

## Virtues

### Questions 55, 57-58

#### Of the Virtues, As to Their Essence

##### Of the intellectual Virtues

#### Of the Difference between Moral Virtues and Intellectual Virtues

### Question 55

Article One: Whether Human Virtue is a habit?

Obj. 2: Augustine indicates that virtue is not a habit. PK indicated in his note that a habit is not a static routine or rut, but a dynamic tendency to act in a certain determinate way. Virtues are good habits and vices are bad habits (PM).

Obj. three: Since habits are continuous we cannot merit by them. Otherwise we could be counted as meritorious even during our times of sleeping (PM).

Reply Obj. 2: "Good use of free-will is said to be a virtue...because it is that to which virtue is directed as to its proper act..." (TA)

Reply Obj. 3: We merit things in two ways: 1.) By running or jogging is an act in and of itself and we gain the benefits thereof. 2.) But also we merit the benefit by exercising our motive power to keep or maintain a good thing such as running and/or jogging continuing on a regular basis (PM). Therefore, human virtue is both a habit and an act.

### Q & A Question 55

1. Is human virtue a habit? We merit things in two ways: 1.) By running or jogging is an act in and of itself and we gain the benefits thereof. 2.) But also we merit the benefit by exercising our motive power to keep or maintain a good thing such as running and/or jogging continuing on a regular basis (PM). Therefore, human virtue is both a habit and an act.

### Question 57

##### Of the intellectual Virtues

Article Two: Whether there are only three habits of the speculative intellect, Viz., Wisdom, Science and Understanding?

On the contrary: "The Philosopher (Ethic. vi. I) reckons these three alone as being intellectual virtues, viz., wisdom, science and understanding."

## Question 57 Article two I answer that

I answer that: According to TA the virtues of the speculative intellect are those which perfect the speculative intellect for the consideration of truth: for this is its good work. There is a twofold consideration, --as known in itself, and as known through another [truth]. What is known in itself, is as a principle, and is at once understood by the intellect: Wherefore the habit that perfects the intellect for the consideration of such truth is called *understanding*, which is the habit of principles. PK indicates that the speculative intellect is not as well considered in today's world. The moral intellect is given much more attention in modern ethics (PM). "When formulated as propositions, these 'truths known through themselves' are self-evident propositions such as 'good is to be done' or 'the whole is greater than the part'; while truths known through other truths are conclusions demonstrated by argument from premises.

TA goes on to add that a truth which is known through another, is understood by the intellect, not at once, but by means of the reason's inquiry. There are two virtues in reason and both have contributions in causes. Wisdom and science are sources for understanding and knowledge respectively. These disciplines or virtues help put in order what the intellect perceives. TA reminds us that there can be no perfect and universal judgment that is not based on the first causes. Science helps with different kinds of knowable matter, but there is only one wisdom (PM).

Article four: Whether Prudence is a distinct virtue from art?

I answer that: TA tells us that art is the right reason [rational knowledge] of things to be made; whereas prudence is the *right reason of things to done*. "*Making and doing differ*, as stated in *Metaph. ix.*, text. 16, in that making is an action passing into outward matter, e.g., to build, to saw, and so forth; whereas doing is an action abiding in the agent, e.g., to see, to will, and the like. Accordingly prudence stands in the same relation to such like human actions, consisting in the use of powers and habits, as art does to outward makings."

Article five: Whether Prudence is a virtue necessary to people?

On the contrary: Prudent ranks up there in the highest level of significance along with other virtues necessary for human life. In Wis 8:17 we learn that wisdom teaches temperance and prudence and justice and fortitude.

I answer that: TA tells us that prudence is a virtue most necessary for human life. The virtue of prudence is needed in reason, to perfect the reason, and make it suitably affected towards things ordained to the end. Prudence is needed to help us live good lives (PM).

## Question 57 Q & A

1. Are there only three habits of the speculative intellect, viz, wisdom, science and understanding? According to TA the virtues of the speculative intellect are those which perfect the speculative intellect for the consideration of truth: for this is its good work. There is a twofold consideration, --as known in itself, and as known through another [truth]. What is known in itself, is as a principle, and is at once understood by the intellect: Wherefore the habit that perfects the intellect for the consideration of such truth is called understanding, which is the habit of principles. PK indicates that the speculative intellect is not as well considered in today's world. The moral intellect is given much more attention in modern ethics (PM). "When formulated as propositions, these 'truths known through themselves' are self-evident propositions such as 'good is to be done' or 'the whole is greater than the part'; while truths known through other truths are conclusions demonstrated by argument from premises.

TA goes on to add that a truth which is known through another, is understood by the intellect, not at once, but by means of the reason's inquiry. There are two virtues in reason and both have contributions in causes. Wisdom and science are sources for understanding and knowledge respectively. These disciplines or virtues help put in order what the intellect perceives. TA reminds us that there can be no perfect and universal judgment that is not based on the first causes. Science helps with different kinds of knowable matter, but there is only one wisdom (PM).

2. Is prudence a distinct virtue from art? Yes, TA tells us that art is the right reason [rational knowledge] of things to be made; whereas prudence is the right reason of things to be done. "Making and doing differ, as stated in *Metaph. ix.*, text. 16, in that making is an action passing into outward matter, e.g., to build, to saw, and so forth; whereas doing is an action abiding in the agent, e.g., to see, to will, and the like. Accordingly prudence stands in the same relation to such like human actions, consisting in the use of powers and habits, as art does to outward makings."

3. Is prudence a virtue necessary to people? Yes, TA tells us that prudence is a virtue most necessary for human life. The virtue of prudence is needed in reason, to perfect the reason, and make it suitably affected towards things ordained to the end. Prudence is needed to help us live good lives (PM).

## Question 58

### Of the Difference between Moral and Intellectual Virtues

Article two: Whether Moral Virtue Differs from Intellectual Virtue?

## Question 58 Article Two cont.

On the contrary: "It is stated in *Ethic.* I, 13 that *there are two kinds of virtue; some we call intellectual; some, moral.*"

I answer that: TA says that moral virtues differ from intellectual virtues even as the appetite differs from the reason. Socrates taught on this subject concluding that one can keep from sinning by possessing knowledge which can be a kind of prudence. This is similar to today's psychiatrists, social workers and general psychologists and educators. Reason is the first principle of all human acts and whatever other principles of human acts may be found, they obey reason somewhat, but in various ways. Some just obey reason blindly. This expectation becomes predominant in the intellect of the despot who tends to assume that reason is the only way of virtue in perfecting man in view of his doing good actions. It follows that it is only in the reason, so that there would be none but intellectual virtues. This was the opinion of Socrates who said that every virtue is a kind of prudence, as stated in *Ethic.* vi. 13) Hence he maintained that as long as a man is in possession of knowledge, he cannot sin; and that everyone who sins, does so through ignorance.

The false assumption that follows here is that the appetitive faculty obeys the reason, not blindly, but with a certain power of opposition; wherefore the Philosopher says (*Polit.* i. 3) that reason commands the appetitive faculty by a politic power, whereby a man rules over subjects that are free, having a certain right of opposition. The idea that Socrates proposed of knowledge keeping one from sinning is not totally inaccurate if the reason is not inadequately influenced by the appetitive powers.

"Accordingly for a man to do a good deed, it is requisite not only that his reason be well disposed by means of a habit of intellectual virtue; but also that his appetite be well disposed by means of a habit of moral virtue."

Article three: Whether Virtue is adequately divided into moral and intellectual?

I answer that: It follows that every human virtue is either intellectual or moral because every human virtue must be a perfection of one of the principles of the intellect or reason and the appetite; for there are two principles of movement in man as stated in *De Anima*, iii, text, 48. As TA stated that human virtue is a habit perfecting man in view of his doing good deeds from either an intellectual or rational stance or from moral standing.

Article four: Whether there can be moral without intellectual virtue.

#### Question 58 Article four cont.

Obj. two: It seems that there can be moral without intellectual virtue because there are many who have lived virtuous lives though they are not highly rational or intellectual. Many saints are known to be of a simple nature and not highly complex in their rational powers.

On the contrary: Gregory says (*Moral. Xxii*) that *the other virtues unless we do prudently what we desire to do, cannot be real virtues*. But prudence is an intellectual virtue, as stated above (Q. 57, A. 5) . Therefore moral virtues cannot be without intellectual virtues.

I answer that: Yes, according to TA “moral virtue can be without some of the intellectual virtues, viz., wisdom, science, and art; but not without understanding and prudence. Moral virtue cannot be without prudence, because it is a habit of choosing, i.e., making us choose well.” In order to choose well two things need to happen. 1.) that the intention be directed to a due end; and this is done by moral virtue, which inclines the appetitive faculty to the good... and 2.) that man take rightly those things which have reference to the end: and this he cannot do unless his reason counsel, judge and common aright, which is the function of prudence and the virtues annexed to it, as stated above (Q. 57, AA. 5,6). Both prudence and understanding are needed to make moral choices.

Reply Obj. two: “A man may be virtuous without having full use of reason as to everything, provided he have it with regard to those things which have to be done virtuously. In this way all virtuous men have full use of reason. “According to the Douay version of Matthew 10:16, we are to be prudent as serpents and simple as doves (PM).

Article five: Whether there can be intellectual without moral virtue?

I answer that: TA says that other intellectual virtues can, but prudence cannot, be without moral virtue...For the virtuous man judges aright of the end of virtue, because *such as a man is, such does the end seem to him* (*Ethic. iii. 5*). Consequently the right reason about things to be done, viz., prudence, requires man to have moral virtue.

#### Question 58 Q & A

1. Does moral virtue differ from intellectual virtue? Yes, TA says that moral virtues differ from intellectual virtues even as the appetite differs from the reason. Socrates taught on this subject concluding that one can keep from sinning by possessing knowledge which can be a kind of prudence. This is similar to today’s psychiatrists, social workers and general psychologists and educators. Reason is the first principle of all human acts and whatever other principles of human acts may be found, they obey reason somewhat, but In various ways. Some just obey reason blindly. This expectation becomes predominant in the intellect of the despot who tends

## Question 58 Q & A cont. question one

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2. Does Virtue adequately divide into moral and intellectual? Yes, It follows that every human virtue is either intellectual or moral because every human virtue must be a perfection of one of the principles of the intellect or reason and the appetite; for there are two principles of movement in man as stated in De Anima, iii, text, 48. As TA stated that human virtue is a habit perfecting man in view of his doing good deeds from either an intellectual or rational stance or from moral standing.

3. Can there can be moral without intellectual virtue? Yes, according to TA “moral virtue can be without some of the intellectual virtues, viz., wisdom, science, and art; but not without understanding and prudence. Moral virtue cannot be without prudence, because it is a habit of choosing, i.e., making us choose well.” In order to choose well two things need to happen. 1.) that the intention be directed to a due end; and this is done by moral virtue, which inclines the appetitive faculty to the good... and 2.) that man take rightly those things which have reference to the end: and this he cannot do unless his reason counsel, judge and common aright, which is the function of prudence and the virtues annexed to it, as stated above (Q. 57 , AA. 5,6). Both prudence and understanding are needed to make moral choices.

4. Can there be Intellectual without moral virtue? TA says that other intellectual virtues can, but prudence cannot, be without moral virtue...For the virtuous man judges aright of the end of virtue, because such as a man is, such does the end seem to him (Ethic. iii. 5). Consequently the right reason about things to be done, viz., prudence, requires man to have moral virtue.

