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Introduction to Philosophy

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Reading Question Week 8

Pascal, “The Wager” (*Pensees*) – pp. 356-359

1. Pascal believes that there is an infinite God, and he is beyond our understanding. He believes that for humans to think in God is like a game; for example, “... the coin will come down heads or tails. How will you bet? Reason will not enable you to decide either way, or rule out either way, or rule out either alternative.” Pascal believes it is like gambling, and people need to believe in God and recognize that there is a supreme being, whether accurate or not.
2. Pascal advises that there is an equal probability of winning and losing and that it is appropriate to risk one life to gain two. One opportunity to win against a finite number of chances to lose, the prize is an infinite number of endlessly happy lives. The ratio of odds of winning and losing is determined by the uncertainty of winning and the certainty of what is being risked.

Kierkegaard, "Faith and Subjectivity" (*Concluding Unscientific . . .*) – pp. 376-382

1. Kierkegaard believes that approving and disapproving of the Bible does not determine faith. Because faith comes with passion; without love, there is no faith. As followers of God, we must believe that a supreme being rules over humanity to have confidence in it. As the bible would say, if we as believers doubt God, we should not expect to receive what we ask of him because of the lack of faith in us.
2. Kierkegaard discusses objectivity as a mode of approach to the problem that persists from generation to generation precisely because the individual is objective and less possessed by an infinite passionate interest. In comparison, he describes subjectivity as inwardness that comes from the spirit. Kierkegaard also states that decisiveness adheres to subjectivity. He says that subjectivity is infinitely interested in eternal happiness, which brings faith in God.
3. Kierkegaard discusses the problems of getting through God via approximation and objectivity. He explains that a person who pursues the objective way sets themselves up for an approximation process that puts God as an Object and not a Subject. He then clears the problem by saying that God is subject and exists only for subjectivity inwardness.
4. Kierkegaard defines truth as; "an objective uncertainty held fast in an appropriation process of the most passionate inwardness is the truth- the highest truth attainable for an existing individual." He expresses this as uncertainty because, without risk, there is no faith. Objective fate brings a lack of confidence, while subjective uncertainty brings a belief in infinite or eternal happiness.