

IS MORALITY IS AS RATIONAL AS IT SEEMS TO BE?

Let us ask if morality, justice and love are its components, is rational. David Hume made a good case for saying it is not.

Hume suggests that he does not consider choice to be the cause of what you do on its own. He thinks your passions and instincts are the reasons you do what you do as well. The will then is not as important as it is made out to be. It is not all about what you choose. He rejects the view of most preceding philosophers that reason and the will can control the passions and instincts so that the latter are not the masters. He writes “reason alone can never be a motive to any action of the will - can never oppose passion in the direction of the will”.

Morality is not rational or impossible to prove as rational if the passions have that big of an input in what we do for even when we control them it is only because they let us and they are still in fact boss. Incidentally morality hardly invites love and passion for it looks like rules and acts like rules and threatens the disobedient. Its side-effect will be people preferring the dark side.

Hume says that if you felt an urge to do something reason would need to work up another urge to stop it but that is not what happens.

Hume then concludes that moral good and reason are not the same thing and it is wrong to call evil unreasonable. That is because reason on its own “can never immediately prevent or produce any action by contradicting or approving of it” (T 458).

Hume also asserts that moral judgements do not state facts. It is not a fact that it is morally wrong to hurt a baby for nothing. It is not a fact that a painting is beautiful. That is what Hume means by saying an is does not give rise to an ought. A baby is hurt and that does not mean it ought not to be. Reason cannot turn a fact into an ought or show how an is can imply an ought. Some think Hume means that as morality is really just feelings that is why a fact cannot imply an ought.

Hume also said that we praise an action for we think it shows a good motive but the motive need not be really good. What we care about is that we approve of it. Us approving of it does not make it good.

