

Reading/Study Questions for Rachels' *Elements of Moral Philosophy* (5e), continued

Chapter Four

1. What is/are the essential claim(s) associated with Divine Command Theory? What two attractive features does Rachels attribute to Divine Command Theory?

[Note that when discussing the difficulties with DCT, Rachels is NOT relying upon any atheistic or even agnostic presumption. That is, the deep problem that Rachels is raising about DCT assumes for the sake of argument that there IS a God, a God even with the full set of properties commonly attributed to Him by Judeo-Christian-Islamic traditions.]

2. What question does the ancient Greek philosopher, Plato, raise concerning DCT? What does Rachels mean generally when he says that the question raises a 'dilemma'? (p. 55)

3. What are the two possible interpretations of the DCT given Plato's question?

4. What does it mean to say that God's commands are 'arbitrary'? (p. 56) What are the other two implications of accepting the first interpretation of DCT?

5. What is the major implication of accepting the second interpretation of DCT (Socrates' second option, p. 57)?

6. What are the three main parts of the Theory of Natural Law?

7. What two reasons does Rachels cite for persons rejecting Natural Law Theory?

8. What is the significance for Natural Law Theory that humans are rational beings with a capacity for reasoning?

Chapter Three, Section 7 (§3.7)

1. What are the three possible meanings for the claim that homosexuality is 'unnatural'? [Are there other possible meanings to the claim that Rachels overlooks?]

2. What difficulties arise for each of the three possible interpretations?

3. What is the practical problem associated with reliance upon sacred text for moral instruction?

4. Thinking on your own here, how is the 'theoretical' problem associated with reliance upon sacred texts related to the Platonic dilemma raised with Divine Command Theory discussed in Chapter Four?