

Moral Code(s) for One?

(A paper on the notion that ethics are relative, for Mr. Bocchino's Class)

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“A system or morality which is based on relative emotional values is a mere illusion, a thoroughly vulgar conception which has nothing sound in it and nothing true.” -Socrates

A principle is defined as “a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning.” Before even thinking about morality, a basic system of reasoning must be put in place. Aristotle introduced us to *first principles*, these principles are self-evident and the foundation for all knowledge. These first principles are how we form a worldview. The usual fallacies in a worldview can usually be traced back to an error in a worldview's first principles.

These first principles are as follows: the law of noncontradiction, the law of identity, and the law of excluded middle. A succinct version of the law of noncontradiction is two things cannot be the same in the same space at the same time. The law of identity states something is what we say it is. An apple cannot be a pear, so therefore we classify it as an apple. The law of excluded middle says that an apple is either an apple or it is not, it cannot be both. These principles are self-evident at a basic level, as well as a grand level.

This paper is written under the presumption that these principles are self-evident and held as unconditionally true.

Who defines what is right and what is wrong? This was the question that dawned the twentieth century and is progressing rapidly into the twenty-first century. Starting at the public schoolroom, we refuse to teach our children that absolute truth actually exists. This of course is hidden under the facade of being “tolerant” and “unbiased.” This sounds well and nice; but I am here to stress the point that being unbiased is logically impossible. Being unbiased is also the reason for the destruction of the moral fabrication of a true moral framework.

Culture has reached a crescendo of science, moral relativity, and humanism. If we go any further we are destined to repeat the Holocaust all over again. The

notion that Hitler came up with his ideas all by himself is erroneous. Hitler recognized the ideas of such idealists as Charles Darwin, and the philosophy of philosophers such as Emmanuel Kant. Hitler took it one step further than Darwin and Kant, he actually executed their ideas. The subtitle of *The Origin of Species* by Charles Darwin is, *The Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life*. The implications this simple title had, profoundly helped cause Adolf Hitler's entire philosophy. He even wrote the book *Mein Kampf* which literally translates into *my struggle*. The very philosophy that inspired Hitler and the Nazi's is being taught in the schoolroom today.

Our founding fathers enacted one of the most profound sets of laws to ever occur in history. This law encompassed all people, for generations to come, and valued the rights of each every individual. The Declaration of Independence was the first proclamation of the government the founding fathers were to create for all people in the United States, with the hope to spread.

WE hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Happiness- That to secure these Rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just Powers from the Consent of the Governed..

The founding fathers of the United States recognized a law higher than themselves. To protect this law, they recognized governments are instituted by the people, for the people, not the other way around. Our set of civil laws is resting on a firm foundation of natural laws. If our natural laws were set upon a set of positive laws, then the entire idea of laws would self defeat and fall apart.

Jurisprudence is the science or knowledge of law, this discipline focuses mostly on the meaning of the concept of law, paired with the concept of morality. The view most frequently defended is natural law. Natural law concludes all human beings are aware of certain laws that govern human behavior and protect the rights of individuals. It is believed these laws are discoverable through "sensible" intelligence. The Ancient Greeks and Romans introduced certain ideas of eternal laws. This idea has followed in almost every major religion and thought process for generations (Unshakable Foundations, 190).

Friedrich Nietzsche coined the phrase "God is dead, and we have killed him." This phrase basically started his philosophy that all objective values no longer exist and reason is the only hope for humanity. He believed that it was up to humanity to will its own laws and values. Utilitarianism is the view that the end justifies the means, basically if the end is "good," then the path to get there was

justifiable. This entire argument is absolutely meaningless. If God doesn't exist and eternal moral values do not exist, then where do morals and laws come from? Without God or his eternal moral code humans are reduced to nothing more than an assimilation of DNA strands. Following this logic we can see that everything a human believes is directly related to chemical reactions in the brain, no more and no less. How can a human animal be responsible for their actions, if they are instinctually struggling to be the fittest to survive? Without a God and the moral attributes of such, morals do not exist.

Natural laws uncover universal self-evident laws that each human is designed to follow. These laws do not mean that every human does, but that it is the standard we are to live by. Culture has listened to science and philosophy's rhetoric so far that we believe because humans do not always follow these laws; they do not exist. This thinking is incredibly dangerous and gives light to the idea of positive law only. If we only believe in positive laws, no absolutes, then we just carry out our instinctual animal desires. If we truly believe that a moral law does not exist, and we just follow our human instincts then what is to stop mass murder, rape, universal abortion, euthanasia, human experimentation, etc.? The whole idea of positive laws begs the question what is law and who decides?

This idea was tackled at the Nuremberg Trials. This was the first trial of its kind; this trial established a precedent for natural law. Robert H. Jackson led the prosecution in the trial; he believed natural law was to be valued higher than positive law. People were astonished at how disgusting and inhumane the Holocaust was; they wanted the Nazis lined up and shot, but Jackson wanted to make sure this would never happen again. He had to appeal to the principle that every civilization believed in basic human rights, and positive laws do not account for such gross violations of natural law. This trial helped create a standard for "just" war, and the way people are intrinsically supposed to behave. The standard was created that every human being has the obligation to know and keep basic human rights even if their government tries to force them otherwise.

Morality and ethics are unchanging; believing otherwise directly violates the law of noncontradiction. Moral standards are what ought to be, not what always is. Believing only in the existence of positive law reduces humanity to basic animals who have no ability to institute laws and no right. If we continue in the new tradition of teaching our children that everybody's viewpoint is true, with no basic human standards, we are destined to repeat history, if not worse.

I hold truth to be self-evident that all people are created by God, and they are of value. Governments instituted by people have the right to prescribe civil law, which by my belief in Jesus - I am to follow, but I will forever hold true that natural law stands highly above all forms of positive law. I hope for the sake of humanity, people will continue to seek truth and abide by the laws instituted among us by our creator.

**The test of the morality of a society is what it does for its children.
-Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

Geisler, Norman L., and Peter Bocchino. *Unshakable Foundations*. Minneapolis,

MN: Bethany House, 2001. Print.