Student Asks Ben Shapiro Why a Fetus Is Human Life, His Answer Earns Cheers From Crowd

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Conservative political commentator Ben Shapiro, 35, delivered a much-anticipated event at the University of California, Berkeley. During his Q&A segment, Shapiro engaged a member of the audience in a powerful discussion; the self-described “left-leaning” student posed a question about the moral value of first-trimester fetuses.
Given the controversial reputation of the speaker, protesters and security guards had already gathered outside. UC Berkeley’s executive vice chancellor Paul Alivisatos even sent out a letter ahead of the event. “No one should be made to feel threatened or harassed,” he stated, “simply because of who they are or for what they believe.”

The footage from Shapiro’s rousing speech has amassed 5.2 million online views, and counting.
“I just wanted to thank you for coming,” the unidentified student began. “As someone who is left-leaning, I truly believe in freedom of speech.” Then came the million dollar question: “I just wanted to know,” the student asked, “why exactly do you think a first-trimester fetus has moral value?”

Shapiro launched into his response without hesitation. “A first trimester fetus has moral value because whether you consider it a potential human life or a full-on human life, it has more value than just a cluster of cells,” Shapiro began. “If left to its natural processes, it will grow into a baby.”
Shapiro then explained his threefold justification. First up: the heartbeat.

“It’s very hard to draw the line at the heartbeat,” he explained. “There are people who are adults who are alive because of a pacemaker, and they need some sort of outside force generating their heartbeat.”

Next: brain function. “Are you going to do it based on brain function?” he asked the student. “Okay, well what about people who are in a coma? Should we just kill them?”
Finally: inception. “The problem is,” Shapiro continued, “that whenever you draw any line other than the inception of the child, you end up drawing a false line that can be applied to people who are adults. So either human life has intrinsic value, or it doesn’t.”

At this point, the commentator posed his own question to the liberal student. “We both agree that adult human life has intrinsic value,” he stated, “can we start from that premise?”
The student, considering his position, responded. “I believe that sentience [the capacity to feel, perceive, and reason] is what gives something moral value,” he came back, “not necessarily being a human alone.”

Shapiro was not stumped. He asked the student whether it would be acceptable for him to stab the student in his sleep. No, was the resolute answer; a person is still considered sentient when asleep.

Could Shapiro stab the student if he were in a coma from which he may awaken? Again, no; “That’s still potential sentience,” the student explained.
At that, Shapiro pulled out his trump card. “I agree, it is potential sentence. You know what else is potential sentence?” he asked, triumphant. “Being a fetus.”

Numerous members of the gathered crowd applauded Shapiro’s sentiment.

The student, momentarily silenced, then voiced his concern about the “burden” placed on expectant parents by unwanted children. Shapiro had an answer for that, too. “I don’t believe that you being a burden on somebody is justification for them killing you,” he said.
According to The New York Times, the activist group Refuse Fascism took the lead in condemning Shapiro’s speech, calling him a “fascist” on campus fliers. Their protest prompted a “highly visible police presence” at the event.

They did not succeed in silencing Shapiro.