

## James Rachels: The Debate over Utilitarianism

### Review Questions:

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

Classical Utilitarianism is classified as:

- a. Actions are to be judged right or wrong solely in the virtue of their consequences.
- b. In assessing consequences, the only thing that matters is the amount of happiness or unhappiness that is caused.
- c. In calculating happiness or unhappiness that will be caused, no one's happiness as to be counted as more important than anyone else's.

2. **Explain the problem with hedonism. How do defenders of utilitarianism respond to this problem?**

Hedonism is a belief of moral happiness. Only pleasure can make a person happy and pain to make unhappy. To defend utilitarianism, they should change their view of pleasure and happiness. Happiness is not something that is acknowledged as good and sought for its own sake, with other things appreciated only as means of bringing it about.

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

The objection about justice is that, a man should bear false witness against the innocent person. A person is not given a fair justice. While the objection about rights is human being are not practicing their rights. Then, the objection about promises it made to be broken and exposed to sort of criticism.

4. **Distinguish between rule-and-act utilitarianism. How does rule utilitarianism reply to objections?**

Act Utilitarianism is an utilitarian theory of ethics which says that the right action is the one which produces greatest amount of happiness or pleasure for the greatest number of beings. While Rule of Utilitarianism is an opposite of Act of Utilitarianism which states that the morally right action is the one that is accordance with moral rules whose general observance would create the most happiness. The revised version of utilitarianism is better than the old version. It not all about happiness and actions but appropriate behavior will be established. If these rules are refined and perfected then they are in the greater good.

5. **What is the third line of defense?**

It describes that an act utilitarian is an absolutely indefensible doctrine and does not have to be modified. Rule utilitarianism by contrast is unnecessarily watered down version theory which provides rule a better significance than they merit. However, Act-utilitarian is acknowledged to be radical doctrine which suggests that many of our usual moral feelings may be mistaken. As what most philosophy always does it challenges man to consider things that we have taken for granted

### 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.**

I believe that it is not acceptable for the reason that it is not right to reject common moral beliefs just because there is a conflict with utilitarianism. It depends on the individual because every person has different beliefs and cultures as a factor for applying utilitarianism.

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

Utilitarian's concentrated mainly on human beings although nonhuman beings also can cause unhappiness with humans and affects man's moral beliefs. Therefore they also consider nonhuman beings as well as the environment like lakes and streams. All the things around man's life should give moral consideration to avoid conflict and disharmony to nature.

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

I do agree with Rachels that in claiming merits it should be given moral consideration independent of utility.