

Another Side of the Problem of Religion and Morality: From Dependence to Tension

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Abstract

The problem of religion and morality is usually understood in terms of the dependence claim. Some defend the thought that morality is dependent on religion. Others defend the independence of morality. Here, I explain how formulating the problem of religion and morality as a debate over dependence/independence comes with two limitations. First, it puts too varied positions in one group. Second, it allows some important issues to remain underdiscussed. However, we can consider the problem as a debate over tension/compatibility. Those who defend the independence of morality may still either find morality compatible with religion or claim some basic tension between them. To illustrate and to give some examples, some arguments are briefly reviewed: the no moral knowledge argument, the no sacrifice argument, the no openness and progress argument, and the no caution argument. In each case, I mention why the arguments would not easily proceed. Meanwhile, these arguments and similar ones together are to suggest that the tension claim between religion and morality is not a trivial position and requires due attention.

Keywords: Religion and morality; moral normativity; moral progress; the problem of evil; skeptical theism.

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