Review Questions:

1. State and explain the Principle of Utility. Show how it could be used to justify actions that are conventionally viewed as wrong, such as lying and stealing.

Principle of Utility or the greatest happiness principle that says that our action is correct as long as it promotes happiness and wrong if they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. It can be justified in a way that lying and stealing can cause them to be unhappy. They will be unhappy in a way that their conscience will bug them therefore this will justify that their actions are wrong.

1. How does Mill reply to the objection the Epicureanism is a doctrine worthy only of swine?

According to Mill he does not consider the Epicureans to have been by any means faultless in drawing out their scheme of consequences from the utilitarian principle.

1. How does Mill distinguish between higher and lower pleasures?

According to John Stuart Mill those people who are capable of higher pleasure is occasionally under the influence of temptation which is quite compatible w/ full appreciation of the intrinsic superiority of the higher. Those people who are capable of lower pleasure are those who pursue sensual indulgence to the injury of health, though perfectly aware that health is the greater good.

1. According to Mill, whose happiness must be considered?

According to Mill, the happiness of the greater good must be considered. If your action brings pleasure to a large amount of people then your action is favorable and good.

1. Carefully reconstruct Mill’s proof of the principle of utility.

According to Mill, principle of utility is a doctrine that determines if the action is right or wrong depending on the pleasure it gave to a person. Also according to him there are two kinds of pleasure wherein the other one is more superior to the other.

Also according to him, No reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable. Each person as he believes it to be attainable desires his own happiness.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is happiness nothing more than pleasure, and the absence of pain? What do you think?

I personally think that happiness is not exactly the same as pleasure, and that there is the absence of pain. Based from personal experience happiness can sometimes be derived from pain. In addition to this you can always feel happy even if there is no pleasure. Sometimes being contented alone with what we have can bring us happiness.

1. Does Mill convince you that the so-called higher pleasures are better than the lower ones?

I’m actually not convinced that higher pleasures are better than the lower ones. Choosing which is better between the higher or lower pleasure is actually quite hard for me, because I believe that is really not much difference. Our perspective in choosing which is better actually depends on our personality. Some may think that higher pleasure is better, while other will prefer lower pleasure.

1. Mill says, “In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility”. Is this true or not?

It is true. The rule states that the means of making the nearest approach to this ideal, utility would enjoin, first the laws and social arrangements should place the happiness and interest of every individual. Making sure that everyone will be happy and making sure that you will not inflict pain to other people is the real essence of principle of utility.

1. Many commentators have thought that Mill’s proof of the Principles of Utility is defective. Do you agree? If so, then what mistake or mistakes does he make? Is there any way to reformulate the proof so that it is not defective?

I agree that Mill’s Principles of Utility is defective in some ways. First defect is that according to the principle anything that makes you happy is right. But what if doing wrong makes you happy? Does that mean that what you’re doing is right when basically it is wrong? Another reason is that according to the arguments a person’s happiness is not evident to the ultimate end. Mill should state that doing something wrong but gives you happiness is not considered happiness at all. It can be because he is blinded by the pleasure it gives him that’s why he mistaken it as happiness. As for the other reason, He should state that achieving happiness is only possible if you are living.