

## It's my Right! – well so what?

24/7 we hear the constant whining “**It's my right**”, whether it's about welfare, freedom of speech, freedom from speech, black, gay, equality, fairness, justice, animals, the list just goes on and on - ad nauseam.

Before we get bogged down in any discussion about any particular right let us first come to an agreement, if we can, on exactly what do we mean by a “right”. Think of it as understanding what we mean by colour before we start deciding what say red is.

Here are some notions of what constitutes the class of “rights” for your perusal.

- 1) Some will argue that they are rules handed down by a deity and thus are just “the way things are” - it's then a theistic “a priori” and not an issue at all.
- 2) Let us say that that 1,000 people get together and jointly decide that it's their right to have sex with children - is that a right they have just created for themselves?
- 3) Let us further say that in a community of 10,000 people and by a majority of 9 to 1 they decide that paedophilia is wrong, do the 1,000 lose their assumed right?
- 4) Are rights then just what a majority decides what they are and then impose them on everyone?
- 5) Is it, as they say, “Might makes Right”?
- 6) Are rights based in anything other than a societies arbitrary mutual consent? In Saudi Arabia it seems that it's the right of parents to lock up their wayward daughters and indeed do so with impunity – factually right 😊
- 7) Can people be permitted to refute a right held by others?
- 8) If the taste of pork were proven to be improved by regularly beating pigs would that violate any pig rights?
- 9) Is being a moral agent essential to creating rights - perhaps then you can only be moral with another that understands morality, but surely a pig cannot be moral?
- 10) Can rights be based on subjective feelings especially when feelings are not universally the same or even experienced the same?
- 11) Muslims were offended by the “Satanic Verses” was it their societies “right” to put a death sentence on Salman Rushdie – if not why?
- 12) Can I impose my rights on you, if not how can you impose your rights on me?
- 13) In a clash over conflicting rights who can possibly arbitrate?

So, given all the above your homework for our next meeting on 30th March is to please complete the following sentence.

**In my view, a “right” is.....**