

## Introduction

You are listening to The Nexus, the most controversial show on radio. I'm Sankara Saranam, the author of God Without Religion.

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God Without Religion is a multi-award winning book that the centralized powers hope you never read. Here why:

## 12 My Comments/News

It's hard to believe we even have to ask in this scientifically advanced day and age: Are millions of women, many of whom are wonderful mothers, murderers for having had an abortion?

Is abortion murder? To answer that, we first need to ask what constitutes murder and why it is wrong. Since murder creates social disharmony and weakens society, but why are those bad? Because the continuation of society has ever been assumed to be the highest good. Therefore, murder was labeled bad. It then became wrong.

Murder may be bad for other legitimate reasons, but good and bad require a preexisting standard of measure. With murder, the standard was that society is good. Even the so-called inalienable God-given right to life still translated into a social right granted and sanctified because it was found to benefit society. There was never any god that commanded anyone not to murder. Rather, it was particular social systems that found murder to disrupt society, and so the law against murder was merely codified and sanctified.

Of course, the good of just any society won't do. Murdering people of other societies was never as bad, legally or religiously. Human beings do that all the time, usually for the sake of increasing a society's resources. We effortlessly glorify and divinize such murder, and glorify the murderers as our heroes, precisely because the murder in war is done for the good of our own society - the same reason murder within our society is easily vilified. It's always the good of a society.

Violence against women and children in our society elicits a particularly visceral response that is linked to our instinct to preserve our species. Even if a woman isn't pregnant, hurting her can result in her inability to have children, who represent our future.

Though the world is now overpopulated, our tendency to protect mothers and children, even across societies, still voices itself in discussions regarding sexual rights. Because of this, we can't be too surprised at some people's instinct to grant personhood to fetuses.

Unfortunately, this instinct to safeguard our genetic code for all futurity does not make for good abortion ethics because a fetus does not yet have a social identity. It has no social responsibilities and hence cannot be afforded social rights, as the two invariably go hand in hand (unless you want to live in a tyrannical state).

Human beings are by definition individuated beings. We naturally question the worth of living when disease or aging requires our bodies to be perennially hooked up to life support. In fact, any loss of independence is instinctively interpreted as a loss of human identity.

When we see conjoined twins, to give another example, our inherent sense of individuality is instinctively challenged. But while conjoined twins are two individuals with more limitations than the rest of us, fetuses are not individuals at all because fetuses have not yet taken the first step toward individuation. Fetuses live completely and solely by virtue of the woman's body that houses them.

The difference, then, between a murderer and a pregnant woman who chooses not to spend her energy in the preliminary growth of a human body inside of her womb is that the former murders independently living and breathing human beings – in other words actual individuated entities - who have social responsibilities, decisions, and a well-developed unique sense of self; while the latter surgically removes a clump of matter that is no less organically living than a tumor but has no more individuation than a side of beef.

So who should decide whether or not a woman should have an abortion? That's simple: the woman with the clump of cells growing in her body. For others to presume to be the defenders - or worse,

avengers - of that fetus means they believe that by virtue of some gift of insight, they can now claim an absolute and unquestionable point of view regarding its personhood, translating in their minds into a social responsibility to protect the rights of the fetus.

This misguided attitude highlights a major distinction between the so-called pro-life and pro-choice camps.

Members of the pro-life camp are self-proclaimed defenders of other people's fetuses, but in reality they are just seeking to impose their ideology on others. Since they are not absolute authority in this world that can unequivocally state that fetuses are persons, the pro-life self-proclamation eventually rests on three words: "I know better."

The British philosopher Bertrand Russell once called philosophy a discipline that teaches the practitioner how to suspend judgment. To those self-mystifying people who would presume to strip power from women because they have judged they know better regarding the personhood of fetuses, I have this to say: Get over yourselves.

Ronald Reagan said, "Unless and until it can be proven that the unborn child is not a living entity, then its right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness must be protected." Reagan had it backwards. The onus of proving that the fetus is a living entity - and more specifically, an individuated being - belongs to those who claim it.

It's easy to claim the fetus is a living entity, which implies individuation, but impossible to prove. On the contrary, it's apparent to all that the fetus is not an individual entity and has no social rights.

Individuation begins with the first breath, and not before. In contradiction to the baseless theological assertions regarding the human soul underlying beliefs such as Reagan's, the very Hebrew language calls human souls neshamot, or breathers. The words spirit and inspiration - literally, inhalation - both stem from the Latin spiritus.

Our perception of time, the fluctuations of our minds, our feeling of being, our sense of awareness, and even our allegiance to a particular body is dependent upon certain breathing patterns.

In other words, since the unborn does not breathe on its own, it is not individuated, does not have an individual sense of selfhood, and is therefore dependent for life upon the individuation of the woman, just as her arm, heart, and nose depend on her breath and will for life.

Now, the sperm, egg, stem cells, embryo, and fetus, certainly contain organic matter - but these chunks of matter do not constitute an individual entity separate from the pregnant woman who is performing all of the individuated living and breathing.

So fetuses are not merely dependent like a diseased person who has lost some independence when hooked up to life support; the clump of matter we call fetuses never had individuality in the first place. The fetus is yet part of a woman, and never was not part of her.

If we approach it as a separate individual with rights, that can eventually lead to laws that steal unborn children from pregnant women, or babies who are not fully individuated, from their mothers against their will, all in the name of upholding the rights of our progeny.

What if the state wisely realizes that superstition is a sort of mental disease, but then unwisely makes a law that prohibits superstitious people, which is most of the people in the world, from being parents because babies have a right not to be indoctrinated into irrational religious beliefs?

Are we one day going to prosecute women who decide not to have children because they are necessarily killing all those potential humans, or women who, through unhealthy habits or addictions, infringe on the rights of all the babies to which they could potentially give birth?

How about this: Are platonic relationships some form of murder because they fail to safeguard our genetic coding? Will a pregnant woman be charged with manslaughter if she accidentally falls down the stairs and loses her fetus?

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How can any sane person reasonably distinguish one group of cells in a woman's body from another group and give them distinctive social rights, separate from her, when none of those cell clusters are individuated? There's no individual to give the rights to!

People in the pro-life movement – these self-righteous self-proclaimed defenders of non-person chunks of matter - undermine how we define ourselves as human beings. They challenge all human rights, including their own, by failing to acknowledge what makes our lives rich: individuality and larger social and human identity.

Perhaps more than anything else, individuality teaches us responsibility, of which fetuses will never know anything. That's right, fetuses will never know responsibility. Fetuses become individuated human beings that may or may not learn responsibility, but even then, it's not fetuses that that know anything about responsibility because the individuated being learning responsibility is no longer a fetus!

Once babies are born, they have the responsibility to breathe, which is why parents instinctually check at night to make sure that their infants are still breathing. Since it takes that responsibility, it has the right to breathe, nothing more. But Nature in its wisdom gives parents the instinct to protect and nurture the baby, though it does not yet actually have any social right to such nurturance. It only has the rights commensurate with the responsibilities it can uphold, which when it is born is the right and the responsibility to breathe.

The baby's right to food and nurturance are not its own, but are given to it by its parent(s), and they take on the equivalent responsibility for giving that nurturance that the baby cannot yet shoulder. It can't yet shoulder that responsibility because it's not fully individuated and socially independent. Again, rights must always equal responsibility.

No human being reaches total independence, which is why being totally independent is to be a god on earth with unlimited rights. But rights must always equal responsibility in a just and free society. They must always be balanced. If they aren't, tyranny is the result.

But back to the fetus, since the fetus is an utterly dependent life, utterly dependent on the woman's, it's the woman's to give and take. Just like the rest of her cells, the fetal chunk of matter lives off of her breath, and she and she alone is responsible for where the energies of her life's breath are directed. No one else carries that responsibility and no one else can justly strip her of her right to fulfill that responsibility because her first responsibility is necessarily to herself.

What goes on in the domain of her body is her responsibility and under her authority. In fact, an adult individual who does breathe has no right to live in her body or off of her breaths unless she consents to it. If an adult will die unless she breathes for him or her, she has ever right not to take that responsibility to breathe for someone else!

So to presume, by virtue of the sanctity of a belief system, to protect that fetal chunk of matter with no social rights or responsibilities, and strip a woman's authority over her own body, is nothing short of egomaniacal tyranny. If a woman willingly consents to spending the energies for the full term of pregnancy, then she is free. But if she is forced into it through lack of choice, she becomes a slave.

To afford a nonentity, like a fetus or a side of beef, rights in a social system when that nonentity has no responsibilities, is actually a ploy to strip rights from one party and grant them to another party.

Even if a woman is denied the right to an abortion in the name of the rights of a fetus, that chunk of organic matter called a fetus, having itself no way to actually receive those rights, or take on any responsibilities or social identity, is not the recipient of those rights taken from the women. Until it begins the process of individuation with its first breath, the fetus has no capacity to receive any rights.

So where did the woman's rights go, then? When a woman is not free to decide what does and does not grow in her body, what person or party will socially benefit from her lack of freedom?

The work of building a baby in the body and potentially raising children is severely limiting to a woman's freedom to develop her faculties in avenues other than motherhood. That is not to say being pregnant or raising a child or children is totally debilitating, but it can easily affect a woman's career, financial freedom, and educational opportunities - which all translate into her garnering greater social responsibility, and perhaps even social authority.

So how pathetic is it that despite the fact that women today, outnumbering men, own roughly only 1% of the world's property, generate only 10% of the income, and yet fill nearly 70% of the total working hours of the human race, pro-life activists have no ethical problem with exacerbating this grave inequity by working to strip a woman of the power to remove a chunk of matter from her body when she doesn't want it growing in there and spending her energies?

Actually, pro-life enthusiasts contradict themselves on a number of points. They often claim that women get abortions because, in their selfishness, they don't feel like caring for a child. If that is true, I fail to see how such selfish women would make good mothers anyway.

They say women need to be responsible enough to use contraception, then turn around and say that a woman who wasn't responsible enough to use contraception is yet responsible enough to be a mother. And as for women who use contraception and still get pregnant, too bad. Then they do their best to make sure contraception has a bad reputation and is hard to get.

Then, they call abortion murder but say that the very women capable of toying with the idea of murder, or are guilty of murder, should be mothers. They perforce call millions of wonderful mothers who have had abortions murderers, which is intellectually and intuitively preposterous.

The truth is, women who decide to get pregnant and give birth are no less self-centered than those who decide to have an abortion. They have merely positioned their sense of self to include the idea of giving birth and raising a child.

In fact, I find that women who have had abortions, knowing they are not ready to be good mothers, are thinking of both their own welfare and that of a potential child and are often the ones making sacrifices.

They may also be thinking of what is best for humanity. Popping out babies has no virtue in and of itself for its own sake, especially in this day when we are 6 plus billion and counting. The virtue is in the hard work of raising children to have expansive identities that serve all of humanity rather than narrow, self-serving viewpoints.

So the crime is in that millions of religious ideological parents of past generations raised closed-minded children who today don't even have the simple intellectual capacity to distinguish between a cluster of cells and an individuated human being, and then to add insult to injury never figured out how to mind their own business.

So true selfishness is embodied by the so-called conservatives and religious fundamentalists who presume to be the defenders of other women's fetuses.

Ironically, it is really not for the fetus that pro-life enthusiasts fight. They fight for an idea they identify with, usually one with theological justification. In other words, they fight for themselves and their narrow worldview against progressive women who came to the correct conclusion that abortion is permissible.

If they simply wanted to live by their belief systems which grant fetuses a self, personhood, and identity, that would be fine, as misguided as it is. But that is not enough for most of them because their moralizing ideology demands foisting their beliefs onto those free women that threaten their sense of self.

A free woman is the greatest threat to religion, because women are the keepers of traditions. Women will even keep traditions, like Catholicism, that undermine their social standing. Once the mind of a woman is free of the shackles of religion, how likely is it that she will impart religion onto her children? Not very, and since 99% of the converts religions rely upon are babies, making sure women are slaves to religion is extremely crucial.

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Those same religious fundamentalists have ever been on the wrong side of history and again today, as in the past, believe they are on the right side without an ounce of ability to suspend judgment.

The greatest irony of the pro-life movement is that it makes its adherents the very enemies that they claim to be fighting against. Once the non-personhood of fetuses is properly appreciated, it becomes clear that pro-lifers are the only ones in this cultural war trying to strip others of power over their bodies. In claiming that women who get abortions strip power over the fetus, they are the ones stripping power from women – real living entities with social responsibilities - as has been done by religion for thousands of years.

No pro-choice person asks or forces women to have abortions. They merely claim that a woman has power over her body – finally!

So, the greatest tragedy of the pro-life movement is that so many women support the misogynistic attitude largely serving the domination of men over the centuries, usually in the name of God - a male god. Women will always be the keepers of tradition, but to keep traditions without questioning them, traditions that undermine the social power of their own gender, is despicable.

I can therefore imagine no more pathetic a figure than a pro-life woman who willingly undermines her own social power. After millennia of disempowerment by the hands of men, these women apply their social power, and misuse their role as the keepers of tradition, to further disempower their gender.

Their narrow sense of identity, a form of self-hatred, is apparent in their unwillingness to accept that women have authority over their bodies and where the energies of their breath, their spirit goes.

Yet every time they have sex with a man for any purpose or desire in their hearts other than to have a child, their hypocrisy rears its head, because doing so acknowledges that people will naturally engage in sex for reasons other than procreation.

Women have the right to exercise power of authority over their own bodies because they're responsible for it. Both contraception and abortion are a woman's right and the right and wrong of abortion can only be determined by the woman according to its effects on her. For some women it is a minor procedure with no side effects; for women who assign to the fetus personhood or an artificial sanctity, it may be a psychologically harrowing experience fraught with guilt.

Superstitious women who feel such guilt should not make the error of assuming that some God made them feel that guilt. No, it was their own untrained mind and its vulnerability to guilt-inducing dogmas. They need to get out a bit and talk to women who have freer minds.

Each woman is free to determine for herself the pros and cons of abortion. The effects of the abortion on a fetus as distinguished from a woman are not only irrelevant, but their very determination requires a dehumanizing and disenfranchising attitude toward women. You might as well think to kill a woman to save her nose.

Now, there are various arguments against abortion. Some pro-lifers say the fetus has rights because it's a POTENTIAL human being.

I ask, what social responsibilities can this fetus shoulder to warrant granting it a social right, especially when this so-called right to life is nothing more than a social responsibility imposed upon another member of society, namely the women who has to do all the responsible living and breathing and eating for this fetus?

And since the fetus cannot shoulder any social responsibilities, who ever gave pro-lifers the right to unilaterally transfer the burden of responsibilities from one member of society to another, let alone from one clump of matter that never was able to shoulder responsibilities to a socially responsible member of society? Again, it is just a ploy to strip social rights and power from women and centralize it in men.

How can a non-individuated clump of matter receive the right to life, when claiming it does only translates into the woman no longer having the right to decide where the energies of her breath of life go, and must now responsibly live for the fetus and its growing demands?

Every human being is POTENTIALLY so many things and can do so many things, some that afford social humans more responsibility and some that strip them of rights, even the right to life where there is capital punishment. But none of this has anything to do with fetuses. Fetuses are fetuses. They are not potential anything unless the women makes it so. The minute they take any bit of responsibility, namely to breathe when they're born, they are not fetuses anymore.

Therefore, fetuses by definition, have no responsibilities and no rights and no individuation and no potential other than the rights and the responsibilities and the potential given by virtue of the woman!

Superstitious people are POTENTIALLY reasonable people, but just because that is so does not mean we can reason with their superstition or receive their superstitious ravings as if it was reasonable. They must first take the responsibility to be reasonable before they earn the right to be listened to with reason. Students must first take responsibility to learn before earning the right to graduate.

Some pro-lifers argue that we can give rights to fetuses because we give them to babies, and babies are not socially responsible. Even pro-choicers argue that babies do have a right to life even though they do not carry social responsibilities.

They are both wrong, and this points out the damage to the pro-choice argument when it is not guided by sound ontology.

Babies have a right to breathe, meaning a right to live upon their capacity to breathe. If a baby cannot breathe, it won't live. You can hook it up to a machine to save its life, but eventually it has to take the responsibility to breathe. And so long as it doesn't, someone else has to shoulder that responsibility, and that someone is not socially obliged to shoulder it indefinitely. It has the right to breath so long as someone takes the responsibility to breathe.

The baby has no intrinsic right to nurturance or food and warmth anymore than does an adult who will not work or serve humanity in some way. If someone does not work, then perforce someone else has to take social responsibility for that, and work for that person.

That is why this rigged capitalism is not socially just. It strips the poor and middle class of their rights, forcing them to take responsibility for the rich who would rather not responsibly earn equivalent to their labor, which is often none. The rich then steal the right to live off of the energies and labors of others. It's a system that's rigged to cheat.

So, it's amazingly ridiculous and hypocritical to see the rich and the duped middle class fight against abortion because of the absurd claim that a chunk of matter has a right to the food and breath and warmth and shelter of a woman's body and labor, but also fight against welfare, because of the sound claim that adult people do not have an inalienable right to food and shelter without taking some social responsibility. Then, to add to the convoluted thinking, they turn around and fight for capital punishment, even though the murderer is taking the responsibility to breathe, and has the POTENTIAL, from one breath to the next, to change his ways.

The question of when life begins is immaterial. Everyone is so wrapped up in this nonsense because none of the scientists or even philosophers or theologians are actual ontologist that have a complete and comprehensive understanding of existence and absolute reality.

The issue is when individuation begins, not when life begins, and with more individuation, the more social responsibility and rights.

Women are not required to provide any justification for abortion to others. It is between her and whoever she wants involved, whether her husband or her doctor. So here's my word to men: Women have the power of giving birth and bearing progeny. Get used to it.

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Then a writer named Don Marquis, who actually got an essay in the Journal of philosophy with this tripe, argued that abortion is wrong because just as killing an adult deprives that adult of future experiences, so too does killing the fetus deprive it of future experiences.

He engages in a non sequitur, which is that adults and fetuses have equal right to future experiences. The right to future experiences is not unconditional. Not even all adults have equal rights to future experiences. If they did, there should be no consequences of crimes, because consequences like jail will to some degree relieve an adult of future experiences. Future experiences are conditional, and they are conditioned by the fulfillment of social responsibilities!

Fetuses only have the right to future experiences that the woman, by shouldering responsibility, bequeaths unto it. For adults to have the right to future experiences in society, they too must everyday fulfill their social responsibilities!

You see it again and again, these so-called philosophers are not really philosophers. They are not great thinkers. They are not ontologists who have penetrated reality, and have a comprehensive understanding of not merely human existence, but existence itself. They are not true phenomenologists or adepts at deconstruction.

Even Judith Jarvis Thompson, the well-known philosopher that provided a great defense for abortion, did not articulate her argument in the most fundamental terms. She too is not an ontologist.

Ontology is the foundation of philosophy, which is why there are so few ontologists. It is the most difficult branch, because it must

completely mesh with all branches of science. It must reach for the most general truths, the most absolute of knowledge.

There are other arguments against abortion, such as from writers like Megan Clancy and Mona Charen, but they are too ridiculous to even bother undermining. It's clear that words like individuation, and the equivalence of rights and responsibilities, never crossed their minds.

And let's never forget that the pro-life movement is largely brought to you by the same minds that at one time defended slavery, and now promote abstinence-only sex education and that condoms don't work, and believe in this Yahweh god character, and that a guy that never existed was born of a virgin two thousand years ago, and in eternal heaven and hell, and the end of times soon to come. Their whole world view is whacked, so it is nearly impossible that they will be right about anything of any moment.

Alright, well, that's it for the subject of abortion. Moving on, it's time to announce that this will be the last Nexus show, or at least the last live Nexus show at this time, on this day, in Phoenix. I'll miss the show, and miss communicating with all of you, and I want to thank everyone who ever got up early on a Saturday to listen in.

No need to bother sending an E-mail to Air America to complain that this show is being cancelled. They'll probably tell you that they didn't cancel it, but rather I cancelled it. And from one perspective, that's true.

But from another, now is the time for me to take some responsibility.

I was originally offered a national show on spirituality, and I was told I needed to raise the funds to have it – about \$40,000. I raised the money, but was then told that I needed to do some local radio first before I could go national.

I paid my subscription for local radio from the money I raised for a national show, and after numerous shows and clear improvement and interest in the show, I still received no word on going national. Finally, two weeks ago, I was told I had to pay my dues locally, perhaps for years, before I could go national.

Well, I was never interest in doing that, especially because it would cost my benefactors \$400 per week to keep me on the air, and that's just too much to ask for a local show at 8 AM on Saturday morning.

After all is said and done, I'm richer for this show in many ways, the important ways, and perhaps poorer only financially. But it was not all my personal money that went to paying for this show. Some of it me and my family gave from our pockets, but three supporters of mine gave me thousands of dollars to make this show possible.

I'd like to thank them - they know who they are - for giving so generously, even when their own income (I'm thinking of one donor in particular) was not on stable financial ground.

I take the responsibility for the donations I receive from the public very seriously, and while I personally know the supporters who gave from their pockets to make this show possible, and I don't expect that any of them will want their money back, I also know that I asked for support with the unequivocal understanding that I was being offered a national show because that was what I was repeatedly led to believe. But as it happened, the story changed again and again.

So, anyone who gave to support this show, who gave with the understandable expectation that they were giving so the ideals behind God Without Religion would receive national attention, but who feels in any way misled, please let me know and I will return your donation with absolutely no hard feelings or questions asked.

Obviously, you would have every right to feel misled. I didn't give you all the information you needed. I said there would be a national show, and there wasn't. For that, I take responsibility.

Music

Closing

Thank listeners

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