

Religion and Ethics

US275 Scientific Ethics
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Is morality is next to godliness?

*“Do the gods love holiness
because it is holy,*

*or is it holy because the gods
love it?”*

Plato’s Dialogue the Euthyphro

**GRACIOUSNESS
IS NEXT TO
GODLINESS**

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What is the connection between religion and morality

1. Does morality depend on religion?
2. Is religion irrelevant or even contrary to morality?
3. Does religion enhance the moral life?



The Creation of Adam
Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1508 - 1512

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Does morality depend on religion?

- Divine Command Theory
 - Commands of God
 - without God
 - there is no universally valid morality
 - moral rightness
 - following God's will

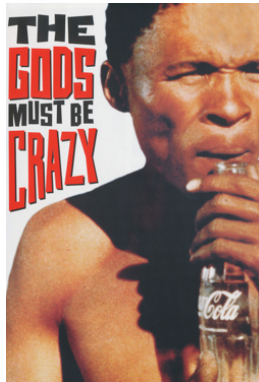


Creation of the Sun, Moon, and Planets
Michelangelo Buonarroti, 1511

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Independence thesis

- ethics exists independent of God
 - even God must obey the moral laws



The Gods Must be Crazy, 1980
Comedy about the journey of a bushman who encounters modern civilization and must travel to the end of the earth to get rid of a Coca-Cola bottle.

Problems with Divine Command Theory

- Circular argument
 - God commands to be good
- morality somewhat arbitrary
 - God can change what is good



God
(animated photograph of 19th century English cricketer WG Grace)
Monty Python and the Holy Grail

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Kant states God makes morality possible

- God and humanity must follow rational principles
 - valid religion ethics
 - valid philosophical ethics
- Religion completes morality
 - God enforces moral laws
 - immortality of soul necessary to attain moral perfection



Moses with the Ten Commandments
Phillippe de Champaigne, 1648

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Is religion irrelevant or even contrary to morality?

- people can be moral without religion
- differences in exact nature of moral code
 - religious ethics
 - strong altruism
 - secular ethics
 - reciprocal altruism



Vishnu Saving the Elephant
Unknown Artist, mid 18th century

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Moral systems outside of religion

- Confucianism
 - secular
- Buddhism
 - nontheist versions
- Greek Philosophers
 - morality independent of religion

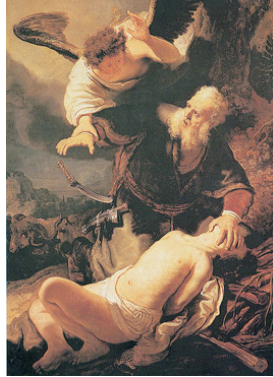


Buddha at Seokguram in South Korea,
World Heritage Site

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Secular ethicists view problems with religious ethics

- inferior because limits deep moral development
 - cannot debate basis of code because rules are provided to them
- rule governed
 - relinquish autonomy to follow divine instructions



Abraham and son
Rembrandt, 1636

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Does religion enhance the moral life?

- With a God
 - God supports, inspires, and gives strength
 - not alone in fight for good to win over evil
 - cosmic justice (karma)
 - created in God's image
 - so all persons have equal worth



Communion of Saints

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Religion can detract from morality

- evil can be done in the name of religion
- religious morality closes off dialogue
 - limited possibility of debate or compromise
- religious morality can lead to group intolerance
 - against those that are not followers



The destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem
Francesco Hayez, 1867

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Assignment

The activity for this lecture will be assigned after the Fact-value mini-lecture.



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Readings

Chapter 10 Religion and Ethics

Pojman & Fieser, (2009) Ethics:
Discovering Right and Wrong.
pp. 170 - 187



Black man reading newspaper by candlelight.
Man reading newspaper with headline, "Presidential Proclamation,
Slavery," which refers to the Jan. 1863 Emancipation Proclamation
Henry Louis Stephens, 1863

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Any Questions?

Email me at:
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<http://www.vipitbullkennels.com/images/animated-question-mark.gif>

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