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I N HIS PAPER "The myth of instrumental rationality,"[1] Joseph Raz takes it for granted that having an end does not give you reason to pursue that end. He chooses (p.10) not to argue directly for this view. So far as I am concerned, he does not need to; I am sure it is correct.[2] It is not credible that, just by adopting some end, you make it the case that you have reason to pursue it. There may be nothing to be said for your end; it may be pointless, stupid or harmful. You cannot give yourself reason to pursue it just by adopting it as an end. I learned from Michael Bratman's *Intention, Plans and Practical Reason*[3] that you cannot bootstrap a reason into existence like this. As Raz says (p. 10), he, Bratman, Jay Wallace and I are all on the same side about this.[4]

1. The puzzle

It poses a puzzle, which Bratman describes. Intentions play a vital part in our management of our lives. We form intentions, and then we set about putting them into effect. To satisfy some of our intentions we form others: we form intentions to take means to ends that we intend. This is not just something we do; it is a central feature of our rationality. We would not be rational if we did not intend means to ends that we intend. But rationality and reasons seem intimately linked together. So the puzzle is: how can intentions engage our rationality as they do, if they do not give us reasons?

At a minimum, rationality requires us to intend whatever we believe is a necessary means to an end that we intend. I have put in a footnote my own best attempt at formulating this requirement precisely.[5] It is

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[1]*Journal of Ethics and Social Philosophy*, www.jesp.org (2005) 1.

[2]I have argued the case for it in my "Are intentions reasons?," in *Practical Rationality and Preference: Essays for David Gauthier*, edited by Christopher Morris and Arthur Ripstein, Cambridge University Press, 2001, pp. 98–120.

[3]Harvard University Press, 1987, pp. 23–7.

[4]See Wallace's "Normativity, commitment, and instrumental reason," *Philosophical Imprint*, 1 (2001).

[5]This is my formula:

> Rationality requires of *N* that, if *N* intends at *t* that *e*, and if *N* believes at *t* that *e* is so only if *m* is so, and if *N* believes at *t* that *m* is so only if she* intends at *t* that *m*, then *N* intends at *t* that *m*.

This is a requirement-schema rather than an individual requirement. "*N*" stands for an expression designating a person, "*t*" for an expression designating a time, and "*e*" and "*m*" for expressions designating propositions. For example, appropriate substitutes for "*N*," "*t*," "*e*" and "*m*" are, respectively: "the Queen," "22.00 on 2 March 2006," "the Queen catches the plane at 10.00 on 3 March 2006" and "the Queen is awake at 6.00 on 3 March 2006." The clause "if *N* believes at *t* that *m* is so only if she* intends at *t* that *m*" is necessary because if *N* believes *m* is so anyway, without her intending it, she

complicated for technical reasons. Only one of the technicalities matters here: that the requirement is to satisfy a conditional. Rationality requires of us that, *if* we intend an end and believe some means is necessary to that end, *then* we intend the means.

This has to be a requirement of rationality. A person is necessarily irrational if she does not intend whatever she believes is a necessary means to an end that she intends. Raz agrees. Although he thinks it a myth that there is a distinctive form of rationality that may be called instrumental rationality, he recognizes particular requirements of rationality. They include this one or something like it. And if this one or something like it is a requirement of rationality, it has to be counted as an instrumental requirement. There are other instrumental requirements, too; for example, rationality also requires us to intend whatever we believe is the best means to an end that we intend. But I shall concentrate on this one.

Now we have a more specific version of the puzzle I mentioned. Rationality requires us to intend whatever we believe is a necessary means to an end that we intend. How can this be so if intending an end gives us no reason to intend whatever we believe to be a necessary means to it?

Raz's answer to the puzzle is this. We have reason to be rational agents—to have the packet of abilities and dispositions and to function in the ways that together constitute being a rational agent. If we are rational agents, we shall satisfy particular requirements of rationality. For example, we shall intend whatever we believe to be a necessary means to ends that we intend. But just because we have reason to be rational agents, it does not follow that we have reason to satisfy any particular requirement of rationality on any particular occasion. For instance, it does not follow that we have reason to intend something that we believe to be a necessary means to some particular end that we intend. And indeed we may have no reason to satisfy that requirement on a particular occasion. We may have no reason to intend something that we believe to be a necessary means to some particular end that we intend.

I do not disagree with any of this. First, it seems very plausible to me that we have reason to be rational agents. Moreover, Raz gives a very plausible explanation of why (p. 18); it is because of the good things we can achieve and do achieve if we are rational agents. Second, I firmly agree with him that it does not follow that we have reason to satisfy any particular requirements of rationality on any particular occasion.

Third, I do not disagree that we may have no reason to satisfy a particular requirement of rationality on a particular occasion. But I do

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may fail to intend it and still be rational. Suppose the Queen believes she will be awake at 6.00 anyway, as a side effect of her getting up at 5.00 to feed the corgis, which she intends to do. Then she may be rational even if she does not intend to be awake at 6.00. The asterisk on "she" marks it as a reflexive pronoun, which it needs to be. Once we have the extra clause in the formula, it is unnecessary to specify that *m* is a means to *e*. Omitting this specification makes the formula a little more general.

not agree either. On this point I am agnostic. For all I know, it may be the case that, necessarily, we have reason to satisfy each particular requirement of rationality on every occasion. I think it is an open question whether the requirements of rationality are normative. More exactly, I think it is an open question whether, necessarily, if rationality requires us to *F*, we have reason to *F*.

This may seem puzzling, because "requires" may seem to be a normative notion, so I need to clarify my use of "normative." Requirements issue from various sources. Prudence requires you to test the temperature of the water before you get under the shower. The law requires you to drive within the speed limit. Grammar requires you not to use a singular form of a verb with a plural pronoun. Morality requires you not to say hurtful things gratuitously. Convention requires you to offer your right hand when you mean to shake hands. You find yourself subject to many requirements, stemming from various sources: from prudence, the law, grammar and so on. Are these requirements normative? They are all normative in one sense, simply because they are requirements. Each sets up a standard of correctness of a sort; satisfying the requirement is correct according to the requirement. If you offer your left hand for shaking, you are acting incorrectly according to a requirement of convention. In one sense of "normative," any standard of correctness is normative. But that is not my sense.

When I say the requirements that issue from some source *S* are normative, I mean that, necessarily, if *S* requires you to *F*, you have reason to *F*. For each source, we may ask whether its requirements are normative in this sense. Let us call this "the normative question" about the source. I think the normative question about rationality is open. But Raz thinks it has the answer "No."

Until recently I would have given the opposite answer "Yes." Much of what I wrote implied that answer. I used the word "ought" to express requirements of rationality, and Raz quotes me doing so (p. 12). For instance, I said that you ought to intend whatever you believe is a necessary means to an end that you intend. I implied – my use of "ought" has this implication – that you have reason to intend whatever you believe is a necessary means to an end that you intend. But I had no grounds for answering "Yes" to the normative question about rationality. I was simply being careless.[6] Now I am agnostic about this question. I do not agree with Raz's answer "No"; nor do I disagree with it.

If Raz's answer turns out wrong, then he has no solution to the puzzle I mentioned. Indeed, in effect Raz's argument for his answer "No" is that if rational requirements are normative, there is no solution to the puzzle. But I have a different solution, which is consistent with the answer "Yes." I do not think Raz's paper provides a convincing argument for the answer "No." Indeed, I know no convincing arguments

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[6]As Andrew Reisner persistently reminded me.

for either answer.[7] That is why I am agnostic.

Here is Raz's argument expressed in my words. Rationality requires you to intend whatever you believe is a necessary means to an end that you intend. More precisely: rationality requires of you that, if you intend an end and believe some means is necessary to that end, you intend the means. This is a necessary truth. If the requirements of rationality were normative, this one would be normative. It would necessarily be the case that you have reason (to intend a means if you intend an end and believe the means is necessary to that end). It would follow that, necessarily, if you intend an end and believe some means is necessary to that end, you have reason to intend the means. But this cannot be true. It is the sort of bootstrapping that Raz, Bratman, Wallace and I all agree is impossible. Therefore the requirements of rationality are not normative.

The step in this argument that I do not accept is the inference from "necessarily, you have reason (to intend a means if you intend an end and believe the means is necessary to that end)" to "necessarily, if you intend an end and believe some means is necessary to that end, you have reason to intend the means." I think that is an invalid inference.

This opens up my own solution to the puzzle. I think you may indeed have reason to intend whatever you believe is a necessary means to an end that you intend. But I think it is not the case that, necessarily, if you intend an end, and believe some means is necessary to that end, you have reason to intend the means. So no impossible bootstrapping is implied.

2. Factual detachment of a reason

Raz defends the step I object to on pp. 12–13. The rest of this paper examines his defense. In presenting it, I shall switch to Raz's own formulations. He expresses what rationality requires in this form:

to do M if one intends to do E and M is the means to E.

This is not an accurate statement of the requirement. You could intend to do E and fail to do M, and still be entirely rational, even if M is the means to E. For one thing, you might not believe M is the means to E, and have no evidence that it is. But this detail makes no difference to the crucial argument, so I shall continue using Raz's formulations.

Suppose this requirement is normative. Then it is necessarily the case that

(1) One has reason (to do M if one intends to do E and M is the means to E).

Suppose it is also the case that:

(2) One intends to do E and M is the means to E.

These premises, says Raz, entail that

> (3)   One has reason to do *M*.

Embedding premise (2), we can infer from (1) alone that

> (4)   If one intends to do *E* and *M* is the means to *E*, one has reason to do *M*.

Since (1) is necessary, so is (4).

It is the inference of (4) from (1) that I do not accept. Equivalently, I do not accept the inference of (3) from (1) and (2).

This inference takes the following form: one has reason (to *Y* if *X*); *X*; therefore one has reason to *Y*. It is a version of what deontic logicians call "factual detachment"; I shall call it "factual detachment of a reason." The parallel inference pattern for some other modal operators besides "one has reason" is a recognized fallacy. For example, this is a fallacious reasoning: necessarily (*Y* if *X*); *X*; therefore necessarily *Y*. If we are to accept factual detachment of a reason, we need a good argument for it.

Raz offers us this argument on p. 12:

> Reasons are reasons to do what will constitute conformity with the reason. [(1)] does state that one has a reason. What is it a reason for? A roundabout way to identify the reason is to say that it is a reason to avoid being in a situation in which one would be in breach of that reason. And one would be in breach of it if one both intends *E* and fails to do *M*. There are two ways to avoid being in that situation. One is to abandon the intention to do *E*. The other is to do *M*. So one has both a reason to do *M* and a reason to abandon one's intention to do *E* (though no reason to do both, because once one does one of them the reason to do the other lapses). That means that, so long as *M* is the means to *E* and one intends to do *E*, one has reason to do *M*.

I read the first few sentences of this passage to be saying that, if we take it for granted that *M* is the means to *E*, then (1) can then be put in this disjunctive form:

> (1')   One has reason (either not to intend *E* or to do *M*).

In summarizing the argument on the next page, Raz confirms that this is his intention in those sentences.

Next comes the sentence "So one has both a reason to do *M* and a reason to abandon one's intention to do *E* (though no reason to do both …)." I read this to mean that one has reason to do *M*, and one has reason to abandon one's intention to do *E*, but one has no reason (to do *M* and abandon one's intention to do *E*). If this is the correct reading, the sentence implies in particular that one has reason to do *M*. That is to say, it implies (3). So this sentence appears to be the point in the argument where Raz arrives at the conclusion (3). He apparently derives it directly from (1'), without calling on the premise that one intends to do *E*.

It is true that he mentions that premise in the following sentence. But it seems not to be required there, and this premise is not mentioned in the summary of the argument on the next page. It is also true that my

interpretation of the argument depends on a particular reading of the sentence "So one has both a reason to do *M* and a reason to abandon one's intention to do *E* (though no reason to do both …)." With some strain, that sentence could alternatively be taken to mean that one has reason (to do *M* if one does not abandon one's intention to do *E*) and one has reason (to abandon one's intention to do *E* if one does not do *M*). From this, we might not be able to infer that one has reason to do *M* without adding the further premise that one does not abandon one's intention to do *E*. But even if we do add that premise, the inference would then have to be by means of factual detachment. So it could not be used in defending factual detachment. This is therefore not a good reading of that sentence for Raz's purposes.

I think Raz really does mean to derive (3) from (1') alone, without calling on the premise that one intends *E*. At first it may seem surprising that he should not avail himself of a premise that is available. Further-more, the inference pattern seems improbable on the face of it. It has the form: one has reason (to *X* or *Y*); therefore one has reason to *X*. However, if I understand Raz right, he is taking up this position with his eyes open. He has a general view that adopting an end does not alter the normative situation, except in some specific ways that he describes in section 4 of his paper. For him, whether or not one intends the end should therefore make no difference to whether or not one has reason to take the means. So the fact that one intends the end should not be required as a premise in the inference.

3. The facilitating principle and intelligibility

Moreover, I believe Raz thinks he has a basis for deriving (3) from (1'). He does not say this explicitly, but his wording suggests he takes it to be an application of what he calls "the facilitating principle," which is stated earlier in the paper on p. 6:

> When we have an undefeated reason to take an action, we have reason to perform any one (but only one) of the possible (for us) alternative plans that facilitate its performance.

This principle can be brought to bear on Raz's derivation by taking the "action" to be (either not to intend *E* or to do *M*) and taking the two alternative plans that facilitate its performance to be not intending *E* on the one hand and doing *M* on the other. I think this interpretation is consistent with Raz's meaning for "facilitating," which is described on p. 5. The principle then gives us that,

> (5) When we have an undefeated reason to (either not intend *E* or do *M*), we have reason to perform either one (but only one) of not intending *E* or doing *M*.

This is close to what Raz needs. It is a conditional statement whose antecedent is close to (1') and whose consequent is close to that crucial sentence, "So one has both a reason to do *M* and a reason to abandon one's intention to do *E* (though no reason to do both …)." So it comes

close to saying that this sentence can be derived from (1'). But actually it falls short of saying that, in two respects.

First, the antecedent in (5) mentions an undefeated reason, whereas (1') mentions only a reason. Raz makes it plain on p. 7 that the facilitating principle would not be true if the word "undefeated" was deleted from it, so this gap cannot be closed. It is a serious one. Go back to the argument of Raz's that I presented in section 1 – the one that is supposed to show that the requirements of rationality are not normative. It now turns out that Raz could not reach this conclusion on the basis of the facilitating principle. He could not conclude that, if rationality requires you to *F*, it does not follow that you have reason to *F*. He could at most conclude that, if rationality requires you to *F*, it does not follow that you have an undefeated reason to *F* – it does not follow that you ought to *F*, as I would prefer to put it. You might indeed have reason to conform to the requirements of rationality; it is just that this reason might be defeated by stronger reasons on the other side. I do not think Raz would be content with this weak conclusion, but he is stuck with it if his argument is to be based on the facilitating principle.

Second, the consequent in (5) says we have reason to perform either one of the alternatives, whereas for Raz's conclusion there has to be reason to perform each of the alternatives. As (5) stands, the consequent says we have reason (to either not intend *E* or do *M*) and no reason (to not intend *E* and do *M*). But the argument needs us to have reason to do *M*, and that does not follow.

As it happens, we could read the original statement of the facilitating principle, quoted above, in a way that gives us what the argument needs. We could read "any one" in the statement to mean "each one." But that is not the reading Raz intends, as he makes clear immediately after stating the principle on p. 5. Furthermore, under that reading the facilitating principle would be false. The following example shows why.

Suppose you have an undefeated reason to avoid feeling hungry this afternoon. There are two alternative plans by which you can facilitate that result. You can eat the tasty and nutritious lunch that is already set on the table in front of you, or you can kill yourself. According to the facilitating principle read with "each one" for "any one," it would follow that you have reason to kill yourself. But plainly it does not follow. Suppose you have some reason to stay alive, perhaps a very slight one. Then you ought to stay alive. The fact that killing yourself would be a way to avoid feeling hungry does not count in the least degree against your reason to stay alive. You have no reason to kill yourself.

In this example, you have an undefeated reason either to eat your lunch or to kill yourself. But you have no reason to kill yourself. You do have reason to eat your lunch. If you have an undefeated reason to do one of two things, it does not follow that you have reason to do each of them. You may have reason to do one and no reason to do the other.

Take the case we are discussing. Even if you have an undefeated reason to (either not intend *E* or do *M*) it does not follow that you have

reason to do *M*. You may have reason not to intend *E* and no reason to do *M*.

In sum, the facilitating principle does not support the inference from (1') to (3).

Could factual detachment of a reason be defended in any other way? In his defence, Raz at one point calls on a different line of argument. He says, "Doing *M* is an intelligible action. It is intelligible that people should take action to conform to reasons they have." This is supposed to support the view that one has reason to do *M*. But an action of yours may be intelligible without your having reason to do it, and you may have reason to do it without your doing it being intelligible. For example, you may do an action because you believe you have reason to, even though actually you do not. Then your action is intelligible, but you have no reason to do it. If conversely, you have reason to do it but believe you do not, then your doing it would not be intelligible. Reasons may come apart from intelligibility in other ways, too.

Raz should not have called on intelligibility to help settle questions about what reasons we have. If a person's action is intelligible, the person is sometimes said to have a "motivating reason" to do the action. This is a way of saying that there is an explanation of why she did it that involves her rational faculty in some way. It is a separate matter from whether she has a normative reason to do it.[8] But Raz is concerned with normative reasons, not motivating reasons.

4. Conclusion

I can find no successful defense of factual detachment of a reason, either in Raz's paper or elsewhere. Raz depends on this inference principle in arguing that the requirements of rationality are not normative. That is why I do not accept his argument, and remain agnostic about the normative question about rationality. I think it remains an open question whether the requirements of rationality are normative. So I think it is an open question whether Raz has a solution to the puzzle I described at the beginning of this paper.[9]

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[8]For instance, see Michael Smith, *The Moral Problem*, Blackwell, 1994.