

Reading Questions: Hume II, *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, and Kant I, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*

1. Notice the *way* Hume discusses the virtues of cheerfulness, greatness of mind, courage, tranquility, and benevolence. Considering his view of sentiment and morality, why does he repeatedly use phrases like “[this quality] seizes the spectator, and strikes him with admiration,” “astonishes our narrow souls,” and “our breast heaves, our heart is agitated, and every humane tender principles of our frame is set in motion?”
2. Why does Hume dismiss the “monkish virtues?”
3. Who is the “sensible knave?” What problem does the knave present? What is Hume’s response to this problem?
4. What is the task of reason in making moral decisions? What is the task of sentiment or taste?
5. Is justice truly like building an arch or a “vault” as Hume claims in Appendix III? Why does he think this is an apt metaphor?
6. For Kant, what does it mean to purge moral philosophy of everything “empirical?” Why is it important to do this according to Kant?
7. What is Kant’s task or “principal question” in the *Groundwork*?
8. What is the only thing Kant says is good without qualification? Why is happiness not good without qualification?
9. What makes a good will good? Is a good will made more valuable by accomplishing its good intention according to Kant?
10. Why does Kant reject happiness as man’s true end? What role does reason and instinct play in this argument?
11. What’s the difference between action done *from* duty and *in conformity with* duty? What examples does Kant use to illustrate this difference? Do you agree with his evaluation of these cases?
12. What is the aim of all of our inclinations according to Kant?
13. Where does the moral worth of an action reside: in its purpose or in the principle guiding it?
14. Who is capable of using Kant’s principle for guiding moral choice? Is anyone excluded?
15. How does Kant suggest we test the maxims (or underlying principles) guiding our actions?