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‘Is that which is right because God commands it? or does God command that which is right?’

This is a question that has been asked before, by many recognisable scholars and philosophers, originally being asked by Socrates to Euthyphro (from which it gets its namesake of the *Euthyphro dilemma*), and being passed among many others, like Richard Swinburne and David Hume. Attempting to construct an answer for this question, I looked at the arguments for both sides of this dilemma, and formulated what I think to be a more unconventional approach to the question.

There are two main perspectives for this question. One side agrees with the first clause of the question, and the other with the latter clause. To focus on the latter clause of the question, the use of naturalism and moral objectivism are crucial to help better structure the argument through the usage of universal moral principles. While saying that God commands the truth, this would mean there is a standard that even God himself has to uphold, being the truth. Not only that, but it also means that there is something that God has no control over - something that is sovereign from the power of God. God then is effectively trapped by morality and forced into actions that follow what is right, instead of establishing what is right and what is wrong himself. And so if God is limited by the confines of morality and truth, this limits his power and leaves questions about God’s omnipotence. And if God is forced to command the truth, does God have free will? Moreover, is he bound to his actions from something out of his control?

Now to focus on the first clause of the question. Effectively, the idea of God being the only being capable of actual ‘truth’ means that without the moral command of God, nothing would be right or wrong. To take a voluntarist view, ‘evil’ and ‘good’ actions do not exist, but the only reason those certain actions are good or evil is because God commands the ‘good’ actions, and prohibits the ‘evil’ actions. However the flaws with this direction of reason are apparent, being that if God’s command is the only moral truth, then what is the point in acting morally if one is an atheist for example? It questions the idea of certain actions being objectively correct or incorrect. Not only this, but it does not account for actions God has not yet commanded explicitly were good or bad.

Having said this, I have a different argument to make for this question. My argument is that *both* are true. This is because God as a being, is incapable of fallacy, and therefore what God says must be what is right. However any word we receive from God automatically means that it is also true, regardless of verification as we as humans have only one true outlet for the truth, which is God. If God commands humans, it is in turn the only possibility for us to find the absolute truth, due to the

source of the command being from God himself. Knowing this, there are some inaccuracies in the question, and so I will pose a perhaps more accurate question: 'is there a possibility of finding the truth without God? Furthermore, what is the point of acting morally if there *isn't* any way of finding truth without God?

Well, to answer this question you would have to look to other sources of truth. If truth is not sought from God, then finding the actual truth in any given scenario would be impossible for humans to ever fathom - and impossible to carry out into action. Humans by nature are incapable of analyzing a situation to the extent that they know *everything* about the situation, and so can make an *absolutely true* decision. However, in order to try to find the truth, I think that trying to embrace our ignorance is key. There are thousands of examples of things that we did in history that are deemed cruel or immoral or wrong. It could be said that over time humans have gotten closer to the truth by cutting away those cruel in our culture. Over time humans evolve to think differently, and recognise inequality in many places, and over time our opinions on certain things change as a culture. The only truth that is capable of being found without the use of God is cultural truth. Cultural truth as we know it today could morph and shift over broad or short expanses of time, however we as a species would be getting closer to believing in a cultural truth that could perhaps coincide with the absolute truth. To put it simply, we have to hope that we as humans can learn to better ourselves over time.