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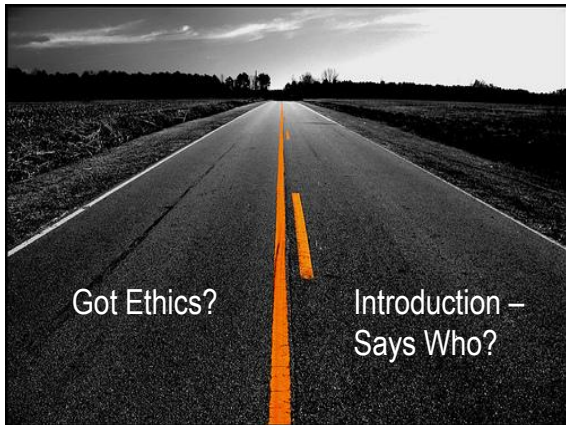
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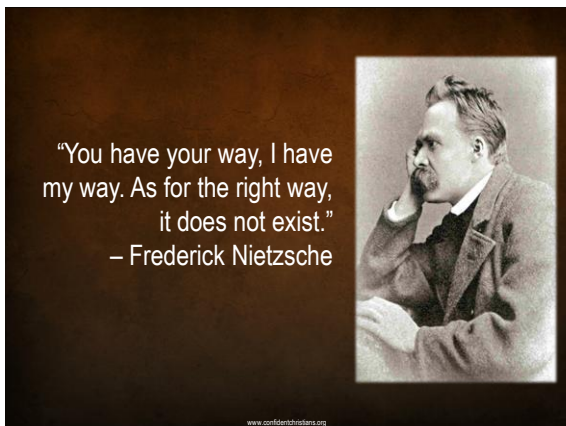
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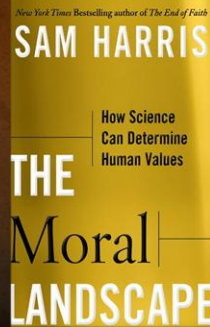
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### Do we need God for Ethics and Morality?

- In October 2010, atheist Sam Harris release his book "The Moral Landscape"
- Harris argues against grounding morality in God and says science is the only vehicle humanity can use to determine the concepts of good and evil
- Breaking from his atheist companions, Harris argues against moral relativism and believes objective moral values do exist



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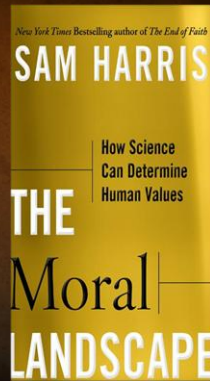
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"The moral landscape is a space of real and potential outcomes whose peaks correspond to heights of potential well being and whose valleys represent the deepest possible suffering. . . . Questions about values are really questions about the well being of conscious creatures."  
- Sam Harris



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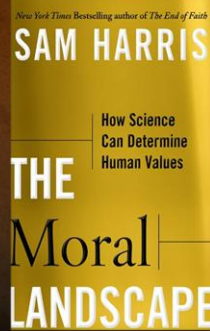
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### Do we need God for Ethics and Morality?

- For Harris, the concepts of good and evil are all about the high's and low's of conscious creatures (animals are undoubtedly included along with humans because, after all, to an atheist humans are nothing more than more highly evolved animals) and their well being.
- Harris says a goal for science is to determine and prescribe ways for human beings to 'flourish' and through human flourishing, the good life will be realized.



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### Question...



Is the 'good' Sam Harris talks about **moral** good?

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### "Good" differs in Science vs. Morality

- Can science tell us what causes human beings to 'flourish'?
- Yes, just like science can tell us what causes an orange tree to flourish
- But, this doesn't equate to a moral conclusion in the least



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### The Core Issues



- Do objective moral values exist?
- If yes, where do these objective moral values come from?
- If yes, how are these objective moral values recognized?
- If yes, how are these objective moral values put into practice by humanity?

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### The Key Questions of Ethics

- By what Authority?
- By what Standard?
- By what Truth?



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### The Danger of a Wrong Answer



- Without the right authority that uses the right standard based on the right and unchanging truth, ethics simply becomes emotive and opinion
- Rape doesn't become wrong, but rather "I don't like rape".

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### The Danger of a Wrong Answer



"A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line."  
– C. S. Lewis

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### Possible Answers to the Source of Ethics



- From the Natural Universe
- From Culture/Society
- From the Individual
- From a Transcendent Creator

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### Ethics from the Natural Universe?

"A man said to the Universe,  
Sir, I exist!  
Nevertheless, replied the Universe,  
That fact has not created in me  
The slightest feeling of obligation."

How can an amoral universe  
accidentally create moral  
creatures? From a cause/effect  
standpoint, an effect must  
represent its cause in  
essence/nature.



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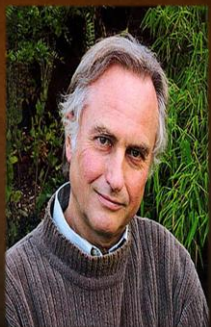
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### Atheism's Intellectually Honest Position

"Humans have always wondered about the  
meaning of life...life has no higher purpose  
than to perpetuate the survival of DNA...life  
has no design, no purpose, no evil and no  
**good**, nothing but blind pitiless indifference"  
- Richard Dawkins

"If man is a product of evolution, one species  
among others, in a universe without  
purpose, then man's option is to live for  
himself..."  
- Paul Kurtz  
The Humanist Alternative



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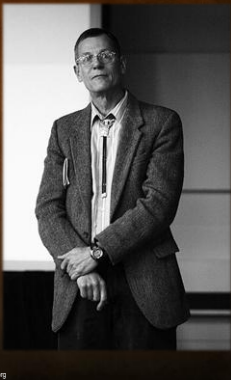
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"When Darwin deduced the theory of natural selection to explain the adaptations in which he had previously seen the handiwork of God, he knew that he was committing cultural murder. He understood immediately that if natural selection explained adaptations, and evolution by descent were true, then the argument from design was dead and all that went with it, namely the existence of a personal god, free will, life after death, immutable moral laws, and ultimate meaning in life"  
 – William Provine



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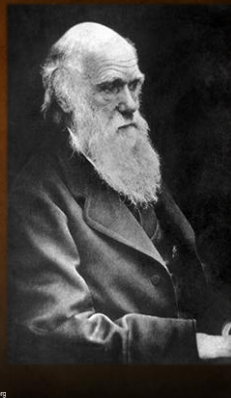
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"With me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of the lower animals, are of any value or at all trustworthy. Would any one trust in the convictions of a monkey's mind, if there are any convictions in such a mind?"  
 – Charles Darwin



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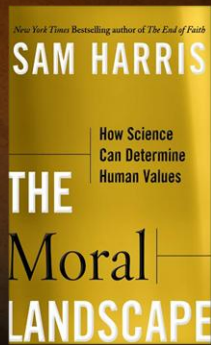
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### The Meaning of "Good"

- For Harris, "good" equates to the well being of conscious creatures.
- Where does Harris find this definition of "good"? It is his own creation and invention
- No one can argue or question why the idea of conscious creatures flourishing equates to "good" because that is what Harris says "good" truly means
- Examples Harris gives include there being good and bad moves in chess and that thinking logically is good



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## Harris Equivocates the Meaning of "Good"



- Would anyone call a bad move in chess an "evil" move?
- Would anyone call someone who didn't think logically "evil"?
- Harris simply equivocates the meaning of good

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## Can Culture Determine What is "Good"?

- In Kenya, the practice of "beading" is carried out. This is where a close family relative of a young girl places a strand of beads around the young girl's neck
- This effectively is a temporary engagement and the relative can now have sexual relations with her
- Some girls are "beaded" when they are six years old
- Many young girls get pregnant and either have abortions or kill their babies at birth
- When they reach adulthood, the girls will marry outside of their village, but taboo dictates the girls will never be able to marry if they keep their babies resulting from beading

### Activist battles Kenyan tradition of rape 'beading'

By David Matthews, CNN  
Nov 11, 2011 6:14 pm EDT



**STORY HIGHLIGHTS** **Kenya, Kenya (CNN)** — "Josephine" is 12 years old and several months pregnant.  
 Her father is accused of being the father of the child.  
 She is a member of the Samburu tribe, living in a small village in a remote part of Kenya's Eastern Province. The girls, whose identity is being protected, claim she had sex with a relative — a rape sanctioned by the Samburu, through a practice called "beading."

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## Can Culture Determine What is "Good"?

- Is/was "Widow burning" in India morally OK?
- In some cultures they love their neighbors and in others they eat them; which do you prefer?
- Does a land exist where murder is a virtue and thanksgiving a vice?
- If the majority rule that rape is OK, does that make it right?
- Is it OK for a culture to gratuitously torture innocent babies?
- If none of the above is true, then what/who is mankind morally obligated to? Real moral obligation exists, but to whom?
- Perhaps the relativist's view has been influenced by their culture...?
- The "Reformer's Dilemma" exists in this situation. How can a culture ever be positively influenced by the outside if the culture is the determiner of good and evil?

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### Can Culture Determine What is "Good"?

- During the trials at Nuremberg, the Nazi defense attorneys argued that Hitler's soldiers who were on trial were only following the orders of their society and should therefore not be held accountable.
- A judge countered that argument with the question, "But sir, is there not a law above our laws?"
- We need an ultimate authority to appeal to in matters that transcend history and societies.



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### Can the Individual Determine What is "Good"?

- How do you decide between differing moral opinions if each individual is the ultimate decision maker of what is good and bad?
- How does the statement "For me, rape is wrong, but it might be OK to you" sound?
- Everything boils down to emotion and emotive responses to morals without ethical global absolutes



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"Nothing succeeds like excess ...  
nothing is good or bad, only  
charming or dull."  
– Oscar Wilde



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### Can the Individual Determine What is "Good"?

In his debate with the atheist Bertrand Russell, the Jesuit and philosopher Frederick Copleston looked at Russell and asked, "Lord Russell, do you believe in good and bad?" Russell replied, "Yes". Copleston continued, "How do you differentiate between good and bad?" Russell replied, "The same way I differentiate between blue and green or yellow and green." Copleston then said, "Wait a minute, you differentiate between yellow and green by seeing don't you?" Russell said, "Yes". So Copleston challenged him by asking, "How do you differentiate between good and bad?" Russell replied, "I differentiate on those matters on the basis of my feelings, what else?"



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### Possible Ethical Frameworks without God

- Utilitarian – whatever produces the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people
- Pragmatic – whatever appears to 'work' where happiness (positive) or consequences (negative) are concerned
- Subjective – whatever is right for the particular person in the particular situation
- Emotive – whatever 'feels' right



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### Subjective or Emotive?

"Any argument against the objective reality of moral values will be based on premises that are less obvious than the existence of objective moral values themselves."

-Louise Antony  
Atheist Philosopher  
(in debate with William Lane Craig)



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### Utilitarian or Pragmatic?

- Could this not lead to eugenics and the infanticide of babies who are not deemed able to 'flourish'?
- Euthanasia could also be declared good if it means that the quality of life is raised for the majority by eliminating a minority who are the source of extravagant expense and effort
- Left to the sterile choice of science, many human atrocities are possible if done in the spirit of improving the flourishing of humanity as a whole. The elimination of undesirables has already been attempted more than once in the past by various regimes.



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### Utilitarian or Pragmatic – Think it can't Happen?

- At the 109th meeting of the Texas Academy of Science that took place at Lamar University in March 2006, evolutionist Dr. Eric Pianka presented a lecture about how human overpopulation is ruining the Earth.
- Professor Pianka said the Earth as we know it will not survive without drastic measures.
- Then, and without presenting any data to justify his conclusion, he asserted that the only feasible solution for saving the Earth is to reduce the population to 10 percent of the present number.
- How would it be done? By using the Ebola virus



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### Utilitarian or Pragmatic – Think it can't Happen?

- Professor Pianka omitted the fact that Ebola victims die a slow and torturous death as the virus initiates a cascade of biological calamities inside the victim that eventually liquefy the internal organs.
- After praising the Ebola virus for its efficiency at killing, Pianka paused, leaned over the lectern, looked at the audience and carefully said, "We've got airborne 90 percent mortality in humans. Killing humans. Think about that."
- The attending scientists gave him a standing ovation.
- Evidently the other attending scientists must have believed they would not be included in the 90 percent of humanity Dr. Pianka advocated being eliminated.



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### The Alternative – Ethics from a Transcendent God



- Laws imply a Law Giver
- There is an objective Moral Law
- Therefore, there is a Moral Law Giver

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### The Atheist's Dilemma

- If there's such a thing as evil, you must assume there's such a thing as good.
- If you assume there's such a thing as good, you assume there's such a thing as an absolute and unchanging moral law on the basis of which to differentiate between good and evil.
- If you assume there's such a thing as an absolute moral law, you must posit an absolute moral law giver, but that would be God – the one whom the atheist is trying to disprove.
- So now rewind: if there's not a moral law giver, there's no moral law. If there's no moral law, there's no good. If there's no good, there's no evil.

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### Atheism's Intellectually Honest Position

“Science cannot tell you if it's right or wrong for you to eat your own baby's clone, but it can tell you that's what you are actually doing. Then you can decide for yourself if you think it's right or wrong.”

– Richard Dawkins

Commenting on act of chef cooking a woman's placenta and feeding it to her husband (the baby's father)



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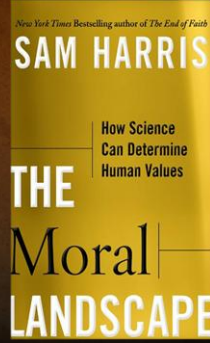
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### An Important Clarification

- Harris is right when he says that people don't need to believe in God to discern moral duties or understand that objective moral values exist. That has never been the argument of the Christian theologian.
- The Christian argument is that in order to ground an objective moral law, you need to have a transcendent source of those values.



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“We should not confuse our knowledge of ethical values (epistemology) with the basis for ethics (ontology).”  
– Paul Copan

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### An Example – the United States



- “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.”
- Nothing similar can be found in a statement made by any other nation: **moral well being hinged on a creative act.**
- Life ... Liberty ... Happiness. It sounds very much like conscious human beings flourishing and experiencing well being. Moreover, the term “self-evident” communicates the concept of the moral law being undeniable, or objective (so does “truths” instead of “opinions”).
- Sam Harris would, or should, be proud.

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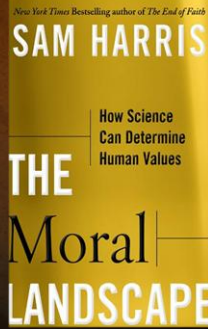
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### Objective Morality without God? No.

- Harris misses an important truth: moral good cannot be defined without purpose, and purpose cannot be defined without cause.
- Without a personal (defined as 'having intent') cause, the atheist formula of Time + Matter + Chance fails to deliver the effect they desire
- In truth, it produces the exact opposite: chaos.



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"If chance be the Father of all flesh,  
 disaster is his rainbow in the sky,  
 and when you hear  
 State of Emergency!  
 Sniper Kills Ten!  
 Troops on Rampage!  
 Whites go Looting!  
 Bomb Blasts School!  
 It is but the sound of man  
 worshipping his maker."  
 - Steve Turner, from *Creed*



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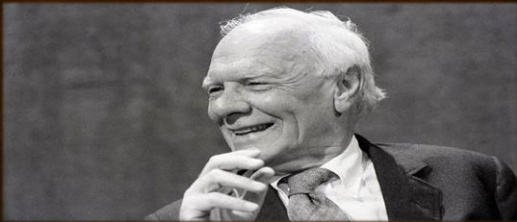
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"If God is dead, something will indeed take God's place; it will either be megalomania or erotomania—the drive for power or the drive for pleasure, the clenched fist or the phallus, Hitler or Hugh Hefner."  
 - Malcolm Muggeridge

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"We might well argue that objective intrinsically prescriptive features supervenient upon natural ones constitute so odd a cluster of qualities and relations that they are unlikely to have arisen in the ordinary course of events without an all-powerful God to create them."  
 – Atheist philosopher J. L. Mackie



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### The Knockdown Argument for Harris

- Harris redefines good to be "the flourishing/well-being of conscious creatures".
- Harris admits in his book that it is possible that the peak of the "moral landscape" could be occupied by flourishing rapists, murderers, and thieves
- So he admits it's possible that goodness and creaturely well-being are not identical
- Identity is a necessary condition in any logical argument
- Therefore, Harris' moral theory collapses  
 - From William Lane Craig



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### Conclusions

- Ethics goes back to three questions:
  1. By what authority?
  2. By what standard?
  3. By what truth?
- Authority is the right to impose obligation
- A standard is that by which something is measured or judged
- Truth is that which corresponds to reality



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## Conclusions

- God is the basis for authority; without Him there can be no objective set of ethics or morality
- God's Word is the standard by which ethics and morality are measured
- God Himself is the truth behind that standard and His goodness that flows from His very nature
- "No one is good but God alone" (Luke 18:19)
- Many things may have some good in them, but there can only be one thing that is good.
- "Taste and see that the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8)



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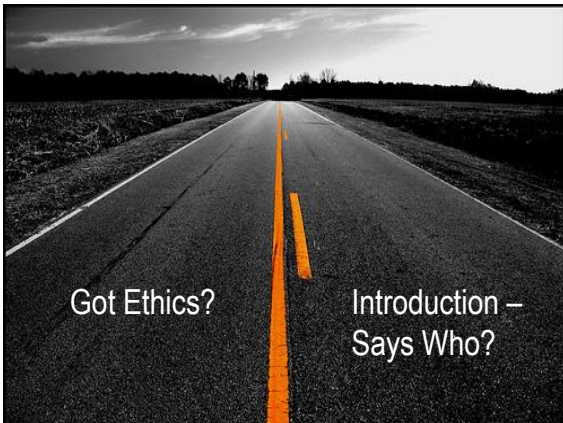
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