

A study of the euthyphro dilemma as depicted in the argument by plato

[Philosophy](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

From the Euthyphro dilemma, Plato argues that divine commands can never be genuinely moral. The divine commands are those belonging or coming from God. This argument stems from the idea that because God is omnipotent, omniscient that he will punish us when he detects any failures. Thus suggesting that the fear that motivates us to follow such divine commands is not a suitable motive to a certain moral action. Another argument that Plato presents is that God sets such divine commands because they are moral which raises the idea that morality exists as an entity separate to God. Both these ideas suggest that the divine command is not genuinely moral as they are acted upon in the interest of the individual and questions the motives of moral actions.

In Plato's argument, he addresses the motives of our moral actions. Since God is omnipotent, omniscient, and omni benevolent he presupposes that the relationship between humans and God is based fear. He suggests that fear is what motivated humans to follow in God's divine command thus showing that such commands are not moralistic but on the other hand is a crude kind of politics where status and power dominate the more insignificant.

Through this argument, it is evident that God is seen as a cold and distant figure. Yet within the Bible, it often talks about God being holy. It may be said that God is the source of all holiness and embodies all that is holy. Holiness is intrinsic to God's nature. Holy is derived from Hebrew to mean separate showing his purity and cleanliness from that of imperfect humans.

From Psalms 99: 3, it reads, " Let them laud your name. Great and fear-inspiring, holy it is." From this, we can see that this fear is not one of morbid
<https://assignbuster.com/a-study-of-the-euthyphro-dilemma-as-depicted-in-the-argument-by-plato/>

dread rather it is a profound sense of reverential awe, respect in its most ennobling form. It is fitting to think this way, as God is brilliantly clean and glorious in comparison to us. Thus, we see that our fear motivates us to respect God and feel inferior in the sense that we want to please him.

God's holy nature can also be used to argue against Plato's idea of morality existing independently of God. Plato suggests that God is able to detect our failures and our wrong doings and thus we treat him as an instrument. For example, God condemns murder because it is immoral which shows that murder as an immoral action already existed before God. This shows that God is placed under the restrictions of morality yet if there is a belief in God, a grand creator, is it not God who has created all things? So how can he be subjected to something in which he has created? If holiness is an intrinsic part of God's nature, he is separated from all that is imperfect and he is inherently good. Thus, this is what makes God, God and shows that it is impossible for him to be under the restrictions and imperfections that humans succumb to. Within 1 Chronicles 16: 34, it reads, " Give thanks to God, you people for he is good. For to time indefinite is his loving kindness". Thus there is an idea of God being forever and time indefinite and good in nature. It is evident that holiness together with justice, wisdom, love and power is weaved through God's nature, thus allowing him to set a standard for good and bad and creating a set of morals that is righteous. Since he is the grand creator, he has placed the faculty of conscience and ethical sense in humans in accordance to himself. If morality was to exist independently, the notion suggests yet another higher and more powerful being other than God in which Plato's argument becomes ridiculous as if God is actually not

<https://assignbuster.com/a-study-of-the-euthyphro-dilemma-as-depicted-in-the-argument-by-plato/>

the most powerful, most wise, it is impossible to reach a definite conclusion of where morality really stems from as morality is not a higher being but a set of standards or rules.

Plato's argument thus fails to understand the relationship between God and humans. His argument that our motives to follow God's divine commands through fear is defeated as the bible often accounts this fear as awe-inspiring to imperfect humans who strive to do what is good in order to please God and draw closer to him. Which links into the idea that since God is our grand creator, he has created all things including a set of morals and standards which has been placed within our nature thus allowing humans to distinguish between right and wrong. Without a God, morality cannot exist independently as there is no one to determine the right and wrong of a certain action. God's holy nature is what makes him God and he does not succumb to the temptations such as imperfect humans, thus he is able to create such a standard of morals for imperfect humans to follow.