



(A Critique of Moral Relativism and a Defense of Natural Law as the Objective Foundation of Good.)

Introduction: The Illusion of Autonomous Morality

In our increasingly secularized modern world, it is common to hear statements like “*I don’t need God to be good*” or “*Morality doesn’t depend on religion.*” While these claims may seem noble at first glance, they conceal a profound philosophical contradiction: **Can atheism provide a solid and objective basis for distinguishing good from evil?**

Moral relativism, the prevailing mindset today, argues that ethical values are human constructs, subject to change based on culture, era, or even individual desires. However, this position leads to a dead end: **if there is no transcendent standard, any action can be justified under some subjective criterion.**

In this article, we will examine why **atheism is incapable of establishing an objective morality** and how **natural law, inscribed by God in the heart of man, is the only firm foundation for true goodness.**

I. The Problem of Atheistic Morality: Goodness Without a Foundation?

1. The Fallacy of “Good by Nature”

Many atheists argue that human beings can be moral “*by nature*,” appealing to empathy, reason, or biological evolution. However, this stance faces serious problems:

- **If morality is a product of evolution**, then it is merely a survival instinct, not a true ethical obligation.
- **If morality is a social convention**, then there is nothing inherently wrong with actions like genocide or slavery—they are merely rejected by consensus.
- **If morality is subjective**, then there is no way to condemn actions like murder or torture beyond personal preference.

As the philosopher **Dostoevsky** observed: “*If God does not exist, everything is permitted.*” Without a supreme Lawgiver, the concept of “good” is reduced to human



preferences.

2. The Dilemma of Objective Morality in Atheism

Some atheist thinkers, like **Sam Harris**, attempt to ground morality in “*science*,” claiming that good is what promotes “*human well-being*.” But this raises unanswered questions:

- Who defines what “*well-being*” is? The state? The majority?
- Why is suffering “*bad*” if the universe is indifferent?
- What moral obligation does one human being have toward another if there is no higher authority?

Atheism, by rejecting God, **denies the only possible source of universal moral obligation.**

II. Natural Law: The Objective Morality Inscribed by God

1. Conscience as the Echo of Divine Law

Natural law is the set of moral principles God has engraved in the human heart, accessible to reason. As **St. Paul** teaches:

“When Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness.” (Romans 2:14-15).

This explains why all civilizations, even non-Christian ones, recognize principles such as:

- **Do not kill.**
- **Honor your parents.**



- **Do not steal.**
- **Keep your promises.**

These truths are not human inventions but **reflections of divine wisdom.**

2. Reason and Faith: Harmony in the Pursuit of Good

The Catholic Church has always taught that **human reason can discern good**, but due to original sin, our moral vision is clouded. This is why **divine Revelation (the Ten Commandments, the teachings of Christ) perfects and clarifies natural law.**

The **Catechism of the Catholic Church** (n. 1955) states:

“The natural law expresses the original moral sense that enables man to discern by reason the good and the evil, the truth and the lie.”

III. Consequences of Moral Relativism

When a society rejects natural law and replaces it with relativism, grave evils arise:

1. **Justice becomes the imposition of the strongest** (e.g., legalized abortion, euthanasia, gender ideology).
2. **The sense of sin is lost**, leading to spiritual and social decay.
3. **Freedom is confused with license**, because without truth, there is no authentic liberation.

As **Pope Benedict XVI** warned:

“A democracy without values becomes a tyranny, whether overt or hidden.”



Conclusion: Only God is the Foundation of True Goodness

The idea that “*we don’t need God to be good*” is a deception of the modern world. **Without God, morality is reduced to shifting opinions, with no authority or permanence.**

Natural law, confirmed by **Christian Revelation**, is the only path to an objective and universal ethic. **Christ did not come to abolish morality but to perfect it** (Matthew 5:17), showing us that true goodness is found only in **charity, truth, and divine grace.**

Therefore, **being good is not just about following rules but loving God and neighbor as He has taught us.** Those who reject God will, sooner or later, end up rejecting true goodness as well.

“*Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.*” (John 6:68).