- Monotidism: Commit to one as true, others may offer truth, even the ultimate truth

• Vis-à-vis

- Atheism: truth in at least one religion.
- Subjectivism: objective truth in religion.
- Exclusivism: possibility of truth in other religions.
- Pluralism: non equality of religions.
- Inclusivism: value others' truth on their own terms; possibility of another's truth surpassing one's own.

• Provisional: "the best thus far"





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10-12-2017

Sunday

Need for Religious Dialogue

1- What religious dialogue entails

- Careful and appreciative examination of others views
- Self-critical examination of one's own view

2- Prevalent misunderstandings

3- Peace among nations

4- Progress toward truth

- Absence of sure knowledge
- When possessing partial knowledge
- Even possessing complete knowledge

Religious Dialogue

- 1- Encouraging faithfulness to own religious tradition
- 2- Rationality of one's religious tradition
- 3- Two aspects to truth
 - Objective: as it is in itself
 - Subjective: as it appears to us
- 4- Moderate agnosticism
 - Absence of full neutral standard
 - Basic but central standards: ethics & meaning
- 5- Dialectical process of belief formation
 - Stage 1: acceptance of beliefs, texts & authorities
 - Stage 2: questions and new challenges arise
 - Stage 3: response to the questions & challenges
- 6- Point of crisis: theoretical or existential challenges
- 7- Challenges met by another tradition
- 8- Provisional: "the best answer thus far!"
- 9- Implications
 - Encouraging the good aspects of the other's religion
 - Good will toward another... toward world peace
 - Likelihood of being available to the other
 - Approximating toward the ultimate truth

12-12-2017

Religious Pluralism : Hinduism

The Ultimate Reality, The One

1- Inability to understand the one

You can't understand what god is like because he's beyond us and he's very great

2- Brahman

- Two meanings: br and brih

Breath

Great

God is a great breath

Breath symbolizes life so God is the great life

- Infinite

~~God is great~~

God is the infinite great life

- Sat, chit, ananda

Be

understanding

Bliss

God is infinite being, understanding and bliss

3- Two view on God

- Transcendent: Nirguna Brahman

God is transcendent

God is beyond us, We depend on him and he doesn't depend on us. The gap is very big between us.

- Personal: Saguna Brahman

God interact with us and is involved in our lives

12-12-2017

The World

1- Maya

Life, the world, and everything in it is Maya

Maya = Dream

The world is inside the mind of Brahman

2- Lila

↳ Play

~~Life~~ All the history, drama, problems are a play don't take it too seriously.

3- All is One

Since everything is in God's mind we are all a part of him.

everyone and everything is a drop of water that make up the ocean.

12-12-2017

Human Soul

1- Jivas

Jivas = Soul

- Soul and Body

you are your soul and your body is like the clothes you wear

- Conscience, freedom, & human ~~the~~ form

your soul can exist in many forms over the centuries but when it was created is unknown.

When it reaches the human form it gains conscience and freedom and you become responsible from this point.

2- The law of karma

What goes around comes around

karma = work

3- Reincarnation

4- The soul's journey

- Sense delight
- Social conquest
- United with to the one

5- 2 views on the ultimate end

- Complete identification with Brahman
- Distinct from Brahman

17-12-2017

Many ((4)) Paths to the Ultimate Reality

1- Knowledge: jnana yoga

You became ultimately one with the Brahman by gaining more knowledge about the essence of this world

2- Devotion: bhakti yoga

Devot your life to one thing that makes most sense

3- Work: Karma yoga

leading a good life

4- Meditation: raja yoga

raja = royal

not everyone can meditate

17-12-2017

Religious Pluralism: Taoism

The Old Master: Lao Tzu (circa 604)

Founder of
Taoism

1- Unknown figure & fantastic legends

He's unknown, and the legend says he was conceived by a shooting star.

Another legend says his mother carried him in her stomach for 82 years that's why he was always very wise.

2- Disillusioned with court life

He was a civil servant, a government official, and he got sick of it so he decided to leave.

He got on his water buffalo and left heading west for a few days and reached a gate and a keeper.

The gate keeper asked him to give him some wisdom and if he was satisfied he'll let him pass, so the old master left and wrote poems for 3 days.

Then he came back and gave them to the gate keeper.

The gate keeper was so impressed and lets him pass and no one knows what happened to him.

3- Tao Te Ching

This is the book he wrote

Tao Te Ching

1- Tao

↳ Way

- The way of the ultimate reality

The Tao that can be spoken is not the true Tao.

Those who know don't say; those who say don't know.

We don't know ~~the~~ what the ultimate reality is.

- The way of nature

We know nature has a certain structure and things exist according to its own nature.

- The way of human life

human beings have certain human nature

2- Te

↳ Power

- Conserving te

~~the~~ best way to life is to ~~we~~ adapt to nature to increase te

- Increasing te

- Wu Wei

and we do that by a principle called Wu Wei.

Wu Wei is the laws of adapting to the way things are and act, ~~the~~ live, function accordingly.

Go with the flow of things.

3- Three ways to maximize Te

- Matter

like when we eat we consume energy

- Movement

exercise

- Mind

meditation

19-12-2017

Key Principles from Tao Te Ching

1- Image of water

We should all become like water.
It's the greatest thing on this planet.

2- Rejection of self assertiveness

Meaning putting yourself forward

3- Attunement with nature; instead of dominance

You need to be intune with nature, go with the flow with nature instead of trying to dominate nature.

4- Duality of life: ying yang

life has good and evil, ultimately they become one.

5- life & death

They see it as a circle your life and death is connected and when you die you return home to rest after the journey of life.