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Summary/Abstract: Pascal's Wager is still one of the most original arguments concerning the fundamental issues of philosophy of religion. What is especially interesting here is its multi-faceted character, as philosophical and theological analysis is combined with elements of probability calculus and game theory. The aim of the paper is to present its critique by Alan Hájek, contemporary Australian philosopher. Hájek argues that Pascal's idea of "profitability" of the faith in God is based on a fallacious argument. On the ground of contemporary knowledge in probability Hájek declines all three Pascal's key premises: 1. It is rational to ascribe positive value to the probability
2. Man has to choose to believe or not to believe and it is possible to predict the consequences of this choice depending on whether God exists or not. 3. Rationality demands to choose the act which leads to the biggest expected value.
To understand Pascal's Wager you have to understand the background of the argument. Pascal lived in a time of great scepticism. Medieval philosophy was dead, and medieval theology was being ignored or sneered at by the new intellectuals of the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century. Montaigne, the great sceptical essayist, was the most popular writer of the day. The classic arguments for the existence of God were no longer popularly believed. What could the Christian apologist say to the sceptical mind of this age? Suppose such a typical mind lacked both the gift of faith and th Pascal's wager is an argument that asserts that one should believe in God, even if God's existence cannot be proved or disproved through reason. Blaise Pascal's original wager was as a fairly short paragraph in Pensées amongst several other notes that could be considered "wagers". Its argument is rooted in game theory and that the best course of action is to believe in God regardless of any lack of evidence, because that option gives the biggest potential gains. Pascal's original text is long-winded Notes to Pascal's Wager. 1. Hájek 2012 argues that in fact this is too quick. This article considers a series of increasingly strong senses of "superdominance" (the one considered here is "superdominance+"), and he argues that none of them is strong enough to confer such a requirement. This, in turn, casts doubt on the validity of the first of Pascal's wagers. However, the details get somewhat intricate, and I have chosen not to get into them in this exposition. 2. Those interested in the reconstruction over the years of the text itself should consult Lafuma 1954. Hájek 1997 argues that it is not, and gives further positive arguments for allowing infinite utilities into decision theory. Sorensen 1994 likewise argues for "infinite decision theory".