

Reading Guide #3

Shafer-Landau "Morality and Religion"*

Preamble to questions 1-5:

Shafer-Landau introduces us to a revised version of a question that Socrates posed to Euthyphro:

"Does God command us to do actions because they are morally right, or are actions morally right because God commands them?" (p. 67)

Divine Command Theory goes with the second option and holds that actions are morally right (or wrong) because God commands them (or forbids them). Shafer-Landau thinks that we should go with the first one and believe that God commands or forbids things based on their morality.

1. Marijuana is legal in Colorado but illegal in Texas. What's more the Colorado legislature forbids marijuana and the Texas legislature permits it. Do you think that the Texas legislature forbids it because it is illegal or is it illegal because the Texas legislature forbids it.
2. Consider holy water. Is holy water holy because it is blessed by a priest or does a priest bless it because it is holy. Before the water is blessed by a priest is there anything special about the water?
3. Shafer-Landau says that those who accept Divine Command Theory and those who reject it can both accept the fact that everything God forbids is immoral and everything immoral is forbidden by God. So what is the difference between those who accept and those who reject the Divine Command Theory (71). Explain.
4. **Assume that you are a Divine Command Theorist who believes that actions are morally wrong because God commands them. Now consider murder, stealing, and breaking your promises. God has clearly forbidden these actions, but is there any reason why God forbade these actions than some others? Do these actions have anything in common that marks them off from other actions that God hasn't forbidden like helping others, having friends, and being honest? [You may want to consider your answer to 6 here.]**
5. **According to a Divine Command Theorist why is it wrong to disobey God's commands? Is this a problem for Divine Command Theory?**