

Michael's Sword

Objective Goodness, Maximal Good, and Comparative Evaluation (Full Edition)

This is the full argument edition. It contains the complete “Michael’s Sword” proof structure and then adds the comparative tables as Section 10. The tables are meant to clarify lineage and distinctives, not replace the argument.

Executive Summary (Plain Language)

- You can deny “objective good,” but you cannot live without “better/worse” judgments; agency requires them.
- Desire is not a measure of good: addiction shows we can want what is bad, then recognize it as bad.
- Moral failure behaves like real error (repentance, repair), not like taste disagreement.
- Therefore goodness is not exhausted by opinion; opinion presupposes standards (truth, coherence, harm, dignity) it cannot create.
- Maximal Sword Cut: If goodness is real and graded, maximal goodness is not optional; God’s existence is logically entailed and faith becomes trust in what reason reveals.

1) The Alleged Catch-22: “Prove It Without Using Opinion”

Objection: “Any proof uses subjective pathways (judgment, language), so objective goodness cannot be proven.” Michael’s Sword replies that this demand is malformed. It confuses the tool we use to detect truths with the truths themselves. We reason about objective reality and objective truth using minds, but that does not make reality or truth mind-made.

The fair standard is not “prove goodness without cognition.” The fair standard is: **show that goodness is not exhausted by opinion**—that it admits error and correction and continues to bind even when denied.

2) Objective Reality and Objective Truth

Objective reality can exist even if all access to it passes through minds. Likewise, objective truths can exist even if humans must form beliefs to state them. Belief does not create truth; it aims to align with it.

Scientific practice illustrates this: one correct account can prevail despite disagreement because reality pushes back. Michael's Sword claims moral reality pushes back too—through predictable costs: suffering, moral injury, broken trust, and institutional collapse.

3) The Core Argument (Numbered Premises)

- 1 **P1.** Human agency cannot operate without distinguishing better from worse. Even deniers of “objective good” still act as though some things should not be done to them.
- 2 **P2.** If “better/worse” were merely preference, moral conflict would behave like taste conflict. It does not.
- 3 **P3.** Desire is not a measure of good. Humans can strongly desire what later proves destructive; therefore “wanted” ≠ “good.”
- 4 **P4.** Moral failure behaves like real error (repentance, guilt, repair), not like harmless difference.
- 5 **P5.** Therefore goodness is not exhausted by opinion. Opinion presupposes standards—truth, coherence, harm, dignity—that it cannot create by itself.
- 6 **C.** Goodness is objective in the practical-philosophical sense: it binds and can be true/false relative to what humans are and what preserves coherent agency and flourishing over time.

4) The Addiction Blade: Why “Desired” Can Still Be “Bad”

Addiction exposes the split between appearance-good and actual-good. Some substances can produce an initial phase of heightened energy, relief, confidence, or endurance. But as dependence grows, agency narrows: choice becomes compulsion, judgment degrades, and long-term flourishing is sacrificed for short-term craving.

A person can sincerely say, during a clearer moment, “This is bad for me,” while still experiencing powerful desire. Desire does not prove goodness; it proves humans can be tricked—biologically, psychologically, and socially. A thing is good (here) to the extent it preserves coherent agency and the capacity to choose over time.

5) The Nature Filter: “Good for a Moth” vs “Good for an Extremophile”

For a moth, fire is destructive. For an extremophile adapted to intense heat, it may be sustaining. This does not make goodness subjective; it shows goodness is assessed relative to what a being is. Once a nature is specified, many “good for X” claims become objective.

Humans are beings capable of reflection, restraint, and deliberate harm. That is why agency-preserving constraints matter: they track what sustains humans as moral agents rather than what merely gratifies moment-to-moment.

6) The Humility Safeguard: Objective Good \neq Authoritarian Certainty

The claim “good is real” does not imply any one person perfectly perceives it. Humans are flawed and often self-deceived. Therefore the existence of a righteous path demands humility, restraint, and correction—not domination.

This harmonizes with a selection principle Michael attributes to Yahweh for leadership: **“meeker than a whisper.”** Meekness functions as a filter against ego-driven power: those who do not crave prominence are less likely to weaponize authority for self-affirmation.

7) From Objective Goodness to God (Derived Conclusion)

If goodness is real and admits grading (worse \rightarrow better), the scale cannot be purely arbitrary. A non-arbitrary scale converges toward an upper bound: maximal goodness. This is a consequence of the ladder, not the starting point.

Maximal Sword Cut: And if goodness is real and graded, maximal goodness is not optional. In that case, God’s existence is not merely believed but logically entailed — faith becomes trust in what reason already reveals.

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good—except God alone.” (Luke 18:19)

8) Objections and Replies

Objection A: “You proved only feelings, not reality.”

Reply: The argument rests on agency and error-structure, not emotion alone. We treat moral failure as correctable mistake with repair obligations—unlike taste differences.

Objection B: “Grounding in human nature is arbitrary.”

Reply: Humans have stable capacities and vulnerabilities. A standard tied to preserving coherent agency and long-term flourishing tracks what humans demonstrably are.

Objection C: “Disagreement proves subjectivity.”

Reply: Disagreement exists in science too; it does not negate objectivity when there are error conditions, correction mechanisms, and reality-pushback.

Objection D: “This implies only one rigid path.”

Reply: There can be multiple good paths consistent with agency and flourishing. Objectivity here means constraints exist and error is real—not that every detail is uniquely determined.

9) Conclusion

Michael’s Sword argues that goodness is not merely opinion because moral agency and moral error are not optional features of human life. Desire can mislead (addiction), nature constrains “good-for,” and moral failure behaves like real error requiring repair. If goodness is objective and graded, maximal goodness follows as a rational consequence—making faith not a blind leap, but trust in what reason reveals.

10) Comparative Tables

How to Read These Tables

These tables are comparative instruments evaluated under explicit criteria. A higher score indicates stronger performance relative to that criterion—not total philosophical dominance. Two lenses are used: (A) rigor in establishing objective goodness, and (B) practical capacity to leave human beings better without encouraging domination, abuse, or moral collapse. Together, they show where each system is strongest and where it is weakest.

Table 1 — Structural Comparison

Category	Plato	Anselm	Aquinas	Michael's Sword
Starting Point	Form of the Good	Concept of God	Degrees of Being	Human agency + moral error
Method	Metaphysical illumination	Ontological reasoning	Metaphysics & causality	Transcendental cut
Evidence Base	Intelligibility	Logical necessity	Perfections of being	Agency collapse, addiction, rep
Role of Desire	Largely ignored	Irrelevant	Secondary	Explicitly unreliable
Guard vs Power Abuse	Weak	None	Implicit	Explicit meekness filter
Where God Enters	Highest Form	Starting premise	Early metaphysics	Derived conclusion

Table 2 — Criterion A: Establishing Objective Good

Criterion	Plato	Anselm	Aquinas	Michael's Sword
Resists Relativism	9	8	9	9
Minimal Assumptions	6	7	7	8
Handles Disagreement	6	5	7	8
Explains Moral Error	5	4	6	9
Derives Maximal Good	8	9	9	9

Table 3 — Criterion B: Leaving People Better (Haimesian Metric)

Criterion	Plato	Anselm	Aquinas	Michael's Sword
Daily Moral Clarity	6	5	7	9
Power Abuse Resistance	4	3	6	9
Handles Addiction	2	1	4	9
Encourages Humility	6	5	7	9
Survivable for Humans	5	4	6	9

Interpretive note: Michael's Sword does not claim metaphysical replacement of classical systems. It argues for objectivity from lived constraints (agency, error, addiction) and adds explicit safeguards against authoritarian misuse. God remains a derived conclusion, not the premise doing the persuasive work.