



Michael Shermer Slams Conservative Dennis Prager's Attack On Atheism

Los Angeles, CA (April 11, 2017): Founding publisher of Skeptic Magazine [Michael Shermer](#) is striking back against the attack on atheism made by conservative radio talk show host [Dennis Prager](#), in the recent video '[If There Is No God, Murder Isn't Wrong](#)'.

In the PragerU video, Prager claims that without God, all morality is mere opinion - and therefore murder isn't wrong. He begins by asking viewers: "I'm sure you think murder is wrong, but how do you know?"

In a video response called '[If There Is No God, Is Murder Wrong?](#)', posted today on the [Skeptic Magazine's YouTube channel](#), Shermer - a well-known atheist and former evangelical Christian, tackles Prager's simplistic assessment of religion and morality.

"Dennis Prager claims that 'without God, there can be no objective morality.' Although this is what many people believe, it is wrong for four big reasons," says Shermer, who is also a Presidential Fellow at Chapman University.

"The argument that our morals come from God is what philosophers and theologians call Divine Command Theory - that we follow God's command, no matter what. But this theory doesn't hold up. For example, if murder is wrong because God said it is wrong, what if God said it was okay? Would that make murder right? Of course not!"

Shermer, who once attended the Church of Christ institution Pepperdine University with the intent of becoming a theologian, then goes on to make his second critique of the controversial video - based on the Either-Or Fallacy.

"The Either-Or Fallacy means that we have to choose between a God-based absolute morality, where there's clear distinctions between right and wrong, and a godless relative morality, where right and wrong are just opinions."

Shermer points out that all societies throughout history and around the world today (even secular ones) have sanctions against murder.

"That's because, if there were no proscription against murder no social group could survive, much less flourish. All social order would break down. We can't have people running around killing each other."

Shermer, who also has a monthly column in Scientific American Magazine, then argues against Prager's claims by stating that the religious source of morality is unreliable.

"Divine Command Theory implies that people get their morality from God. But how? Most people don't see burning bushes, hear the voice of God, nor receive chiseled

stone tablets from the Almighty. So where do these ideas about right and wrong come from?"

"If God has reasons why murder is wrong, why don't we just base our proscriptions against murder on those reasons and skip the divine middleman?" Shermer added.

Shermer continues his critique by asking viewers this question:

"Most religious people say that they get their morality from their Holy Book. The problem with this is that God apparently dictated different moral commands for different religions, so which one is right?"

Shermer's last point of rebuttal is his assertion that 'absolute morality corrupts absolutely'.

"The belief in absolute morality inexorably leads to the conclusion that anyone who believes differently has departed from God's truth, and thus is unprotected by our moral obligations," Shermer says.

"Historically this absolutism led to crusades, inquisitions, witch hunts, religious wars, and genocides – all in the name of God. Today, it's why suicide bombers shout out Allahu Akbar – God is Great. These Islamic terrorists also believe in absolute God-given morality, and they act accordingly."

Shermer wraps his 7-minute video by concluding that morality is not absolute - but neither is it relative.

"We get our morality from our parents, peers, mentors, teachers, books, and culture, and we listen to that still small voice within—our moral conscience."

Michael Shermer's next book, *Heavens on Earth: The Scientific Search for the Afterlife, Immortality & Utopia*, is due out in January 2018.

See Michael Shermer's video ['If There Is No God, Is Murder Wrong?'](#)

See Michael Shermer in conversation with [Bill Nye](#)

See Michael Shermer in conversation with theoretical physicist [Dr Lawrence Krauss](#)

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