

The Primacy of Human Will

by Rebecca Bynum (March 2013)

argues that whereas we are not our own creators, and did not create all the myriad factors of our environment, do not control all the factors of influence that go into our genetic and environmental make-up, that therefore no decision made can be said to have been truly free. All the evolutionary factors of our make-up going back to the beginning of life on earth (indeed beyond, since why this planet and not another?) would have to have been consciously decided by us to make our decisions free since all of those factors influence our decisions at least to some degree now. Hence, our decisions are limited; therefore, we are not free will beings.

I would tend to agree with Mr. Harris, if it were true that human beings were merely material constructs with no perception or experience of non-material reality. But that is not true, human beings perceive and act upon spiritual value, we distinguish good from evil, and it is these very decisions which are valuable in and of themselves. Though human beings are built upon an evolutionary animal substrate, and that substrate predetermines many kinds of preferences and desires during material life, yet the most critical moral decisions are made by distinguishing levels of value. In this realm, involving the choosing of better and more moral positions among our fellow men, we are completely free. In the absence of mental illness or serious brain injury, both good and evil are freely chosen.