

(b) 'Divine Command Theory is a better approach to ethics than Ethical Egoism.'

**Evaluate this view.**

**[AO2 25]**

**Candidates could include some of the following, but other relevant responses should be credited.**

- One line of thinking could be that if God does exist then Divine Command Theory must be a better approach to ethics than Ethical Egoism. This is because it is a natural consequence of God's omnipotence that He must have complete power over everything, including morality; therefore, making Ethical Egoism completely irrelevant.
- However, this could be countered by the argument that as far back as Ancient Greece it has theorised that humans live to purely maximise pleasure e.g. philosopher Epicurus argued that human behaviour was motivated by pleasure alone. Therefore, Ethical Egoism is a better approach to ethics than Divine Command Theory because it supports moral agents natural psychological state of pleasure seeking.
- Another line of argument is that unlike Ethical Egoism, Divine Command Theory is objective. Therefore, right and wrong are not influenced by humanities personal feelings, opinions or reasoning e.g. it does not matter what humanity thinks about the issue of stealing; it is wrong because God has commanded it that way. Therefore, right and wrong are unchanging, authoritative, eternal truths.
- However, this line of reasoning could be rejected because Ethical Egoism is all about developing the whole self in the tangible world around us, rather than following the abstract, unprovable and often debated 'truths' of Divine Command Theory. Therefore, Ethical Egoism is a better approach to ethics because it develops what we can comprehend i.e. our own self's.
- Another line of thinking is that Divine Command Theory is a better approach to ethics than Ethical Egoism because Divine Command Theory is the most loving approach to ethics of all the Normative Ethics. This is because God cannot command any kind of cruelty because of His omnibenevolent nature.
- However, this line of thinking could be rejected because if there is no God then Divine Command Theory has no omnibenevolent foundation at all. Therefore, what is needed in a godless universe is an ethic that encourages moral agents to concentrate on achieving their own goals in life. Ethical Egoism is the best ethic to achieve this because not only does it encourage moral agents to fulfil their short term objectives but more importantly our long term objectives i.e. the egoist is encouraged to consider long term self-interests because the fulfillment of short-term desires may prove detrimental to the self.

**Overall, candidates should engage with the debate and come to a substantiated evaluation regarding the issue raised**