

HRN argues that, if one being is good for another, it is because of its structure and the way in which its structure corresponds to the structure of the other being, so as to meet the other being's needs, fit its capacity, complement its potentialities, and so on.

But, then, it evidently follows that, if any being is supremely good, in that it is good for *all* beings, it can only be because of its structure and the way in which its structure corresponds to the structures of all beings, so as to meet their needs, fit their capacities, complement their potentialities, and so on.

As HRN actually defines it, however, "the being of supreme intrinsic value," by which he can only mean, presumably, "the being of supreme intrinsic *good*," is "that absolute source of all value by relation to which all other things have their value." This means, I take it, that the supremely good being can only be the being for which all beings are—if not good, then—valuable, either positively or negatively. (In point of fact, HRN speaks again and again of the supremely good being as the being for which "whatever is, is *good*"[cf., e.g., *RM*: 112; italics added]!). And this means in turn that the structures of all beings correspond or fail to correspond to the structure of the supreme being, so as to meet or fail to meet its needs, to fit or fail to fit its capacities, complement or fail to complement its potentialities, and so on.

But, then, by HRN's own reasoning, God is adequately defined only as both—the being that is good for all beings *and* the being for which all beings are good, or, at any rate, valuable. Why, then, he should not explicitly acknowledge this is, to say the least, odd. And yet his definitions or quasi-definitions of God, are characteristically one-sided. Consider such formulations as the following

"That has the value of deity for man which values him."

"This is the being which values me or judges me, by relation to which I have worth or possibility of worth."

"What is revealed in revelation is not a being as such, but rather its deity-value, not that it is, but that it 'loves us,' 'judges us,' that it makes life worth living."

The "starting point," or "dogmatic beginning," of monotheistic faith's value theory is with "the transcendent One for whom alone there is an ultimate good and for whom, as the source and end of all things, whatever is, is good." (I take it that what HRN means in saying that there is an ultimate good for the transcendent One alone is that it is the only "center of value" that is itself "ultimate," i.e., not finite, transitory, perishable, but abiding.)

"[T]he starting point is that transcendent absolute for whom, or for which, whatever is, is good."

This one-sidedness in HRN's formulations is all the more striking because, given the general principles of his relational value theory, whose relativism is "objective," rather than "psychological," the only way he can avoid flatly contradicting classical theism's axiom that God cannot be said to have need of any being external to himself is to have recourse, after all, to "a sort of psychological relativism," so as to be able to say instead only that "whatever is exists because it pleases God" (112). But even at the price of thereby arbitrarily limiting his own value theory, he immediately goes on to say that monotheistic faith "no more begins by asking what God is good for than humanistic or vitalistic ethics begins with the inquiry what man or life is good for."

The advantages of my position over HRN's, then, are clear. God is God, or has the value of deity, because, as the universal individual, God is both the One that alone is good for all things, self and all others, and for which alone all things, self and all others, are ultimately, abidingly valuable, either good or bad. In other words, God alone is unsurpassably good both constitutively and intrinsically, all other things being only surpassably good in both respects. On this position, unlike HRN's, two things are clear: (1) that and why the religious meaning of "God" necessarily implies its metaphysical meaning, value being dependent on being, or, in my terms, meaning for us being dependent on structure in itself; and (2) that and why God is, indeed, the One

for whom all things are valuable—not, as HRN invariably seems to say, because of the relation of all things to God, but because of God's relation to all things. As the One to whom all things are related, God can only be the One who is good for all things.

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