

This Is Philosophy - Chapter 1 Summary

The Normative Universe

The Normative Universe is made up of shoulds, oughts, duties, rights, the permissible and the impermissible.

Is Morality Just Acting on Principles?

Golden Rule - do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Well, the Golden Rule implicitly *assumes* that **everyone has the same preferences**. That assumption seems a bit questionable. Suppose that you like backrubs. In fact, *you'd like a backrub from pretty much anyone*. The Golden Rule advises you to treat other people the way you would like to be treated. Since you'd like other people to give you unsolicited backrubs, *you should, according to the Golden Rule, give everyone else a backrub, even if they didn't ask for one*. **But some people don't like backrubs**, or don't care for strangers touching them. Intuitively, *it would be wrong to give backrubs to those people without their consent, or against their will*. Since this intuition conflicts with the Golden Rule's implication to administer unsolicited backrubs, we should conclude that maybe the Golden Rule is really iron pyrite after all.

The Divine Command Theory

Divine Command Theory Premises

1. God loves (endorses, recommends, advocates) all good actions and hates (forbids, abjures, prohibits) all evil actions.
2. We can figure out which is which; that is, we can know what God loves and what he hates.

Euthyphro Argument/Objection

Option A

"Things are good because God loves them. This means that it is God's love that makes things good, and his dislike that makes things bad. Prior to, or considered independently of, God's judgment, things don't have moral qualities at all. If it weren't for God, nothing would be right or wrong, good or bad. Moral properties are the result of God's decisions"

Option B

"God loves good things because they are good. On this option, things are good (or bad) antecedently to, and independently of, God. In other words, things already have their moral properties, and God, who is an infallible judge of such matters, always loves the good things and hates the bad things. Morality is an independent objective standard apart from God. God always responds appropriately to this standard (loving all the good stuff and hating the bad), but morality is separate from, and unaffected by, his judgments."

This objection asks which of the following options is true. And if option A is true, then God's judgment is entirely objective, and

therefore so is morality, under the divine command theory. If option B is true, then following God's judgment is pointless, since things are already good and bad independent of him. Morality is then therefore independent of God.

Under Option A: *morality is random and arbitrary.*

"So there is no moral reason for God to declare murder wrong instead of right. morality is completely arbitrary; the fact that rape and murder are immoral is random. God could have just as easily made rape and murder your moral duty. What's to stop him? He's God after all"

Under Option B: *morality and religion are logically separate*

"God loves things because they are good. That is, God's judgments flawlessly track moral reality; he invariably loves the good and hates the wicked. God may be a perfect judge, but he does not make the moral law. In other words, morality and religion are logically separate, which means that whether God exists has nothing to do with whether there are moral facts or what those facts are."