Morality Does Need Religion Essay, Research Paper

Morality Does Need Religion

In his essay, C. Stephen Layman clashes two views of morality: that of the secular point of view and the religious point of view. Layman starts out by defining the two different stances. The secular point of view states that there is no after life and that morality was an emergent phenomenon. Also, the only goods are those that can be found on the earth. The religious perspective states that there is life after death, and therefore the ?goods? one receives do not end with death. Also, morality was not an emergent phenomenon because God has always been in existence and God guides morality. Layman uses these two definitions to argue that morality does not make sense from the secular point of view and that morality really does need religion.

Layman starts out by asking the question ?do we desert the moral point of view if we defend morality on the grounds that it pays?? To answer this question, Layman states that we must start by defining the difference between the justification of an institution and the justification of a particular act within that institution. Layman uses the examples of etiquette and baseball to do this. He then asks the question that sets up the rest of his argument: ?does morality pay?? He then gives four reasons why morality doesn?t pay from the secular perspective.

In Layman?s terms, from the secular perspective, it is unclear why moral concern must extend beyond one?s society. Also, in the secular perspective, one can break morality rules in secret. It is here that Layman inserts the notion that one can?t break rules in secret from the religious view because God sees all. Layman points out that morality doesn?t pay for everyone in the secular perspective because there are those ?free-loaders? that will benefit although they are not moral. Layman?s last argument is that from the secular point of view, morality doesn?t benefit those that take risks involving death because earthly goods end with death. With all of these arguments, Layman sums up that morality cannot be justified from a secular point of view.

To end his essay, Layman recounts the four secular moral questions and gives short responses from the religious side that simply report that morality needs religion. He says, ?It is not difficult to see how morality might pay if there is a God.?