

Singing the Greg Bahnsen Blues

A court jester for Christianity recently created an anonymous moniker on Blogger so that he/she/it can masquerade in the comments sections of this and other blogs. This one goes by the name Singh. His/her/its Blogger profile is dated September 2007, and when I checked it there had been only 4 page views. So Singh must have just recently been born again, for it appears he/she/it just fell off the cabbage truck. Incidentally, [Peter Pike](#) just happens to have has an entry on his blog about a book by Simon Singh. Coincidence?

Anyway, Singh left comments today in response to two of my blog entries. Singh also made an appearance at [Debunking Christianity](#) earlier today as well. On my blog, Singh's drive-by comments can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Singh apparently didn't like my series on Greg Bahnsen's attempts to defend "knowledge of the 'super-natural'." Observe:

Singh: "Sure, you have answered Bahnsen."

I surely have.

Singh: "Whether you have answered correctly is another story."

In my [final assessment](#), I identified 13 areas where Bahnsen's defense of "knowledge of the 'super-natural'" could at best be considered utterly deficient. Bahnsen's defenders are free to show where Bahnsen in fact addresses these concerns in the space of the 31st chapter of his book *Always Ready*. Failing to do this on these 13 points will only concede the matter to my analysis and the verdicts it supports.

Singh: "Your unargued presupposition that all existence, life, mind, and reason it itself is the the result of mindless processes is still hanging out their [sic] twisiting in the wind."

What is the alternative to what Singh has characterized as "mindless processes" if not some process which is guided by mental activity? And what alternative is there to the "presupposition that all existence, life, mind, and reason it [sic] itself is the result of mindless processes" if not the presupposition that "all existence" is "the result of" a *mental* process? Thus in so characterizing my "presupposition" (which is nothing other than [the primacy of existence principle](#)), Singh confirms Christianity's dependence on [the primacy of consciousness metaphysics](#). Notice how Singh's own presupposition of the primacy of consciousness hangs itself: on his view, "all existence" is the "result" of some conscious activity - which can only mean: the conscious activity took place prior to "all existence" - which could only mean that the conscious activity could not exist. But in order to be responsible for "all existence," it would have to exist. Thus your Singh's presupposition necessarily entails self-contradiction. This isn't surprising coming from a Christian, for Christianity is a form of [worshiping contradiction](#).

Now what is so wrong with supposing that a so-called "mindless process" is responsible for various activities in reality? Singh does not say, so perhaps there's nothing wrong with it. But consider: when a drop of water falls from the leaf of a plant in the early morning dew, why suppose that some *conscious* activity makes this happen? Sure, one can *imagine* that a magic being is causing this. But this simply raises the question: what *objective* inputs from reality suggest this? The lack of objective inputs does not stop a thinker from *imagining* that a magic consciousness resides "behind" everything in the universe. But that's one of the major points which Bahnsen continually fails to confront: since there is a fundamental distinction between what is real and what is imaginary, those who assert a god need to explain how a thinker can distinguish between what the believer calls "God" and what the believer may simply be imagining. I raise this question at numerous critical junctures throughout my interaction with Bahnsen's essay, but Singh nowhere acknowledges that this might even be a concern, let alone addresses it.

Singh: "Science has certainly not demonstrated your presuppositions of course, but your faith that it will is obviously great."

Singh succeeds only in broadcasting his/her/its own ignorance here. Science is only possible on the basis of a rational worldview guided by the principle of objectivity. The primacy of existence is the essence of the principle of objectivity. It is the recognition that the *objects* of consciousness hold metaphysical primacy over the *subject* of consciousness. The alternative to this view is [any form of subjectivism](#) that the human mind can invent (such as

Christianity). In terms of essentials, the primacy of consciousness view of the world ultimately reduces to the view that wishing makes it so. Obviously science does not proceed on the basis that wishing makes it so; rather it proceeds on the basis that facts obtain regardless of what we wish and that the scientist's task is to *discover* and *identify* those facts, whatever they might turn out to be. Since science is not possible on any basis other than the primacy of existence principle (the recognition that existence exists independent of consciousness), there is no scientific burden to demonstrate the truth of the primacy of existence. It is in fact axiomatic - a base-level truth upon which all other truths depend. If the primacy of existence were not already true, science simply would not be possible. The fact that science not only is possible but is an amply developed field of human endeavor, is for the purposes of serving the point thus taken as sufficient confirmation of the primacy of existence. To deny this is to deny the principle of objectivity and surrender the mind to outright subjectivism.

Singh: "And I do use faith in the same perjorative [sic] sense that you do, in this context."

It is the bible, not I, which associates faith with hoping (see specifically Hebrews 11:1). And it is Greg Bahnsen himself, not I, who characterizes faith as [belief without understanding](#). If Singh affirms things on faith, that's not my problem.

Singh: "Frankly, your self referential rehashes and baseless moral pronouncements are unconvincing."

It's not clear what Singh is referring to here. So saying whatever it is he has in mind is "unconvincing" is unhelpful to anyone other than himself.

Singh: "The great flaw in your whole continuing thread is your constant claims that Bahnsen does this...Bahnsen does that...without adequate (or, in many cases ANY) references to where EXACTLY he does this."

This is so false that it's apparent that Singh hasn't bothered to read any of my installments interacting with Bahnsen's essay. I give "references to where EXACTLY" Bahnsen does precisely what I cite him doing. What's more, I identify the book where does this, and I cite the page number. And I go even further to quote exactly what he says. Then I interact with it.

Whether he/she/it realizes it or not, Singh demonstrates that his/her/its commitment to Christian mysticism is emotional rather than intellectual in nature. Singh's concern is to discredit my criticism of Bahnsen without assembling any counter-criticism of his/her/its own or showing where in fact Bahnsen addresses the issues which I have raised. Apparently Singh sees that his/her/its champion apologist has been decisively exposed as a blathering fake, and frustrated by this he/she/it feels a need to retaliate. Why does it matter to Singh what I or any other critic of Bahnsen has to say? Did Singh really believe that such paltry comments are going to accomplish anything of value by emoting in this manner? T'is true, Christians do believe all kinds of foolish things, so perhaps this is the case.

Singh: "And knowing how much you despise Christians, from your remarks on other blogs, I am certainly not going to place any "faith" in your representing him correctly."

I nowhere ask that any of my readers "place any 'faith' in" anything I do, say or present in the first place. In fact, I have published arguments for my verdicts. But I don't see that Singh has interacted with any of them. Why, for instance, does Bahnsen seem so oblivious on the relationship between perception and conceptualization, as his own statements make clear? If Singh thinks I'm wrong in concluding that Bahnsen did not understand the relationship between perception and the conceptual level of cognition, where does he present his understanding on this, and why didn't he integrate it into his "defense" of his "knowledge of the 'super-natural'"?

As for the claim that I "despise Christians," this only shows that Singh is a very poor judge of character. Singh has mistaken his/her/its own umbrage with evidence of spite on my part. On the contrary, however, I love Christians. They make for great entertainment. Singh is a case in point.

by Dawson Bethrick

Labels: [Christian Psychopathy](#), [imagination](#)

posted by Bahnsen Burner at [6:00 PM](#)

1 Comments:

[lordodamanor](#) said...

"One is that the bible is painfully ambiguous in its use of the word 'faith'."

Thanks for proving that you've never read, or have never understood Scripture. Unequivocally Jesus states, "You will know the Truth, and the Truth will set you free."

You quoted Hebrews 11.1, but inaccurately expound it. "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen." Estin de pistiv elpizomenwn upostasiv, pragmatwn elegxov ou blepomenwn.

To unpack this: Pistis is derived from a root that means immovable, the foundation, the rock, the essential, basis, elemental, base knowledge. Hupostasis means that which is the substance, again, elemental. Elpizo, is the thing expected. To put this back together, faith is faith is faith, or knowing is knowing is knowing, or faith is the essence of hope. Or, faith is the possession of the thing hoped for. Analogously, water is H₂O.

Pragma, means fact, a proven thing done. Blepo, has a wide variety of meaning, but for this context it simply means to observe and coupled with Ou meaning not, ou blepo expresses the unseen.

So, the bible is not "painfully ambiguous." It is exacting, expansive, extensive in its definition. Calvin in his Institutes takes an entire book, along with many references elsewhere to explore the meaning, not obliquely, but rather exegetically, with incurrence, understanding the critical nature of faith's precise definition and operational application.

"Now what is so wrong with supposing that a so-called "mindless process" is responsible for various activities in reality? Singh does not say, so perhaps there's nothing wrong with it."

So, you're a presuppositionalist?

"But this simply raises the question: what objective inputs from reality suggest this?"

"No man knows another's pain." This Scriptural view is contrary to the psychological expression of empathy. So which is true? A man's pain is a subjective reality. He may know it as objective, but only in himself. He may even express it objectively to another. But, the other cannot know that pain which is subjectively experienced by the one expressing it. So, how do you establish that you are not just imagining that you have pain? There are no external inputs to objectively establish your subjective experience. The observations of another can only establish that he is observing what appears to be the experience of pain, but since pain can be faked, visual observation can not establish the existence of pain let alone the experience of it. Now, you may want to argue that with modern technology, pain centers can produce measures that when associated with self-reports, substantiate that pain is occurring. Yet with that, there may not be any physiological cause. Another problem of course is in the objective measures of quantity and quality, for which, there is yet no means to establish a baseline for the experience, individually, which can be used acrossed populations. In the end the experience of pain is just your imagination by any external measure.

Your example of a drip simply involves you in the infinite regress. You state the processes that can be observed without discovering the source of those processes. You simply presuppose their existence, eternally, unsuccessfully avoiding the tautological, recursive, said so is so, redundancy.

You might likewise presuppose that because you experience pain, that there must be an objective measure of its experience. You might even presuppose, that since technology advances, what was unable to be observed, since it can be experienced, that some day there may be a means to objectify it. There is no such thing, and never will be. The only true measure of pain is always, and ever will be, relative to the subjective experience of it. So, how do you know that pain exists, as opposed to your just imagining it does? Or, how do you know what you know of pain? Or, what is the basis of your epistemology of it? Similarly, how can an observer know what you know? Like pain, he can only experience the knowledge of what you say you know. He cannot experience your knowing it. So, how does an objective observer establish that you are truly knowing what you say you do. You may be able to argue that you do. You may be exact in your expression of any given data. The same could be said of your subjective experience of your existence. You say you exist, another may observe that you exist, but how do you establish for the observer that you know you exist. The observer cannot know with certainty that which he cannot see, namely your experience.

Empathy is a false reality. We say, "I feel your pain." The reality is that "No man knows another's pain." Now, you would not deny that anyone but yourself can experience pain simply because you cannot know their experience of it. You've experienced pain, so you presuppose that others do, also. What is the difference between your presupposition of the existence of the experience of pain, (your presupposition of eternal existence), and another's presupposition of the existence of God? There is none. You simply, out of blind prejudice deny that God exists. Because of that, you deny that anyone can know Him. But, how is it, that you cannot know another's pain and establish that they can know it? They cannot show you their subjective experience, they can display it, you might even be able to demonstrate scientifically that pain is materially happening, but you cannot demonstrate by any means a value of experience. Conversely, though you use all your means to demonstrate that you do not know that God exists and therefore cannot know that God exists, you cannot demonstrate that another does not. The problem with pain is that it can only be truly known by the individual experiencing it. The problem with knowing God is likewise. Unless one experiences God, he cannot know. This is faith. Jesus put it this way, "You study the Scripture because in them you think you know God. But, they are that which speak of Me." Just like pain, apart from experiencing it, God cannot be known through objective means, alone.

In all you say, you demonstrate that you are a presuppositionalist. You've missed though what all Presuppositionalists, presuppose. Though propositional statements must always begin with presupposition they can never be proven, except experientially.

Unfortunately, Neo, no one can tell you what the Matrix is....

Though this bizarre Eastern mystic movie is filled with dead ends, this truth statement expresses what you are struggling to understand. Or to put it in the words of Christ, "Unless an man is born from above, he cannot see..."

[September 28, 2007 12:54 PM](#)

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