COMPLETION MARKER --JOURNAL 4 on Divine Command Theory as Religious Relativism

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**Journal Writing 4**

1. **Define the role of religion in ethical life. What is the foundation of the Divine Command Theory? What is the grounding of this theory?**

The Divine Command Theory is a theory that explains the role of religion in ethics. The theory states that morality is what the gods like and immorality are what the gods dislike. It should be noted that the Divine Command theory was first highlighted way back in ancient Greece around 350 BC by Socrates and Euthyphro. Under the Divine Command Theory, the only way to know whether an action is moral or not is to know the commandments of God. It should be noted that the Divine Command Theory was first highlighted way back in ancient Greece around 350 BC by Socrates and Euthyphro. During the time of Socrates, he lived in a society wherein his fellow citizens believed in many Greek gods such as Zeus, Hera, Apollo, etc.

Moving on, the Divine Command Theory is the belief that what is moral and what is immoral is based on the commandments of the divine, whether it is the Judeo-Christian God, some other deity, or a group of gods. It should be noted that the Divine Command Theory is the oldest ethical theory in the world. People have been taking into account the role of gods on how to behave since the recorded history. One major reason why many people subscribe to this theory is that it is quite easy to determine what is right and what is wrong; that is, by praying to God. The Divine Command theory also addresses the grounding problem. It is important to take note that every ethical system should have its own foundation. In the case of the Divine Command Theory, the main foundation is God.

1. **What was Feodor Dostoyevsky’s argument regarding Divine Command Theory? What is the implication of this argument in finding ethical grounding?**

In Fyodor Dostoevsky's The Brothers Karamazov, the brothers debate about the existence of God and whether the creation of God could be as morally perfect as the faithful belief. Specifically, the brothers argue about how God, who is all good and perfect, can allow something evil to happen. The more pious brother explains that since God is powerful, He can draw something good out of evil. Hence, in the process of experiencing evil, we only need to trust Him. However, the skeptical brother is not convinced by the answer given by his brother.

Given this, Dostoevsky presents two important dilemmas which have implications in finding ethical grounding. The first dilemma is that evil things are real and therefore God is responsible not only for creating good but also for evil things. The second dilemma is that we can know that all of God's creation is good, but we would not be able to determine what is right and what is wrong. For the first dilemma, the implication is that we cannot trust God on good and evil precisely because He is responsible for creating evil things. For the second dilemma, the implication is that we cannot trust ourselves in identifying what is good and what is evil because we assume that all of God's creations are perfectly good. Therefore, Dostoevsky argues that religion has no place in ethics.

1. **What was Kai Nielsen’s argument regarding Divine Command Theory? What is the implication of this argument in the search for ethical grounding?**

In Kai Nielsen's Ethics Without God, the author argues morality and the will of God are not dependent on one another. He accepts the fact that even if it is prudent to obey the commands of a powerful being, still it does not follow that such obedience is mandatory. He further explains that all religious people assume that God is good, which implies that these religious people already have a criterion for making judgments of "goodness" aside from the will of God. When we say that God is good, this means that we have some independent moral criterion to validate this judgment and such criteria are indeed not based on God.

Apart from that, another critical argument of Nielsen against the Divine Command Theory is that we simply do not have evidence to prove the existence of God. If this is the case, the implication of this argument in the search for ethical grounding is that having one's faith is not necessarily needed to have a life of purpose. Even without having faith in God, people can live purposeful lives.

1. **What can be the weakness of this theory which cannot be universalized (accepted by all)? Write your criticism on this theory? Do a research, what is the advantage and disadvantage of this theory?**

The weakness of Divine Command Theory that cannot be accepted by all is the problem imposes by Socrates with his dialogue with Euthyphro. Socrates asked, "Does God command this act because it is good, or is it good because God commands it?" His question asked the very nature of God and morality. If God commands such acts because for him it is good, then the nature of what is moral and immoral can be changed depends on what God wants to command. This problem was shown when God commanded Abraham to sacrifice his son, but God also forbids killing. All can't accept this problem because not everyone wants to be toyed by God, and it creates a problem that morality does not have absolute nature, the only thing absolute about it is that God commanded it. The second weakness if the good is good in its very nature that is why God commands it, then morality is separate from God. It questions the nature of God, which is his being omnipotent. Such a thing can't be universalized since most of everyone thinks God is the highest being thus, everything is under his control.

Besides that, my criticism against Divine Command Theory is a criticism against the need for a divine being just to have an objective idea of morality. God is created by man, and it was not the god that creates us. Thus, every idea we have that corresponds to the so-called nature of god is a product of human imagination and human thought. Others might argue that there is an absolute being however we also recognize that some gods in mythology are the product of human thought to have a justification for how the phenomenon of the world works. There is Zeus of Greeks and Thor of Norse that humans created to understand the event of lightning. If humans are capable of this kind of idea, then they are also capable of creating a god that has a moral identity. Every religion argued that their religion and beliefs have the true divine command, and the other religion that we know of are false. However, when we condemn other religions as false, we are also admitting that humans can build an idea of what is moral and immoral. Because those religions have established their moral and immoral idea, an idea created by humans that we thought of as divine command. Consequently, from these stated reasons, humans do not need the divine command theory to understand what is good and what is bad. Additionally, it negates the need for a god to establish and know what is good and what is bad.

Eventually, Kant argued in his philosophy that can be said as the advantage of the Divine Command Theory is the existence of god. Moral acts do not assure its results. It can be disappointing or sometimes rewarding. However, Kant argued that if there is a god that rewards every moral act, then there is a necessity for the existence of God. God assures reward in every moral act, that results in the assurance of happiness that humans wanted. However, this suggestion of Kant also results in a disadvantage of the Divine Command Theory. If humans will act because of the rewards that come after doing moral acts, then the nature of doing moral acts will be lost. The pure intention of humans will miss is to place every time humans did good actions because their attention is focused on the reward the god will give to them.

1. **If you are to write one last paragraph: What can be the role of religion in shaping moral attitude of the person? Is religion still relevant today in molding human person?**

Religion was the basis of morality in almost every country in the world. Then beliefs and ideas inside religion were the things we labeled as the right things to do and what are not the right things to do. From this, we have also established some laws that correspond to the beliefs of religion. Religion has also taught us how to treat each other. this is how religion shapes the moral attitude of a person but despite all of that, we also created beliefs and ideas that are totally against the established beliefs and ideas of religion. The religions shape humans in a way that humans were able to criticize some teachings of religions that resulted in producing new moral attitudes. One example that could support this statement is the issue of abortion. Abortion is immoral for some religions, if not all, however, humans have able to understand some factors that could affect the morality of the act of abortion. From this, it produces a new moral attitude towards such acts. The foundation of religion begins the foundation of the norms that we took as moral and immoral, but when humans start the criticism against these norms, humans have produced a norm that will challenge the dominating norm. thus, we can say that the former and latter moral attitudes were a product of how shapes the moral attitude of a person.

In the end, even there is a growing rate of atheism across the world as reported by WIN-Gallup International wherein they have found in the results from the poll they did that when comparing the poll between 2005 and 2012 in 39 nations, in 2005 4 percent have said that they are atheist while in 2021 it grows up to 7 percent; the relevance of the religion still prevalent (Sherman, 2019). Religion is just about tradition and practices; religion also holds a value that can be used in every talk we have according to the truth of the world and also of morality. Humans are complex beings with competing ideas and beliefs, and that what makes humans different from other species. Religious people, even people that consider themselves as not religious, still hold some ideas that can be traced from religions. Hence, religion is still relevant in molding people. Some of them are how some of us still argued that the fetus does have the essence of life, the importance of marriage, an ideal monogamous relationship, etc. Even the day comes where people have lost interest in religion, its relevance will not be lost. It has affected our history and our thinking that even times have changed, the ideas and beliefs we hold can be traced back to religion.

Work Cited

Sherman, Bill. "Report: Atheism Rate Growing Worldwide." *Tulsa World*. Last modified February 19, 2019. Accessed February 17, 2021. https://tulsaworld.com/lifestyles/report-atheism-rate-growing-worldwide/article\_e1d33730-2bbc-5837-801d-085a3b8eb19d.html.