

## Questions on Benn on Virtue

1. What is the 'spirit' (160) that has given rise to a resurgence in virtue ethics?
2. Most philosophers say that there are two sorts of moral theories: those concerning what you are and those concerning what you do. Are the two compatible?
3. Why might one claim that Aristotle's ethics are all about 'ends' (or *telois*, or aims, or goals)? (161)
4. How can I become aware of the 'good' goal? What is it?
5. Why is it difficult to claim that humanity has a purpose?
6. How does Aristotle work out what the goal of the human is? Does this work?
7. What does it mean to describe virtues as 'needs'? (165)
8. You will be more than familiar with the doctrine of the mean. And probably the 'controversy' (166) over virtues like pride. Why does Benn think that this isn't a big problem?
9. Do desires and reason necessarily conflict according to Aristotle? (167) Why/why not?
10. What does it mean to call virtue theory 'trivial'? (169) Is it?
11. Benn argues that virtue theory has an advantage over action theories as it is able to condemn 'fantasies of revenge' (pure motives without external action). Do you agree?
12. What, according to Benn, is an 'important contribution of virtue theory' (174)?
13. What is the 'Robin Hood' criticism of virtue ethics?
14. Is it possible to hold that the virtues are a unity (176)? Again remember IB marking schemes - weak point, counter, better point, discussion.
15. What do you think is meant by 'executive' (177) virtues? Why might they be slightly different to others?
16. What makes virtues 'good'? And how should I choose when I feel different virtues conflict?
17. What, for Anscombe and Foot, makes issues 'moral'?
18. What does it mean to say that Aristotle makes moral truth a 'naturalistic truth'? (180)
19. What is the benefit of defining the 'good person' in this way? (181)
20. Benn outlines several problems with the virtue theorist's account. What are they and how convincing do you find them?