Review Questions:

1. Rachels says that classical utilitarianism can be summed up in three propositions. What are they?

Classical utilitarianism – the theory defended by Bentham and Mill can be summarized in three propositions.

1. Actions are to be judged right or wrong solely in virtue of their consequences.
2. In assessing consequences, the only thing that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness that is caused.
3. In calculating happiness or unhappiness that will be caused, no one’s happiness is to be counted as more important than anyone else’s.
4. Explain the problem with hedonism. How do defenders of utilitarianism respond to this problem?

Hedonism gets things the wrong way because we do not think the goodness of the action because the action itself makes us happy. Hedonism misunderstands the nature of happiness. Happiness is not something that is recognized as good for its own sake but happiness is a response we have to the attainment of things that we recognized as good.

There are few utilitarian that formulate their view w/o assuming a hedonistic account of good and evil. According to them hedonism was never really part of the theory in the first place.

1. What are the objections about justice, rights and promises?

For justice, the only objection is fair judgment. The argument is only if someone were in the position, then on utilitarian grounds he should bear false witness against the innocent person. For rights, the objection is that people aren’t practicing their rights. The argument is that utilitarianism is at odds with the idea that people have rights that may not be trampled on merely because one anticipates good result.

For promise, the only objection is that it is made to be broken. The argument is that utilitarianism says that consequences are the only things that matter, seems mistaken.

1. Distinguish between rule-and-act utilitarianism. How does rule-utilitarianism reply to the objections?

Act-utilitarianism is the original theory of utilitarianism. An act utilitarian would have the tendency to be tempted to bear false witness against the innocent man because a consequence of that particular act is good.

Rule-utilitarianism is the new version of the theory of utilitarianism. It has no problem with coping with the three ant utilitarian arguments.

1. What is the third line of defense?

Act-utilitarianism.

Discussion Questions:

1. Smart’s defense of utilitarianism is to reject common moral beliefs when they conflict with utilitarianism. Is this acceptable or not? Explain your answer.

No, because moral beliefs is already part of us. If we’re going to reject that for the sake of utilitarianism therefore we’re not practicing our rights to follow whatever belief we want.

1. Utilitarianism is supposed to give moral consideration to all concerned. Who must be considered? What about nonhuman animals? How about lakes and streams?

I think consideration should be given to all. We all have the rights for moral consideration. Even the nonhuman animals, lakes & streams should be taken into consideration because they are part of our life. If we would take them for granted then it would be us that will suffer in the end.

1. Rachels claims that merit should be given moral consideration independent of utility. Do you agree?

Yes. I agree with Rachels because he understands that every person have different perspective of moral consideration. He does not see it as applicable to all but depends on what personality a person have.