

INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE OF ETHICS

In our general discussions and daily life routine, we listen and use many times remarks such as, this is good, this is wrong, this is bad, this is very good, Mr so and so has good behavior whereas others have not this.

Now the point is that on which basis we decide or determine that this is good and this is bad? This question can easily be replied by saying that this parameter or standard is provided by ethics. This is vast term and it is a major branch of Philosophy.

Definition of Ethics

Ethics is defined as the study of "what is right or good in conduct". The word Ethics has been taken from Greek word "ethora" means character and this is connected with custom or habit.

Moral philosophy

The term "moral philosophy" is also used for this subject, which means same thing as ethics. The word "moral" has also been derived from Greek word "moras" meaning habits or customs, whereas the word "Philosophy" has been derived from two Greek words "Phillian" and "Sophia" meaning seek and wisdom respectively.

There is also another word that represents this kind of discussion known as axiology, means scientific study of values, or only study of values.

So we can say that the moral philosophy is the name of such habits and deeds by which wise ness, reasoning and good intellect is taken.

It also (Ethics) discusses men's habits and customs or in other words their characters, the principles on which they habitually act, and considers what it is that constitutes the rightness or wrongness of those principles, the good or evil of those habits.

These terms "right" and "good" seem requires little explanation.

Right

The word "Right" has been derived from Rectus, which is Greek word, meaning straight or according to rule. When we say that conduct is right, we mean primarily that it is according to rule. Rules however, have reference to some result to be achieved by them, and it is this fact that is indicated by the second term "Good".

Good

The term "good" is connected with the German gut means valuable for some end. Any thing is considered to be good when it is valuable for some end. Thus, particular kinds of medicines are said to be good when it is useful for this or that complaint. Similarly, when we speak of conduct as good, we may mean that it is serviceable for the end or ideal that we have in view.

It should be carefully observed that the term "good" is also used to signify not something which is means to an end, but some thing which is itself taken as an end. Thus the summum bonum, or supreme good, means the supreme end at which we aim.

Hence, when we say that the study of Ethics is concerned with the rightness or goodness of human conduct, we mean that it is concerned with the consideration of the serviceableness of our conduct for some ideal or end at which we aim, and with the rules or general principles by which our conduct is to be directed in order that this end may be attained. But of we are to consider the serviceableness of our actions to an end, and the rules or conditions by which by this end is to be attained, it is evident that we must have some understanding of the nature of the end itself.

Now there are many ends to which our actions may be directed, for example, the building of house, the writing of book, the passing of an examination, and so on. But since Ethics is the study of conduct as whole, not particular kinds of conduct, it is not any of these special ends it sets itself to consider, but the supreme or ultimate end to which our whole lives are directed. This end is commonly referred to as the Summum Bonum or supreme good.

Now it is no doubt open to question at the outset, whether there can be said to be any one supreme end in human life. Men aim at various objects. Some desire wealth, others independence, others power. Some are eager for fame, others for knowledge, and others for love and some again for highest good in serving others. Some are fond of excitement, some fill their lives with many sided-interests-art and science and the development of social and political institutions, others are tempted to regard all these as vanity and sometimes even turning from them in all disgust to believe that the best thing of all would be to die and be at rest, while others again fix their highest hopes on life beyond death to be perfected in better world than this.

But little consideration service that many of these ends can not be regarded as ultimate, if, for instance, we were to question to those who are seeking for wealth or independence are power, we should generally find that they would explain their desire for these objectives by enumerating the advantages which attainment of the desired objects would bring, the possibility of such an explanation proves that these objects are not regarded as ultimate ends by those who pursue them, but are desired for the sake of something else.

According to John S. Mackenzie, as he discussed in his book “A manual of Ethics” There are three ultimate ends for human beings, which are Truth, Goodness, and Beauty.

Still, we hardly seem to be justified in starting with the assumption that there is any one ultimate end in human life. The question whether any such end can be discovered is rather one that must be discussed in this study. What it is necessary for us to assume is simply that there is some ideal in life, i-e that there is some standard of judgment by reference to which we are able to say that one form of conduct is better than other. What the nature of this ideal or standard is –whether it has reference to single ultimate end, to set of rules imposed upon us by some authority, to an ideal type of human life which we are somehow enabled to form for ourselves, or in what other possible way it is determined-we must endeavor to discover as we go on.

The Normative Ethics

Traditionally, normative ethics (also known as moral theory) was the study of what makes actions right and wrong. Classical theories in this vein include utilitarianism, Kantianism, and some forms of contractarianism. These theories offered an overarching moral principle to which one could appeal in resolving difficult moral decisions.

Aristotle (384 BC – 322 BC) was a Greek philosopher, a student of Plato (who was also a Greek Philosopher and author of book “Republic”) and teacher of Alexander the Great. He wrote on many subjects, including physics, metaphysics, poetry, theater, music, logic, rhetoric, politics, government, ethics, biology and zoology. His famous book on this subject is “Ethics”.

Ethics as a major branch of philosophy

Ethics is a major branch of philosophy encompassing right conduct and good life. It is significantly broader than the common conception of analyzing right and wrong. A central aspect of ethics is "the good life", the life worth living or life that is simply satisfying, which is held by many philosophers to be more important than moral conduct.

The nature of ethics

Ethics is not a practical Science, in view of the fact that Ethics is concerned with action, it has sometimes been characterized as a practical science, but this is on the whole, misleading. There are scientific studies that may rightly be characterized as practical, such as medicine, engineering or architecture. Such studies are directed towards the realization of a defined result. The study of moral culture might be classed with these, but it would seem to be a part of general study of education.

Ethics, as a theoretical study, differs from this, just as logic and aesthetics do.

Logic deals with the general conditions involved in discovery and apprehension of truth, and aesthetics deals with the general conditions involved in the production and appreciation of beauty.

In like manners, Ethics deals with the general conditions involved in the rightness or goodness of conduct. In all these it is true that reflection on the principles involved may be expected to help us in the application of them. One who has studied Logic may be expected to think more accurately than he otherwise would, one who has studied aesthetics may be expected to have finer appreciation of beauty in nature and art than he would otherwise possess and to be more careful in artistic productions. So also one who studies Ethics ought to have a finer moral discernment and a more zealous and discriminating pursuit of what is right good than he would otherwise have had. But this is not necessarily the case, nor is it the primary object of such studies. The most distinguished logicians are not necessarily the best thinkers and discoverers. Interest in and familiarity with particular subjects is generally of more importance. Similarly, the greatest poets and painters or the most appreciative lovers of nature are not always students of aesthetic principles. And, just in the same way, it is not by the study of ethics that men and women become heroes or saints.

The objects of those studies that are described as normative is to supply a knowledge of guiding principles rather than to explain how they are to be applied, and this is perhaps even truer of Ethics than it is of Logic or aesthetics, since action covers a larger part of human life than thought or the appreciation of beauty and is to a greater extent learned by practice rather than by systematic reflection.

The nature of Ethics

Ethics is not the Art of conduct. It is now generally recognized that truth, Beauty, and Goodness are ultimate ends for human being. It appears to be absurd to ask why we should want to know To apprehend what is beautiful or to do what is right; but it is not immediately apparent what the exact nature of these great ends is, or what are the conditions that have to be observed for the attainment of them.

The application of these conditions may be said to be an art; and in that sense we may say that there is an art of thinking and an art of conduct, just as there are art of painting, music and poetry by which beautiful objects are created, but Logic is not properly to be called the art of thinking, nor is aesthetics to be called or identified with any of the particular arts by which beautiful objects are called into being. In those studies that are called normative we are rather seeking for insight into the nature of those supreme values –truth, beauty and goodness- to which particular modes of knowledge, appreciation and action are subsidiary.

It has become customary to regard such studies as belonging to the province of philosophy, rather than as being either science or arts. It has even been urged that the study of the supreme values is the one object of philosophical studies, which aim, as the name implies, at the acquisition of wisdom rather than particular modes of knowledge. It has to be recognized, however, that this distinction has not always been present to the minds of those who have written about Ethics and in dealing with the subjects in a general it appears that the history of Ethics is the history of views that are more or less erroneous but the errors cannot be treated as due merely to human perversity. They are due rather to certain difficulties that are inherent in the nature of the subject.

Is there any art of conduct?

It has been noticed that it appears to be erroneous to speak of Ethics as an art of conduct. It has also been noticed that Ethics is the akin of Logic and aesthetics. The major reason is that the essence of conduct lies in an attitude of Will not in the possession of a particular kind of skill. The good painter is one who can paint beautifully and a similar remark applies, on the whole, to a thinker, who thinks well and very well for the welfare of mankind. But a good man is not one who can, but one who does, act rightly. Of course, sometimes the right action may be refraining from any over activity. They also serve who only stand and wait, but to stand and wait is a form of conduct. Conduct is not a capacity but a habit, in Aristotle's phrase; it is a "Habit of Choice". Where we choose to act or refrain from acting, we are in either case making a choice. We have to decide to do or not to do. The study of Ethics has a direct

reference to action, in a sense in which these other cognate studies have not. It may be well at this point to be some discussed in detail.

Virtue exists only in activity

A good painter is one who can paint beautifully; a good man is not one who can, but one who does, act rightly. The good painter is good when he is asleep or in a journey, or when, for any reason, he is not employed in his art. The good man is not good when asleep or on a journey, unless when it is good to sleep or to go on a journey. Goodness is not a capacity or potentiality, but an activity, as Aristotle has discussed this point in his book "Ethics".

This is a simple point, and yet it is a point that presented great difficulty to ancient philosophers. By nothing perhaps were so much misled as by the analogy of virtues to the arts. Thus in Plato's Republic, Socrates is represented as arguing that if justice consists in keeping property safe, the just man must be a kind of thief, for the same kind of skill which enables a man to defend property, will also enable him to steal it. The answer to this is that justice is not a kind of skill, but a kind of activity. The just man is not merely one who can, but one who does, keep property safe. Now though the capacity of appropriating it, the act of preserving is certainly very different from the act of appropriating.

The man who knows precisely what the truth about any matter is, would undoubtedly, as a general rule, be the most competent person to invent lies with respect to the same matter. Yet the truth-speaker and liar are very different persons, because they are not merely men who possess particular kinds of capacity, but men who act in particular ways. Often, indeed the most atrocious liars have no special faculty for the art. And so also it is with other vices. "The Devil" it is said, "is an Ass."

The essence of virtue lies in the Will

The man who is a bungler in any of the particular arts may be a very worthy and well-meaning person, but the best intentions in the world will not make him a good artist. In the case of virtuous action, on the other hand, as Kant says, in his book "Metaphysics of Morals" a good will is good not because of what it performs or effects, not by its aptness for the attainment of some proposed end, but simply by virtue of the volition. "Even if it should happen that, owing to a special disfavor of fortune, or the niggardly provisions of a step-motherly nature, this will should wholly lack power to accomplish its purpose, if with greatest efforts it should yet achieve nothing, and there should remain only the good will, then, like jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole values in itself. In like manner, Aristotle says of a good man living in circumstances in which he cannot find scope for his highest virtue, his nobility shines through.

It is true that even in the fine arts purpose counts for something, and a stammering utterance may be not without a grace of its own. In conduct also, if a man blunders entirely, it is assumed generally that there was some flaws in his purpose that he did not reflect sufficiently, or did not will the good with sufficient intensity. Still, the distinction remains that in art the ultimate appeal is to the work achieved, whereas in morals the ultimate appeal is to the inner aim. Or rather, in morals the achievement cannot be distinguished from the inner activity by which it is brought about.

Is there any science of conduct the fact that it is somewhat questionable to speak of an art of conduct suggests a doubt whether it is even quite proper to speak of a science of conduct. We generally understand by a science the study of some limited portion of our experience. Now in dealing with morals we are concerned rather with the whole of our experience from one particular point of view, viz., from the point of view of activity from the point of view, of the pursuit of ends or ideals Matthew Arnold has said that conduct is three fourths of life., but of course, from, from the point of view of purposive activity, conduct is the whole of life. It is common to distinguish the pursuit of truth science and the pursuit of beauty fine art from the moral life in the narrower sense. But when truth and beauty are regarded as ends to be attained, the pursuit of them is a kind of conduct; and the consideration of these ends, as of all others, falls within the scope of the science of morals.

In a sense, there for, Ethics is not a science at all, if by a science we understand the study of some limited department of human experience. It is rather a part of philosophy that is a part of the study of experience as a whole. It is, indeed, only a part of philosophy; because it considers the experience of life only from point of view of will or activity. It does not, except indirectly, consider man as knowing or enjoying, but as doing, means pursuing an end. But it considers man's whole activity, the entire nature of

the good, which seeks, and the whole significance of his activity in seeking it. For this reason as we have already noted, some scholars prefer to describe the subject as moral philosophy or Ethics philosophy, rather than as the science of Ethics. For it is the business of philosophy, rather than science, to deal with experience as a whole. Similarly, Logic and Aesthetics, the two sciences that closely resemble Ethics, are rather philosophical than scientific. But the term science may be used in a wide sense to include the philosophical studies as well as those that are called scientific in the narrower sense.

We can summarize this discussion as follows,

All the statements presented and discourses written here are intended to give a general indication of the nature of Ethical study. The learner should know that the different scholars regard the subject in different ways. Some regard it as having a directly practical aim, while others endeavor to treat it as a

purely theoretical science, in the same sense in which chemistry or astronomy is theoretical. Mr John S. Mackenzie in his book "A manual of Ethics" adopted the middle way in this respect. But the full significance of this difference as well as the grounds for adopting one or other of these views can hardly become apparent to the learners until one has learned to appreciate the distinction between leading theories of the moral standards. In fact, in studying Ethics, as in studying most other subjects of any complexity, it should always be borne in minds that the definition of the Ethics and its understanding of its scope and method come rather at the end than at the beginning. With these cautions, however, one may perhaps find the remarks made in this discourse of some service as an introduction to the study of Ethics.

It is hoped that their significance will become clearer as it has been preceded. The main points to which attention has been directed may be briefly summarized as under

- 1) The Ethics is the theoretical study, which deals with the ideal, or with the standard of rightness and wrongness, good and evil, involved in conduct.
- 2) This study is normative, not one of the ordinary positive sciences.
- 3) It is, however, not properly to be described as a practical science, though it has a close bearing upon practical life.
- 4) Still less is it to be described as an art.
- 5) It is hardly correct to speak of an art of conduct at all.
- 6) Some objections may also be taken even to the term science of conduct, since the study of the ideal in conduct is rather philosophical than scientific.

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from a manual of Ethics by John S. Mackenzie and from An Introduction to Ethics by William Lillie, first chapter of both the books)

THE DIVISION OF THE SUBJECT

There are at least four main divisions of the study of ethics. First, we should know that the Ethics is branch of philosophy and its (philosophy) branch that studies the nature of knowledge, its presuppositions, foundations, its extent and validity, is known as Epistemology.

Ethics is also considered the branch of Metaphysics and Logic is one of its branches which is defined as “Correctness of thought”. Ontology is also one of the branches of Metaphysics but it has different approaches from Ethics. Ethics is not like Ontology also, which is the branch of metaphysics that deals with the nature of being and discusses about the design and structure of the natural bodies.

It also not resembles to Sociology because the study of social phenomena is the theme of Sociology and Ethics discusses the right or wrong, good or evil in our conduct. It is not like Aesthetics, which is defined as “Characterized by a heightened sensitivity to beauty”.

Ethics is also different from the Philosophy of Nature that is defined as the study of particular facts that come before our consciousness has to be handed over to the particular sciences, or, so far as philosophy is able to deal with them, they form the content of what is called the Philosophy of Nature, Whereas Aesthetics considers the standards of beauty or worth of beauty.

In this chapter, it is necessary to give some attention to the psychological aspects of the subject. The consideration of the nature of feeling, desire, will, of the meaning and place of motives and intentions in individual consciousness, of the origin and nature of conscience, of the elements contained in the moral judgment and other problems of similar character, is almost indispensable preliminary to the study of the moral ideal.

Again, the treatment of these psychological questions naturally leads us on to the more sociological Aspects of the subject, it means to the study of the way in which the moral consciousness grows up in mankind in relation to the general development of civilization in its various aspects.

These genetically inquiries lead us on to the consideration of the nature and significance of the moral idea. But even the treatment of this is necessarily to some extent historical. It is hardly possible at the present stage of the development of the Ethical studies, to lay down the one view that is to be accepted aspects correct, without reference to the various more or less incorrect opinions that have been current in the course of Ethical speculation. Having considered these and formed our view as to be general nature of the doctrine that is to taken as true, we are then able, finally, to consider the application of this doctrine to the treatment of the concrete facts of the moral life.

In this way there are at least four main divisions of the study, the psychology of the moral consciousness, the sociology of moral life, the theories of the moral standards, and the application of the standard to the treatment of the moral life.

A part dealing with the metaphysics of Ethics might also be added; but this could hardly be separated from the discussion of the theories of the moral standards, which, as we shall see, inevitably leads us into metaphysical consideration. A few remarks now be made on each of these divisions of the subject, and it may be well also to refer briefly to biology.

The biological aspects of Ethics

It is possible to apply moral, or at least quasi-moral, distinctions to the lower animals, as well as to human beings. The bees and the ants have long served us models of diligence and cooperative efforts, and, in recent years, J.H. Fabre and others have extended our interest in insect life. The fidelity of the dog and the affectionateness of the dove are regarded with admiration and their qualities tend to be contrasted with those of the ape and tiger.

But it is at least doubtful whether any of these animals’ beings have any definite knowledge of the distinction between right and wrong. They appear to act instinctively or at least with very little power of choice. Even in human beings aspects we shall have occasion to notice, there are instinctive or impulsive

movements as well as some abnormal obsessions that can hardly be controlled. Moral distinctions can only be made when there is some possibility of deliberately adopting different modes of action.

It has to be recognized, however, that the distinctions between human beings and animal beings is not an absolutely sharp one in this respect, and it may be necessary to make some future reference to animal life in this connection at a latter stage and especially to notice certain obsessions that tend to reduce human life almost to the animal level. Recent psychological studies, especially those carried on by the behaviorists and psych-analysts, have given a good deal of prominence to these tendencies, and they cannot be altogether ignored in the study of Ethics.

The psychological aspects of Ethics

Most of the considerations that fall under this head are discussed in treatise on psychology, where they more strictly belong. But it is found convenient in Ethical works to recall some of the more important considerations on the subject of the Desire and Will, in particular, and also to deal with the nature of conscience and the moral judgment, which are apt to be passed over somewhat slightly in purely psychological discussions. The bearing of such questions on aspects of the freedom of the Will on the moral judgment have also to be considered, and, though this is partly a metaphysical question, yet it is on the whole the psychological aspect of it that more directly concerns Ethics. It is, however, the more social aspects of psychology with which Ethics is most intimately connected, and we are thus led to the 2nd division of the subject.

The sociological aspects of Ethics

The science of sociology is of comparatively recent growth, and it is perhaps still premature to state precisely what it should be regarded as containing, but we may say of it generally that it is largely an extension of psychology to the consideration of the more social aspects of life. Such a consideration has reference too much to what has very little bearing on Ethics. When we study the life of savage peoples, the primitive facts of language, the early religious ideas, the superstitious practices, the beginnings of law and government, our interest is directed to many points that do not much concern the rightness and wrongness of conduct.

All these things, however, are modes of conduct, or tend to affect conduct, and it is possible to study them from this point of view. Further the tendency to pass judgment upon these and other forms of activity, as being right or wrong, good or evil, begins at a very early stage in the development of the human race, and the way in which this judgment grows up in one of the most interesting points in the study of sociology. All this is hardly to be described as Ethics in the strict sense, but it is an almost indispensable preparation for the study of Ethical problems.

The theories of moral standards

The study of Ethics in the stricter sense begins with the consideration of the nature of the ideal, standard or end by reference to which conduct is pronounced to be right or wrong, good or evil. Now there are several different theories on the subject and though some of these theories are now generally admitted to have been superseded, yet the leading types of theory cannot well be neglected, the more so as these leading types are seldom wholly erroneous, but nearly always bring out some important aspects of the subject.

At the same time, a student should know that the common error of supposing that these controversies about the definition of the standard, often rather futile and involving a good deal of misunderstanding on all sides, constitute the whole or even the main part of Ethical doctrine. In order to guard against such misconception, it is important to pass on to the consideration of the way in which Ethical principles may be used in the treatment of the concrete moral life, even if the discussion of this subject is inevitably of a very summary and incomplete character.

The concrete moral life

It will be found that the exact way in which the concrete moral life is to be handled by Ethical science depends to a considerable extent on the nature of the theory that is finally adopted.

If, for instance, we were to take the view that the moral standard consists in certain absolute and immutable laws, which are intuitively known to every developed consciousness, the study of the concrete moral life could have little more than a historical interest.

We should only be able to discover that at certain periods the nature of the moral laws has been obscured, for various reasons, from the consciousness of the majority of the human race, and that at other times the laws, though fully recognized, have been very commonly disobeyed.

These facts would be of sociological and psychological, rather than of strictly ethical interest. On the other hand, if we should be led to take the view that the moral standard consists in a certain end-say, happiness- which, though generally pursued by mankind, is not pursued consistently or wisely, it would then be possible to point out, at least in general terms, the ways in which improvements could be introduced into the concrete moral life of mankind. Rules could be laid down for the more complete and consistent adoption of the right means to the end that we have in view. Or, again, if we accepted the view that the standard is of the nature of an ideal that is more or less clearly present throughout the development of the human consciousness, it would then be possible for us to trace the ways in which this ideal comes into clearness, to point out how it is illustrated in the concrete growth of the moral life, and to indicate to some extent the directions in which we may hope to see it more fully realized.

According to the first of these views, the study of the concrete moral life would have hardly any ethical interest. According to the second view, the study of the ethics would lead directly to certain practical recommendations for the remodeling of the concrete moral life. According to the third view, it would be the main business of Ethics to bring out the significance of the moral life in its concrete development, rather than to aim at its reform. Accordingly, it is not possible to decide on the precise way in which this department of the subject should be dealt with, until we have considered the nature of the moral standard.

This portion of the treatment of Ethics is sometimes called Applied Ethics.

Applied Ethics

Applied ethics is a discipline of philosophy that attempts to apply ethical theory to real-life situations. The discipline has many specialized fields, such as bioethics and business ethics.

The lines of distinction between meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics are often blurry. For example, the issue of abortion can be seen as an applied ethical topic since it involves a specific type of controversial behavior. But it can also depend on more general normative principles, such as possible rights of self-rule and right to life, principles which are often litmus tests for determining the morality of that procedure. The issue also rests on meta-ethical issues such as, "where do rights come from?" and "what kind of beings has rights?"

Another concept which blurs ethics is moral luck. A drunk driver may safely reach home without injuring anyone, or he might accidentally kill a child who runs out into the street while he is driving home. The action of driving while drunk is usually seen as equally wrong in each case, but its dependence on chance affects the degree to which the driver is held responsible.

Meta-Ethics

Meta-ethics is concerned primarily with the *meaning* of ethical judgments and/or prescriptions and with the notion of which properties, if any, are responsible for the truth or validity thereof. Meta-ethics as a discipline gained attention with G.E. Moore's famous work "*Principia Ethica*" from 1903 in which Moore first addressed what he referred to as *the naturalistic fallacy*. Moore's rebuttal of naturalistic ethics, his Open Question Argument sparked an interest within the analytic branch of western philosophy to concern oneself with second order questions about ethics; specifically the semantics, epistemology and ontology of ethics.

The semantics of ethics divides naturally into descriptivism and non-descriptivism. The former position advocates the idea that prescriptive language (including ethical commands and duties) is a subdivision of descriptive language and has meaning in virtue of the same kind of properties as descriptive

propositions, whereas the latter contends that ethical propositions are irreducible in the sense that their meaning cannot be explicated sufficiently in terms of truth-conditions.

Correspondingly, the epistemology of ethics divides into cognitivism and non-cognitivism; a distinction that is often perceived as equivalent to that between descriptivist and non-descriptivists. Non-cognitivism may be understood as the claim that ethical claims reach beyond the scope of human cognition or as the (weaker) claim that ethics is concerned with action rather than with knowledge. Cognitivism can then be seen as the claim that ethics is essentially concerned with judgments of the same kind as knowledge judgments; namely about matters of fact.

The ontology of ethics is concerned with the idea of value-bearing properties, i.e. the kind of things or stuffs that would correspond to or be referred to by ethical propositions. Non-descriptivist and non-cognitivists will generally tend to argue that ethics do not require a specific ontology, since ethical propositions do not refer to objects in the same way that descriptive propositions do. Such a position may sometimes be called anti-realist. Realists on the other hand are left with having to explain what kind of entities, properties or states are relevant for ethics, and why they have the normative status characteristic of ethics.

Descriptive ethics

Descriptive ethics is a value-free approach to ethics which examines ethics not from a top-down *a priori* perspective but rather observations of actual choices made by moral agents in practice. Some philosophers rely on descriptive ethics and choices made and unchallenged by a society or culture to derive categories, which typically vary by context. This can lead to situational ethics and situated ethics. These philosophers often view aesthetics, etiquette, and arbitration as more fundamental, percolating "bottom up" to imply the existence of, rather than explicitly prescribe, theories of value or of conduct. The study of descriptive ethics may include examinations of the following:

- Ethical codes applied by various groups. Some consider aesthetics itself the basis of ethics – and a personal moral core developed through art and storytelling as very influential in one's later ethical choices.
- Informal theories of etiquette which tend to be less rigorous and more situational. Some consider etiquette a simple negative ethics, i.e. where can one evade an uncomfortable truth without doing wrong? One notable advocate of this view is Judith Martin ("Miss Manners"). According to this view, ethics is more a summary of common sense social decisions.
- Practices in arbitration and law, e.g. the claim that ethics itself is a matter of balancing "right versus right," i.e. putting priorities on two things that are both right, but which must be traded off carefully in each situation.
- Observed choices made by ordinary people, without expert aid or advice, who vote, buy, and decide what is worth valuing. This is a major concern of sociology, political science, and economics.

Relational ethics

Relational ethics are related to an ethics of care. They are used in qualitative research, especially ethnography and auto ethnography. Researchers who employ relational ethics value and respect the connection between themselves and the people they study, and "between researchers and the communities in which they live and work" Relational ethics also help researchers understand difficult issues such as conducting research on intimate others that have died and developing friendships with their participants.

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from a manual of Ethics by John S.Mackenzie, pages, 24-30 and from An Introduction to Ethics by William Lillie, and also from <http://amriunigha.blog.co.in/2009/03/03/what-is-ethics-by-tgk-amri-alburnuni>)

THE STANDARD AS LAW

Introductory Remarks

In dealing with the different types of ethical theory, it seems most convenient to start with those that take as their fundamental conception the idea of Duty, Right, Law, and Obligation. To the race, as to the child, morality tends to present itself first in the form of commandments, and even in the form of threats. It is only at a later stage of development that we learn to regard the moral life as a good, and finally as the realization of our own nature.

Hence it seems most natural to begin with those theories which are based rather on the idea of rightness than on that of the Good. From this point of view, morality presents itself as obedience to the Law of Duty. The significance of this conception, and the different forms which it may take, are what we have now to consider.

The Meaning of Law in Ethics

A good deal of confusion has been caused in the study of Ethics, as well as in that of some other subjects, by a certain ambiguity in the word Law- It is important, therefore, that we should try to understand exactly the sense in which it is here to be used. It has been customary to distinguish two distinct senses in which it may be used. We speak of the laws of a country and also of the laws of nature; but it is evident that the kinds of law referred to in these two phrases are very different. The laws of a country are made by a people or by its rulers. And, even in the case of the Medes and Persians, there is always a possibility that they may be changed. There is also always a possibility that the inhabitants of the country may disobey them; and, as a general rule, they have no application at all to the inhabitants of other countries. The laws of nature, (it is meant such laws as those that are stated in treatises on theoretical mechanics. These laws relate to tendencies that are operative throughout the whole of nature), on the other hand, are constant, inviolable, and all pervading.

There are three respects; therefore, in which different kinds of law may be distinguished. Some laws are constant: others are variable. Some are inviolable: others are liable to be disobeyed. Some are universal: others have only a limited application. The last of these three points, however, is scarcely distinguishable from the first: for what is universal is generally also constant and necessary, and vice versa. Consequently, it may be sufficient for the present to distinguish different kinds of laws as

- (1) Changeable or unchangeable;
- (2) Violable or inviolable

Though we shall have to return shortly to the third principle of distinction. Adopting these two principles, we might evidently have four different classes of laws

- (1) Those that can be both changed and violated;
- (2) Those that can be changed but cannot be violated;
- (3) Those that can be violated but cannot be changed;
- (4) Those that can neither be changed nor violated.

Of the first and last of these, illustrations have already been given. Of the second also it is not difficult to discover examples.

The laws of the solar system, of day and night, seedtime and harvest, and all the vicissitudes of the seasons, are inviolable so long as certain conditions last; but if these conditions were changed—say, by the cooling of the sun, by the retardation of the earth's velocity, or its collision with some comet or erratic meteor—the laws also would change with them.

It might be urged that all laws of nature are of this character. For example. that they are all hypothetical, depending on the continuance of the present constitution of the universe. This is true, unless there are some laws of such a kind that no system of nature could exist without them. The consideration of this question, however, belongs to Meta-Physics.

Again, most of the laws of political economy are of this character. They hold good of certain types of society, and among men who are swayed by certain motives; and within these limits they are inviolable. But change the conditions of society, or the characters of the men who compose it, and in many cases the laws will break down. Such laws are some-times said to be hypothetical. They are valid only on the supposition that certain conditions are present and remain unchanged.

Some philosophers' have thought that even the laws of mathematics may be of the above character—that there might be a world in which two and two would be equal to five, and that if a triangle were formed with the diameter of the earth for its base and one of the fixed stars for its apex, its three angles might not be equal to two right angles (as said by Gauss). But this appears to be a mistake. The laws of mathematics belong rather to the last of our four classes.

The laws of Ethics, however, must on the whole be regarded as belonging to the third class. They cannot be changed, but they may be violated. It is true, as has been already stated, that the particular rules of morals may vary with different conditions of life; but the broad principles remain always the same, and are applicable not only to all kinds of men, but to all rational beings. If a spirit were to come among us from another world, we might have no knowledge of his nature and constitution. We might not know what would taste bitter or sweet to him, what he would judge to be hard or soft, or how he would be affected by heat or sound or color. But we should know at least that for him, as for us, the whole is greater than any one of its parts, and every event have a cause; and that he, like us, must not tell lies, and must not wantonly destroy life. (Some theologians have denied this, holding that goodness in God may be something entirely different from goodness in man. Mill refuted this opinion in his Examination of Hamilton, chapter 3). These laws are unchangeable. They can, however, be broken.

Of course, we may speak of ethical principles that it is impossible to violate. An ethical writer, for instance, may insist on the truth that every sin brings with it some form of punishment. This is a truth from which there is no escape, it is rather a metaphysical than an ethical truth. It is a fact about the constitution of the world, not a moral law.

A moral law states something that ought to happen, not something that necessarily does happen. Moral laws are not the only laws that are of this character. On the contrary, the laws of every strictly normative and of every practical science are essentially similar. No one can make the fundamental principles of architecture, navigation, or rhetoric, in any way different from what they are; though in practice any one that is willing to take the consequences may defy them. No doubt the rules of these sciences might require modification if they were to be applied to the inhabitants of another planet than ours; and even on our own planet they is not absolutely rigid. A style of building that is suitable for Iceland would scarcely be adapted for the Tropics.

The navigation of the Mississippi is different from that of the Atlantic. And the oratory, which would awake the enthusiasm of an Oriental people, might move an Anglo-Saxon audience only to derision. Still, it is possible in all these sciences to lay down broad general laws that shall be applicable universally, or at least applicable to all conditions under which it is conceivable that we should wish to apply them—laws, indeed, from which even the particular modifications required in special cases might be deduced.

For example, we might take it as a principle of rhetoric that if an audience is to be moved to the performance of some action or the acceptance of some truth to which they may be expected to be disinclined, they ought to be led up to the point by an easy transition, from step to step, beginning with some things that are obvious and familiar, and in which their affections are naturally engaged. From this it might be at once inferred that the character of such an appeal ought to vary with different audiences, according to the nature of the objects to which their experience has accustomed them, to the intensity of the feelings that have connected themselves with these objects, and to the average rapidity of their intellects in passing from one point to another. The law is constant; it is only the application that varies.

The science of logic gives us a still more obvious instance of such laws. The rules of correct thinking cannot be changed, though the particular errors to which men are most liable may vary with different objects of study, different languages, and different habits of mind. In this case also, as in Ethics, the laws cannot be changed, but may be violated.

It may be urged, no doubt, that some at least of the laws of logic are applicable only within certain hypothetical limits. Some of them, for instance (vis. those commonly discussed under the head of

Formal Logic), depend on the admission of the principles of identity, contradiction, and excluded middle; and it may be maintained that there are objects to which these principles are not strictly applicable. But this point is too subtle to be more than merely hinted at in this place.

It may be well to add also that the distinction between laws that can and cannot be violated, like other distinctions of the same sort, must be interpreted with some care, and not pressed too far. In a sense it is possible to violate a natural law, i.e. we can evade the conditions under which it holds. In a sense also it is not possible to violate a moral law. To act wrongly is, as we shall see, to be in contradiction with ourselves; and "a house which is divided against itself cannot stand.

Similarly, even the law of a nation, if it is a real law, cannot be violated. Punishment may be said to be the open expression of this impossibility. The violation recoils upon the perpetrator, and annihilates him and his act.

Is, Must be, and ought to be

The distinctions expressed in the preceding section may be conveniently summed up by saying that some laws express what is, some what must be (or shall be), and some what ought to be.

What we call laws of nature are simply general statements about what is. The law of gravitation simply states that bodies tend to move in certain ways relatively to one another. Even the laws recognized in the more abstract sciences are of this character. The law of demand and supply simply states that, as a general rule, prices tend to adjust themselves in particular ways. (Here the point should be kept in mind, as it has already been indicated {notes to Introduction, chap. I.}, that there is a sense in which the principles of the more abstract sciences may be said to be normative—that theoretical astronomy may be said to state the laws according to which the planets ought to move, that geometry may be said to state the laws that ought to hold in a perfect triangle or circle, and so forth. But "ought" in this sense, means that these relationships do hold, in so far as the appropriate conditions are realized; and the significance of the sciences lies in the fact that, in the concrete world of experience, they either do approximately hold, or are determining conditions in the actual constitution of things.

Truly normative principles are not of this nature. If all men were to go mad, the principles of correct thinking would still hold as before).

Laws of nations, on the other hand, state what must be, i.e. what is bound to be unless certain penalties are incurred. Atoms and prices do not and cannot violate their laws, so long as the appropriate conditions hold. Their laws are nothing but statements of the way in which certain occurrences uniformly take place under certain conditions. Human beings, on the other hand, may and do violate the laws of their country. But the law states that they must not do so, and attaches penalties (or sanctions) to the doing of it.

A moral law, finally, is a law that states that something ought to be. It is the statement of an Ideal. Thus, if a Government decides to enter upon a war which is known by the citizens to be unjust, some of the soldiers may feel that it is wrong to serve, i.e. that it is contrary to their ideal of what is right in conduct. Here they come in conflict with what they recognize as a moral law. Nevertheless, they must not desert; i.e. they will be shot if they do. Here there is a law of the State. Suppose they do desert and are shot, they die by a law of nature.

The Categorical Imperative

We are now in a position to understand the important conception that was introduced by Kant with reference to the moral law. He said that it was of the nature of a categorical imperative. The meaning of this may readily be made apparent. All laws, which are not simply expressions of natural uniformities, may be said to be of the nature of commands. The laws of nations are commands issued by the government, with penalties attached to the violation of them. Moral laws may also (subject to a certain qualification) be said to be commands, though we are not yet in a position to consider how they are issued.

Now commands may be absolute in their character, or subject to qualification. The laws of a nation are laws that we must obey, unless we are prepared to suffer the consequences of disobedience. Again, the

fundamental principles of rhetoric may be said to be of the nature of commands or rules; but the commands, which are thus laid down, are applicable only to rhetoricians. The laws of architecture, in like manner, apply only to those who wish to construct stable, commodious, and beautiful buildings. Some of the laws of political economy, again, are neither constant nor universal. They are not constant; for they may vary with different conditions of society.

They are not universal; for they are applicable only to those who wish to produce wealth. Even the laws of formal logic are not universal. They apply only to those who wish to be self-consistent. Now a man may reject this aim. He may say, with Emerson, "Suppose you should contradict yourself, what then? A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds, adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do.

Such imperatives as these, therefore, are merely hypothetical. They apply only to those who adopt the end with which the particular normative science is concerned.

The laws of Ethics differ from all other laws in being not hypothetical, but categorical. It is true that Emerson's paradox about consistency has been capped by that of the preacher who bade us, "not righteous overmuch." But if this maxim is to have any intelligible meaning, we must understand the term "righteous" in a somewhat narrow sense.

It cannot be taken to mean that we should not, to too great an extent, do what we ought to do. This would be a contradiction in terms. If we are not to be too fanatical in the observance of particular moral rules, it must be in deference to other moral rules or principles that are of a still higher authority. The supreme moral principle, whatever it may be, lays its command upon us absolutely, and admits of no question. What we ought to do we ought to do. There can be no higher law by which the moral imperative might be set aside.

There are, indeed some other laws, which might seem to be scarcely less absolute, because they relate to ends that every one naturally seeks. Thus, every one would like to be happy; and consequently if there were any practical science of happiness, every one would be bound to follow its laws.

Accordingly; Kant called such laws a sartorial, because although they depend on the hypothesis that we seek for happiness, yet it may be at once asserted of every one that he does seek this end. Again, intellectual perfection is an end which a rational being can hardly help desiring. There is probably no one who would not, if he could, have the penetration of a Newton, or the grasp of a Shakespeare or a Goethe. Hence if there were any science that taught how such perfection is to be attained, its laws would have at least an almost universal application.

Still? Even such laws as these are not quite parallel to the laws of morals. Their universality, if they are universal, depends on the fact that every one chooses the end to which they have reference; whereas the laws of morals apply to all men irrespective of their choice. indeed, happiness could be shown to be necessarily hound up with virtue, and unhappiness with vice, then the obligation to follow the rules of happiness would have the same absoluteness as the obligation to obey the moral law; but only because these two things would then be identical. In like manner, if we were to accept quite literally the view of Carlyle, that all intellectual perfection has a moral root, so that a man's virtue is exactly proportional to his intelligence, in this case also the laws of intellectual perfection would become absolute, but only because they would become moral.

Uniqueness of moral law

The moral law, then, is unique. It is the only categorical imperative. Up to this point, so far as possible, John S. Mackenzie follows the account of Kant, There is, however, two points on which some slight criticism, or at least caution, seems to be required.

(1) It is somewhat misleading to describe the moral law as an imperative. At least it can only be so described on a certain view of its nature, which will have to be further considered.

To call it an imperative or command is to represent it as being of the nature of a must rather than of an ought. It should rather be described as based on an ideal.

{2) In saying that it is categorical, we must remember that all that can at present be seen to be categorical is the principle that we must do what is right, when we know what it is.

It remains to be seen whether it is possible to lay down any rule for the determination of what is right. If there is any such rule, it will be categorical; but it may turn out that there is none. In the latter case, it is somewhat misleading to speak of a categorical imperative.

With these general remarks on the nature of moral law, we may now proceed to ask what exactly the law is which is thus categorically imposed.

Various Conceptions of Moral Law

After discussion about categorical imperative, now we start confabulation about various concepts of Moral Law.

The Law of the tribe

We have already seen that the earliest form in. that the idea of law presents itself is that of the law of the tribe, or of the chief of the tribe but this in soon felt not to be categorical. It often comes into conflict with itself; and the reflecting consciousness demands something more consistent; at the best it furnishes a must, rather than an ought; and the tree man soon rebels against such government from without.

The Law of God

It is a stage higher when the moral law is distinguished from the law of the land, and regarded as a principle that owes its authority, not to any man or body of men, hut to God or the gods. The best-known instance of such a set of laws is to be found in the Ten Commandments of the Jews. But these also may come into conflict, and require qualification. Besides, the moral consciousness soon begins to ask on what authority the divine law rests. If it rest merely on the command of powerful supernatural beings, it is still only a must, not an ought. If God is not Himself righteous, His law cannot he morally binding merely on account of His superior power. But to ask whether God is righteous is to ask for a law above that of God Himself, and which may judge God. Hence the law of God cannot be accepted as final.

The Law of Nature

In order to get over this difficulty, the view has sometimes been taken that the most fundamental law of all is that which lies in the nature of things. In Greek Ethics, in particular, the conception of nature plays a very prominent part. The Greeks understood by nature the essential constitution of things underlying their casual appearances. It was in this sense, for instance, that the Stoics used their famous phrase to "live according to nature"

In modern times also, especially in the latter part of the seventeenth and the greater part of the eighteenth centuries, much was made of the idea of natural law. Perhaps in Ethics one of the most striking applications of this conception is to be found in the system of Samuel Clarke (1675-1729). Clarke held that certain differences and relations between things are inherent in their very nature, and that any one who observes them in a careful and unprejudiced way will become aware of these differences and relations.

The differences, relations, and proportions of thing: both natural and moral, in which all unprejudiced min thus naturally agree, are certain, unalterable, and real in the things themselves.

To the laws of nature thus discovered the reason of all men everywhere naturally and necessarily assents, as all men agree in their judgment concerning the whiteness of the snow or the brightness of the sun. That from these different relations of different things there necessarily arises an agreement or disagreement of some things with others, or a fitness or unfitness of the application of different things or different relations, is Likewise as plain as that there is such a thing as proportion in Geometry or Arithmetic, or uniformity or deformity in comparing together the respective figures of bodies.

Here we have the statement of the celebrated doctrine of “the fitness of things. But in all statements of this sort, taken as the basis of moral theory, there seems to be an obvious confusion involved. There are certainly laws in nature; but these, as we have noted, are simply statements of the uniform ways in which things occur; and such laws are exhibited quite as much in what is evil as in what is good. The destruction of a building by the explosion of a bomb is as much in accordance with the fitness of things, as deduced from the laws of nature, as the movements of the planetary system.

Fitness, in any sense in which it can serve as the basis of moral theories, must be fitness for something i.e. it must involve some reference to an end or ideal; and no alchemy can ever extract this out of the mere observation of natural laws. The analysis of the “is” in any such sense as this, can never yield an “ought.”

Similar doctrines to that of Clarke have frequently been put forward, even in quite recent times; but they all seem to hour under the same fatal defect.

The Moral Sense

If the laws of nature or the laws of God are to yield us moral principles, it must be because they in some way appeal to our own consciousness, because we in some way feel that obedience to them or observance of them serves to realize an ideal that we bring with us. Now an obvious way of making the connection between such external principles and our own minds is to say that we have a natural feeling which leads us to approve some things and disapprove of others. We are thus led to the conception of the moral sense.

This point of view, like most others in Ethics, has had a long history. It connects itself essentially with the Greek view of the identity between the Beautiful and the Good. In Greek this was used habitually either for beauty or for moral excellence. Thus, the Stoic maxim, *Stoic maxim* means that only the beautiful (i.e. the morally excellent) is good.

A similar view has frequently appeared in modern times. Thus, the philosopher Herbert insisted strongly on the identity of goodness with beauty, and definitely treated Ethics as a part of Aesthetics.

The Law of conscience

Bishop Butler introduced this concept for the remedy of defect in Shaftsbury view of moral sense. Butler thought of human nature an organic whole, containing many elements, some of which are naturally subordinate to others. Thus, there are in our nature a number of particular passions or impulses, which lead us to pursue particular objects, but all these, are naturally subordinate to self-love, on the one hand, and to benevolence, on the other, it is natural for us to restrain our passions with a view to the good of our selves or others. But there is certain principle in human nature that is naturally superior even to self-love. This is the principle of reflection upon the law of rightness and this is what Butler understood by Conscience.

He regarded this principle categorical on account of its place in the human constitution. Thus the principle, by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own heart, temper, and actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some influence; which may be said of every passion, of the lowest appetites: but likewise as being superior; as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others; insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendence.

This is s constituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itself: and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right, had it power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world.

When we ask, however, what is the nature of this authoritative principle, two different views seem to present themselves.

According to one view, it is simply an inexplicable faculty that we find within us, by which laws are laid down. According to another view, it is an intelligible authority whose commands can be understood by rational reflection. It is not quite clear in which of these two ways Butler thought of Conscience; but

among those who followed him the two views began to be clearly distinguished. The former view is that which is generally known as Intuitionism, in the narrower sense: the other is the view of a law of Reason.

Intuitionism

From Greek word “intueri” means to look at. May be described generally as the theory that actions are right or wrong according to their own intrinsic nature, and not in virtue of any ends outside themselves that they tend to realize. Thus, truth speaking would be regarded as a duty, not because it is essential for social well being, or for any other extrinsic reason, but because it is right in its own nature? This theory has been held in various forms, more or less philosophical in character. For a full account of those forms reference must be made to histories of Ethics and Philosophy} Here it is only possible to notice the leading points.

In the narrower sense of the term, Intuitionism is understood to mean the doctrine that refers the judgment upon actions to the tribunal of Conscience, understood as a faculty, which admits of no question or appeal.

When conscience is thus referred to as the fundamental principle of morals, we must not understand it to mean the conscience of this or that individual. The conscience of any particular individual is simply the consciousness of the harmony or disharmony of his action with his own standard of right and if this standard is defective, the same defect will appear in the conscience. His conscience may be, in Ruskin’s phrase, “The conscience of an ass.” The man who does not act conscientiously certainly acts wrongly: he does not conform even to his own standard of rightness. But a man may act conscientiously and yet act wrongly, on account of some imperfection in his standard. One who acts conscientiously in accordance with some defective standard is generally known as “fanatic”.

When, however, Kant says that " an erring conscience is a chimera," or when Butler says of the conscience " if it had power, as it has manifest authority, it would absolutely govern the world," or when, in general, intuitionist writers refer to the conscience as the supreme principle of morals, what they mean by conscience is rather what may be called the universal conscience. They mean that ultimate recognition of the rightness and wrongness of actions, which is latent in all men, but which in some men is more fully developed than in others. The principles by which this recognition is made are

Sometimes referred to as principles of Common Sense, because they are supposed to be common or universal throughout the whole human race.

Some writers have referred to the principles of common sense as if they were simply certain moral truths that are found unaccountably in the consciousness of mankind. Against this view there is the same objection as there is against the corresponding view with regard to intellectual truth. It conflicts with a principle which is deeper than any other principle of common sense can well be—the principle, namely, that the world must be regarded as an intelligible system of which a definite account can be given before the bar of reason.

If this principle is a mistaken one, it is hard to believe that there can be any other that has a deeper claim to be regarded as of universal validity.

The inadequacy of conscience as a basis of morale becomes further apparent when we endeavor to determine definitely what principles are laid down by it. The content of conscience, even if we mean by it the conscience of a people or an age, rather than that of an individual, is found to vary very considerably in different times and countries; and even at the same time and place the rules that are laid down by it are of a very uncertain character reflection shows, moreover, that these variations are not arbitrary, but have a distinct reference to the utility of actions under varying conditions for the realization of human welfare.

This has been well brought out in the very thorough examination of Common Sense Morality that is given in Sedgwick’s Methods of Ethics; from this it appears that the moral sense must not be regarded as a blind faculty, laying down principles for our guidance that are not capable of any further analysis or justification. On the contrary, the principles, which it lays down, can be rationally justified and explained.

In fact, it is only by such justification and explanation that we can distinguish what is permanent and reliable in the decisions of conscience from what is variable and untrustworthy. But when we thus draw distinctions and pass judgment upon conscience itself, it is evident that we most somehow have a conscience behind conscience, a faculty of judgment which stands above the blind law of the heart.

The Law of Reason

The view, however, which holds that there are certain universal principles of moral truth in the human consciousness, is not necessarily pledged to regard these principles as unintelligible. Just as Kant held that there are certain principles of intellectual truth what he called (Categories) which belong to the nature of all intelligent beings as such, so it may be held also that there are certain universal principles of moral truth. Just as the categories of our intellectual life may be deduced from the very nature of thought, so also the principles of our moral life may be capable of a rational deduction.

The Kant's view of Moral Reason

He argued that the moral imperative is categorical; it cannot be derived from the consideration of any end outside of the will of the individual. For every external end is empirical and could give rise to a hypothetical imperative. We should only be entitled to say that, if we seek that end, we are bound to act in a particular way, with a view to its attainment.

Kant held, therefore, that the absolute imperative of duty has no reference to any external ends to which the will is directed, but simply to the right direction of the will itself.

There is nothing good but the good will; and this is good in itself, not with reference to any external facts. It must have its law entirely within itself. If the imperatives, which it involves were dependent on any of the facts of experience, which are by their nature, contingent. It would itself be contingent, and could not be an absolute law.

It follows from this that the moral law cannot have any particular content. It cannot tell us any particular things that we are to do or to abstain from doing; because all particular things have in them an empirical and contingent element, and the moral law can have no reference to any such element.

Hence the moral law cannot tell us what the matter or content of our actions ought to be; it can only instruct us with regard to the form. But a pure form, without any matter, must be simply the form of law in general. That is to say, the moral law can tell us nothing more than that we are to act in a way that is conformable to law. And this means simply that our actions must have a certain self-consistency that the principle that on, which we act, must be principles that we can adopt throughout the whole of our lives, and that we can apply to the lives of others. Kant is thus led to give as the content of the categorical imperative this formula. Act only on that maxim or principle, which thou canst at the same time, will to become a universal law.

He illustrates the application of this formula by taking such a case as that of breaking promises. It is wrong to break a promise, because the breach of a promise is a kind of action that could not be universalized. If it were a universal rule that every one were to break his promise, whenever he felt inclined, no one would place any reliance on promises. Promises, in fact, would cease to be made. And of course, if they were not made, they could not be broken. Hence it would be impossible for every one to break his promise. And since it is impossible for every one, it must be wrong for any one. The essence of wrongdoing consists in making an exception.

Similarly, it may easily be shown that we could not, without a certain absurdity, have universal suicide or universal stealing, or even universal indifference to the misfortunes of others. Since, then, we cannot really will that every one should do such acts, we have no right to will that we ourselves should do them. In fact, the moral law is-*Lot* only in such a way as you could will that every one else should act under the same general conditions.

Criticism of Kant

It seems clear that the principle laid down by Kant affords in many cases a safe negative guide in conduct. If we cannot will that all men should, under like conditions, act as we are doing, we may

generally be sure that we are wrong. When, however, we endeavor to extract positive guidance from the formula-when we try to ascertain, by means of it, not merely what we should abstain from doing, but what we should do, it begins to appear that it is merely a formal principle, from which no definite matter can be derived and further consideration may lead us to see that it cannot even give us quite satisfactory negative guidance.

We must first observe, however, what was the exact meaning that Kant put upon his principle. It is evident that it might be interpreted in two very different ways. It might be taken to refer to general special of conduct, or it might be taken to refer to particular acts, with all the limitations of time, place and circumstance. It was in the former sense that Kant understood the principle; but it is well to bear in mind that there is also a possibility of the latter interpretation.

The difference between the two might be illustrated, for instance, in the case of stealing. According to the former interpretation, stealing must in all cases be condemned, because its principle cannot be universalized. According to the latter interpretation, it would be necessary, in each particular instance in which there is a temptation to steal, to consider whether it is possible to will that every human being should steal, when placed under precisely similar conditions. The former interpretation would evidently give us a very strict view of duty, while the latter might easily give us a very lax one.

Now if we accept, as Kant does, the former of these two interpretations, it seems clear that the principle is a purely formal one, from which the particular matter of conduct cannot be extracted. In order to apply it at all, we must presuppose certain given material) Thus, in order to show that stealing leads to self-contradiction, we must presuppose the existence of property. It is inconsistent to take the property of another, we recognize the legitimacy of private property but if any one denies this, there is no inconsistency in his acting accordingly.

In order to apply Kant's principle, therefore, it is necessary first to know what presuppositions we are entitled to make. Otherwise, there is scarcely any action that might not be shown to lead to inconsistency. For instance, the relief of distress, the effort after the moral improvement of society, and the like, might be said to lead to inconsistency; for if every one were engaged in these actions, it would be unnecessary for any one to engage in them.

They are necessary only because they are neglected. The only difference between these cases and that of theft or of promise-breaking, is that in the one set of cases the abolition of the activity would lead to what is regarded as a desirable result, the cessation of distress or immorality; while in the other set of cases it would lead to what is regarded as an undesirable result the cessation of property or of promises. But when we ask why the one result is to be regarded as desirable and the other as undesirable, there is no answer from the Kantian point of view. All that the Kantian principle enables us to say is that, assuming certain kinds of conduct to be in general right, we must not make exceptions on our own behalf.

If, on the other hand, we were to adopt the second of the two possible interpretations of the principle of consistency, it would not be possible to derive from it even this very moderate amount of instruction. For to say that we are always to act in such a way that we could will that all other human beings, under exactly the same conditions, should act similarly, is merely to say that we are to act in a way that we approve.

Whenever a man approves of his own course of action, he ipso facto wills that any one else in like conditions should do likewise.

Consequently, from this principle no rule of conducts whatever can be derived. It simply throws us back upon the morality of common sense.

Then when it is right for a man to devote his life to a green cause, it is usually right just because it may be assumed that no one else will do it. Or take the case of celibacy.' For every one to abstain from marriage would be inconsistent with the continuance of the human race on earth; consequently, any one who abstained from marriage for the sake of some benefit to posterity would, from Kant's point of view, be acting inconsistently; yet it seems clear that it is not the duty of every one to marry, and even that it is the duty of some to abstain, and to abstain, too, for the sake of posterity.

It appears, then, that the Kantian principle, interpreted in this way, is much too stringent. On the other hand, if we were to accept the other interpretation, it would be too lax.

For it would then admit of every conceivable exception that we could will to be universally allowed under precisely similar conditions; and this would include everything that human beings do, except when they are consciously doing what they know cannot be justified by any rational plea.

Real Significance of the Kantian Principle

We must not, however, conclude from this that the Kantian principle is to be entirely rejected.' There is a sense in which it is quite complete criterion of the rightness of an action to ask whether it can be consistently carried out. Our moral action is in this respect exactly similar to our intellectual life. An error cannot consistently carry out, and neither can a sin.

But in both cases alike the test is not that of mere formal consistency. We may take up an erroneous idea and hold consistency to it, so long as we confine ourselves to that particular idea. The inconsistency comes in only when we try to fit the erroneous idea into the scheme of the world as a whole. It is with that scheme that error is inconsistent.

In like manner in our moral life we may take up a false principle of action, and we may carry it out. Consistently, and even will that all others should act in accordance with it, so long as we confine our attention to that particular action and its immediate consequences. But so soon as we go beyond this, and consider it's bearing on the whole scheme of life it becomes apparent that we could not will that it should be universalized.

The reason is, not that the action is inconsistent with itself, but rather that it is inconsistent with the unity of our lives as a systematic whole.

But then we have at once to ask--How are we to know what is and what is not consistent with this unity what can we, and what can we not, desire to see universally carried out? This question cannot be answered by any more consideration of formal consistency. We must inquire into the nature of our desires-i.e. We must introduce matter as well as form.

We must ask, in other: words, what is the, nature of the self with which we have to be consistent. `

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from a manual of Ethics by John S.Mackenzie, pages, 132-164)

THE STANDARD AS HAPPINESS

The wider universe may be regarded as higher or better than the narrower one, since it enables us to maintain a more consistent point of view in actions.

From the above consideration we may partly see why it is that one universe is to be regarded as higher or better than another. Still, this does not make it quite clear. For sometimes when we prefer one universe to another, the former does not include the latter, and is not obviously wider than it.

What is the ground of preference in such cases, we shall consider at a later point in this inquiry. But in the meantime, it may be well to notice a plausible explanation of the preference, which we shall see reason afterwards to reject in such subjects as Ethics; erroneous doctrines are often almost as instructive as those that are correct.

Satisfaction of Desires

When a desire attains the end to which it is directed, the desire is satisfied; and this satisfaction is attended by an agreeable feeling, a feeling of pleasure, enjoyment, or happiness. On the other hand, when the end of a desire is not attained, we have a disagreeable feeling, a feeling of pain, misery, or unhappiness.

Now if we act within a wide universe, or within a universe that includes desires that are continually recurring throughout life, we shall be acting in such a way as to satisfy our desires with great frequency, and so to have many feelings of pleasure.

On the other hand, if we act within a narrow universe, or one containing desires that do not often recur, we may have few satisfactions and a frequent occurrence of painful feelings.

Hence it seems plausible to say that, since what we aim at is the satisfaction of our desires, the best aim is that which will bring the greatest number of pleasures and the smallest number of pains.

This consideration would supply us with a criterion of higher and lower universes. The highest universe within which we could act would be that which would supply us with the greatest number of pleasures and the smallest number of pains. The highest universe, in fact, would be that which is constituted by the consideration of our greatest happiness throughout life; or, if we consider others as well as ourselves, by the consideration of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. This leads us to the consideration of Hedonism.

Idea behind Hedonism

The basic idea behind hedonistic thought is that pleasure is the only thing that is good for a person. This is often used as a justification for evaluating actions in terms of how much *pleasure* and how little *pain* they produce. In very simple terms, a hedonist strives to maximize this net pleasure (pleasure minus pain). The nineteenth-century British philosopher J. S. Mill defended the ethical theory of utilitarianism according to which we should perform whichever action is best for everyone. Conjoining hedonism, as a view as to what is good for people, to utilitarianism has the result that all action should be directed toward achieving the greatest amount of happiness for everyone. Though consistent in their pursuit of happiness, Bentham and Mill's versions of hedonism differ. There are two somewhat basic schools of thought on hedonism:

- One school, grouped around Bentham, defends a quantitative approach. Bentham believed that the value of a pleasure could be quantitatively understood. Essentially, he believed the value of a pleasure to be its intensity multiplied by its duration - so it was not just the number of pleasures, but their intensity and how long they lasted that must be taken into account.
- Other proponents, like Mill, argue a qualitative approach. Mill believed that there can be different levels of pleasure - higher quality pleasure is better than lower quality pleasure. Mill also argues that simpler beings have an easier access to the simpler pleasures; since they do not see other aspects of life, they can simply indulge in their pleasures. The more elaborate beings tend to spend more thought on other matters and hence lessen the time for simple pleasure. It is therefore more difficult for them to indulge in such "simple pleasures" in the same manner.

Critics of the quantitative approach assert that, generally, "pleasures" do not necessarily share common traits besides the fact that they can be seen as "pleasurable. Critics of the qualitative approach argue that whether one pleasure is higher than another depends on factors other than how pleasurable it is. For example, the pleasure of sadism is a more base pleasure because it is morally unpalatable, and not because it is lacking in pleasure.

While some maintain that there is no standard for what constitutes pleasurable activities, most contemporary hedonists believe that pleasure and pain are easily distinguished and pursue the former.

Varieties of Hedonism

Hedonism is the general term for those theories that regard happiness or pleasure as the supreme end of life. It is derived from the Greek word "hedone" meaning pleasure. These theories have taken many different forms. It has been held by some that men always do seek pleasure; that pleasure in some form is always the ultimate object of desire; whereas other Hedonists confine themselves to the view that men ought always to seek pleasure. The former theory has been called by Prof. Sedgwick, Psychological Hedonism, because it simply affirms the seeking of pleasure as a psychological fact; whereas he describes the other theory as Ethical Hedonism.

Again, some have held that what each man seeks, or ought to seek, is his own pleasure; while others hold that what each seeks, or ought to seek, is the pleasure of all human beings, or even of all sentient creatures. Professor Sedgwick called the former of these views Egoistic Hedonism; the latter, Universalistic Hedonism. The latter has also been called Utilitarianism which, however, is a very inappropriate name.

(Most of the earlier ethical Hedonists were also psychological Hedonists; but this latter view has now been almost universally abandoned. Egoistic Hedonism has also been generally abandoned. Its chief upholders were the ancient Cyrenaics and Epicureans, Some more modern writers, however, such as Bentham (1748-1842) and Mill (1806-1873)--did not clearly distinguish between egoistic and universalistic Hedonism.)

(*The Methods of Ethics* is a book by Sedgwick) in which he defines three basic methods of ethics:

(1) Egoistic hedonism, (2) intuitionism, and (3) universalistic hedonism. The analysis of these methods attempts to determine the extent to which they are compatible or incompatible. Sedgwick describes how each method may provide its own definition of the ultimate goal of ethical conduct. For egoistic hedonism, the private happiness of each individual may be the ultimate good. For intuitionism, moral virtue or perfection may be the ultimate good. For universalistic hedonism, the general happiness of all individuals may be the ultimate good. Sedgwick describes how each of these methods may define rational principles of conduct and how they may each interpret moral duty differently.

Methods of ethics are rational procedures which enable us to determine what we should voluntarily do (or what it is right for us to do) in a particular situation. Ethics is a study of the principles that govern right action or conduct. It is different from politics, because it is concerned with what is right for each individual, while politics is concerned with what is right for society. It is also a philosophical rather than a scientific inquiry, because it is mainly concerned with what *ought* to be, rather than with what *is*. However, judgments about what *ought* to happen in a particular situation often depend upon judgments about what actually *is* happening in that situation, and thus ethical judgments may often depend upon scientific judgments.

Psychological hedonism should be distinguished from ethical hedonism. Psychological hedonism affirms that the motives of human action are to be found in the pursuit of pleasure or in the avoidance of pain. Ethical hedonism, on the other hand, asserts that actions are good insofar as they produce pleasure or prevent pain. Psychological hedonism is a theory of psychological motivation, while ethical hedonism is a theory of ethical conduct. Psychological hedonism and ethical hedonism may be either in agreement or disagreement with each other, and they may be either combined or separated as methods of defining the ultimate goal of moral conduct.

Ethical hedonism may be divided into egoistic hedonism (including Epicureanism) and universalistic hedonism (including utilitarianism). While egoistic hedonism affirms that each individual should aim to promote his own happiness, universalistic hedonism affirms that each individual should aim to promote the happiness of all individuals.

Egoistic and universalistic principles may be combined in ethical hedonism, because individuals may rightly or wrongly believe that promoting their own private happiness will promote the general happiness of all individuals. However, the egoistic principle that the private happiness of each individual is more important than the general happiness of all individuals may not be compatible with the universalistic principle that an individual should sacrifice some of his own happiness for the sake of the happiness of other individuals. The egoist may consider his own private happiness to be the ultimate good, while the universalism (or utilitarian) may consider the general happiness of all individuals to be the ultimate good.

Insofar as some actions may be judged intuitively to be right or wrong, these actions may be judged as right or wrong on the basis of their motives or other intrinsic qualities. Intuitionism affirms that some actions may be intrinsically right or wrong, regardless of their consequences. It also affirms that some actions may be judged as right or wrong, regardless of how these actions compare with actions which are required by moral duty.

Sedgwick defines a moral duty as a right action for which a moral motive is at least occasionally necessary. A duty is an action that is obligatory and that is owed to someone or to something. Types of moral duty include duty to one's family, duty to one's friends, duty to one's community, duty to one's country, duty to those from whom one has received help, duty to those who are in need, and duty to those who are suffering.

Sedgwick defines virtue as a praiseworthy quality which is exhibited in right conduct and which extends beyond the limits of moral duty. Practical wisdom and rational self-control are intellectual virtues, while benevolence and common humanity are moral virtues. Justice, good faith, veracity, gratitude, generosity, courage, and humility as other moral virtues.

An important question which must be considered by any method of ethics is whether some actions are intrinsically good or whether they are good merely as a means to attain an ultimate good. Another important question to be considered is whether there is a reliable way of deciding which action should be performed in a particular situation in order to achieve the ultimate goal of moral conduct. Another important question is how to determine the ultimate goal of moral conduct. Ethical hedonism defines the highest good as the greatest amount of happiness that is attainable by an individual or by a society. It affirms that the greatest amount of happiness that is attainable by an individual or society is equal to the sum of the greatest amount of pleasure or pain that may be produced by the actions of that individual or society. However, the quantitative method of empirical hedonism may not always be reliable in determining which action is the best means to attain an ultimate good.

Egoistic hedonism and universalistic hedonism may be described as intuitive methods of ethics if they intuitively accept the principle that the enjoyment of pleasure and the avoidance of pain are the only rational aims of human action. They may intuitively rely on psychological hedonism as a theory of motivation, but they do not always rely on it as a theory of motivation. Moreover, they may disagree with the intuitionist principle that the rightness or wrongness of some actions does not depend on the consequences of those actions.

Sedgwick explains that universalistic hedonism should be clearly distinguished from egoistic hedonism. Universalistic hedonism affirms that all individuals have an equal right to be happy and that there is no individual whose happiness is more important than that of any other individual. It also affirms that the rightness or wrongness of actions depends on whether or not they promote universal happiness. Moral virtues such as benevolence, generosity, and good citizenship may be better promoted by universalistic hedonism than by egoistic hedonism, says Sedgwick.

However, Sedgwick admits that a problem with universalistic hedonism is that an individual may have to decide whether an action is right or wrong by estimating not only how much personal happiness will be produced by the action but also how much general happiness will be produced by the action. An individual may have to be able to compare the pleasures or pains of other individuals with his own pleasures or pains. Thus, an individual may have to be able to estimate the total amount of his own pleasure or pain and may have to be able to estimate the total amount of the pleasure or pain that may be experienced by other individuals.

Sedgwick Proof of Universalistic Hedonism

Sedgwick's argument in support of Universalistic Hedonism is perhaps the most thorough and convincing that has ever been set forth. His doctrine is, to some extent, a reproduction of that of Butler with regard to conscience; but it has much greater clearness and definiteness on some fundamental points—a definiteness that has been largely gained by the partial adoption of the views of Kant.

Sedgwick, like Butler, bases his doctrine on the authority of Conscience; and he agrees with Kant in identifying Conscience with Practical Reason. The fundamental requirement of morality, according to Sedgwick, is that we should place ourselves at the point of view of Reason, and obey its dictates.

This yields the conception of Justice, which has two main requirements. We must be just to ourselves; and Sedgwick interprets this as meaning that we must be impartial—the treatment of all the moments of our lives; and, in choosing our own pleasures, the future is to be regarded as of equal weight with the present. In like manner also, the pleasures of others are to be regarded as of equal weight with our own.

It might be thought that in this way Sedgwick had overthrown egoistic Hedonism and had shown universalistic hedonism to be the only reasonable Hedonistic theory. But, for some reason which it is not altogether easy to follow, he does not consider this to be the case. So far as can be made out, the reason seems to be that what is primarily our good is our own pleasure; and it is only in a secondary way that we discover that the pleasure of others ought to be equally regarded.

Now, this secondary discovery cannot overthrow the first primary truth. Hence we are bound still to regard our own pleasure as a supreme good. For this reason, Sedgwick considered that there is a certain contradiction or dualism in the final recommendations of reason.

We are bound to seek our own greatest pleasure, and yet we are bound also to seek the greatest pleasure of the aggregate of sentient beings. Now, these two ends may not, and probably will not, coincide. There is thus a conflict between two different commands of reason. This conflict is referred to by Dr. Sedgwick as “the Dualism of Practical Reason. But if there is any force in this consideration, it seems as if we might carry it further, and say that there is a similar conflict between the pursuits of our own greatest pleasure at a given moment and the pursuit of the greatest happiness of life as a whole.

For it is the pleasure of a given moment that appears to be primarily desirable.

At any given moment what seems desirable is the satisfaction of our present wants. Consequently, on the same principle, we might say that we are bound to seek the greatest pleasure of a given moment no less than the greatest pleasure of our whole life. There would thus be three kinds of hedonism instead of two, the “Cyrenaic” view being recognized as well as the Epicurean and the “Benthamite”.

However, it is perhaps scarcely worth while to consider which form of Hedonism is the most reasonable, as they seem all to be based on a misconception.

Kinds of Happiness

Further reflection on what is meant by happiness must lead to the conviction that the term is highly ambiguous. Even J.S. Mill, has recognized that there are differences of quality among pleasure, and, as soon as this is recognized, it is hard to see how we can speak of “greatest happiness” as the object that is to be aimed at.

Further reflection; however, seems to show that the differences among Hedonic experiences are sometimes differences of kind, rather than of quality. What is primarily meant by pleasure would seem to

be the simple Hedonic tone of elementary sense experiences, such as are presumably present in the consciousness of most animals. The apprehension of satisfactory condition of life as a whole, which appears to be what is properly meant by happiness, is probably only possible for human beings, and cannot be regarded merely as a sum of pleasures. Again, the apprehension of a satisfactory state of existence in a social group is perhaps best expressed by the term joy, as in Wordsworth's phrase, "joy in widest commonalty spread." That also can hardly be interpreted as the sum of the happiness of the individuals composing the group.

It depends on our thinking of the group as a composite unity of a super-personal kind. What Carlyle meant by blessedness again may perhaps be interpreted as referring to the satisfaction that is felt in the contemplation of existence as a whole, what has sometimes been expressed by the term "cosmic emotions.

These different types of satisfaction may all be said to involve a certain Hedonic tone; but they are so different from one another that it is misleading to treat them as qualities of the same thing. They are different modes of valuation; and they can only be properly considered in connection with the general subject of value. To this more definite reference will be made in the chapter after next.

Ideal Utilitarianism

In the elaborate work by Dean Rashdall on *The Theory of Good and Evil*, an attempt is made to state a utilitarian theory which does not rest upon the view that either Pleasure or Happiness is to be regarded as the moral end. He still called his view "utilitarian" because he conceived that moral goodness is to be regarded as a means to an end larger than itself—an end that includes pleasure and happiness along with other intrinsic values. Further reference will be made to this somewhat complex theory at a later stage.

It is doubtful whether it ought to be described as utilitarian, since it recognizes that moral goodness is part of the supreme end of life, and not merely means to an end other than itself.

It approximates to the view of Aristotle, that the moral life is to be pursued for the sake of its "beauty," This is a theory of the end as intrinsic value, to which reference will be made in a subsequent chapter.

Kant's Composite Theory of the Moral end

In connection with the view of happiness as the end, it may be well to refer here to the composite theory that was maintained by Kant.

Although Kant is best known in Ethics by his doctrine of the Categorical Imperative, referred to in the previous chapter, yet he did also recognize a moral end as well as a moral law; and it is closely connected both with this view of the end that we have been considering in the present chapter, and also with the one that is dealt with in the following chapter. His thought that the end that is aimed at in the moral is twofold the Perfection of us and the Happiness of others.

What we rightly seek for ourselves is the 'development of the Good Will, in the sense that was explained in preceding lesson. On the other hand, what we rightly seek for others is happiness in a sense that is not very precisely defined.

Something may undoubtedly be said in defense of this view. It is evident that we cannot, in any very direct way, cultivate the moral attitude in others, especially if we are bachelors like Kant, and not the preachers or moral instructors by profession; and consequently this cannot be said to be a supreme end for most of us to aim at, though it may be a subordinate end.

On the other hand, to make our own happiness a supreme aim would be a form of egoism that could hardly be reconciled with the categorical imperative.

He did not, if I understand him rightly, mean that our own happiness is of no account. This would seem to be incompatible with the view that it is part of the end that should be aimed at by others. His own life, though simple, could hardly be called, as any extreme sense, ascetic. Nor again does he appear, to have meant that we were not to take any interest in the cultivation of the moral will in others.

This would hardly have been consistent with his own work as an educator. His point seems to have been that we could, in the most absolute sense, cultivate the good will in ourselves; whereas we could only cultivate it somewhat indirectly in others; while, on the other hand, it would be fatal to endeavor to promote our own happiness in any sense in which we ought not to aim equally at the promotion of happiness in all others.

That there is some ground for this recognition of a double and is thus apparent, especially if happiness is thought of in a purely hedonistic sense; but it can hardly be allowed that the real good of others can be different from our own real good.

To press such a distinction would seem to involve thinking of others as if they were a superior sort of animals, rather than responsible human beings. If we are to recognize an end for human action at all, it would seem that it must be an end for all.

Bradley and Kant's view

Kant's view is rightly characterized by Bradley as that of 'Duty for Duty's Sake, and is contrasted with the utilitarian view which is described as that of "Pleasure for Pleasure's Sake." Professor Dewey, in like manner, describes the Kantian system as furnishing us with merely "Formal Ethics," and as being a "theory which attempts to find the good not only in the will itself, but in the will irrespective of any end to be reached by the will.' It appears to me that there is some exaggeration in this.

Kant considered that we must do our duty out of pure respect for the law of reason, and not from any anticipation of pleasure; but he nowhere, so far as I am aware, suggests that there is any merit in the absence of pleasure. On the contrary, though he does not regard happiness as the direct end at which the virtuous man is to aim, he yet believes that, in any complete account of the supreme human good, happiness must be included as well as virtue though in subordination to virtue.

Indeed, he even considered that, unless we had grounds for believing that the two elements, virtue and happiness, are ultimately to be found united, the very foundation of morality would be destroyed.

Summum bonum

Thus he says

"In the summum bonum which is practical for us, i.e. to be realized by our will, virtue and happiness are thought a necessarily combined, so that the one cannot be assumed by pure practical reason without the other also being attached to it. Now this combination {like every other} is either analytic: or synthetically. It has been shown that it cannot be analytical it must then be synthetically, and, more particularly, must conceived as the connection of cause and effect, since it concerns a practical good, i.e. one that is possible by means of action; consequently either the desire of happiness must the motive to maxims of virtue or the maxim of virtue must be the efficient cause of happiness.

The first is absolutely impossible, because [as was proved in the Analytic) maxims which place the determining principles of the will in the desire of personal happiness are not moral at all, and no virtue can be founded on them. But the second is also impossible, because the practical connection of cause and effects in the world, as the result of the determination of the will, does not depend upon the moral dispositions of the will, but on the knowledge of the laws nature and the physic power to use them for one's purposes; consequently we cant expect in the world by the most punctilious observance the moral laws any necessary connection of happiness with virtue, adequate to the summum bonum.

Now as the promotion of this summum bonum, the conception of which contains this connection, is o priori a necessary object of our will and inseparably attached to the moral law, the impossible of the former must prove the falsity of the latter. If then supreme good is not possible by practical rules, then moral law also which commands us to promote it is directed to vain imaginary ends, and must consequently be false.

Kant's view, then, was that the supreme aim of the virtuous man is simply that of conforming to this law of reason i.e. according to him, the law of formal consistency. He must not pursue virtue for the sake of happiness, but purely for the sake of duty.

Virtuous and Happiness

Further, Kant considers that though the virtuous man does not aim at happiness, yet the complete well-being of a human being includes happiness as well as virtue. And apparently he thought that if we had no ground for believing that the two elements are ultimately conjoined, the ground of morality itself would be removed. For morality rests on a demand of reason; and the possibility of attaining the summum bonum is also a demand of reason. If the demands of reason were chimerical in the latter case, they would be equally discredited in the former.

He solves this problem by postulating the existence of God, "as the necessary condition of the possibility of the summum bonum.

From this it will be seen that Kant did not really regard his moral rigorism as being in any way opposed to human happiness.

Indeed it may be doubted whether such an opposition has ever been made by any serious school of moralists. Bentham, indeed (at least as represented by Dumont), contrasts his utilitarian theory with what he calls "the Ascetic Principle," saying of the latter that "those who follow it have a horror of pleasures. Everything which gratifies the senses, in their view, is odious and criminal. They found morality upon privations, and virtue upon the renouncement of one's self.

In one word, the reverse of the partisans of utility, they prove everything which tends to enjoyment; they blame everything which tends to augment it." But this description would evidently not apply to Kant or perhaps to any school of moralists, if we accept some of the extremists of the Cynics.

Bentham himself, in the passage from which the above extract is taken, does not prior to any philosophic writers, but only to the Jansenists and some other theologians. Even the Stoics" to whom certainly Kant bears a strong resemblance) did not regard the sacrifice of happiness as in itself a good.

On the contrary, as Kant himself remarks both the Stoics and Epicureans were agreed in identifying virtue with happiness: only while the Epicureans held that the pursuit of happiness is virtue, Stoics held, contrariwise, that the pursuit of virtue is happiness, however, that the moral end might rightly be said to consist in the promotion of our own perfection and the happiness of others.

It is evident enough that there is some ground for this distinction. If moral "perfection consists in the right direction of the will, it seems clear that it is only over our own wills that we have any direct control. Our own happiness, on the other hand, especially in the non-Hedonistic sense of welfare, is so directly an object of pursuit that it does not call for any particular emphasis. Hence the distinction between the two ends may be, to some extent, justified.

But it may be doubted whether it can be regarded as strictly valid. Parents at least, teachers, preachers, statesmen, even poets and dramatists, seem to be rightly concerned with the moral perfection of others, as well as their happiness.

Shakespeare indeed, in one of his epilogues, professed that his object was only "to please," but it may be doubted whether his purpose in writing *Macbeth* or *King Lear* could be supposed to be only that of promoting happiness.

At any rate, some more recent dramatists show a more obvious moral end.

And there are many other famous writers whose aim is still more obviously prophetic in the moral sense of that term.

Ordinary life and moral criticism

Even in ordinary life, moral criticism appears to play a considerable and surely a quite legitimate part. On the other hand if our happiness consists largely, it surely does in the successful fulfillment of our proper

functions, each person would seem to be more concerned with the achievement of this object for himself than for others.

Hence it seems doubtful whether more than a relative distinction can be drawn between the scopes of the two ends.

In a limited sense, however, it seems right to say that we are most directly concerned with the goodness of our own wills, and that our main duty to others is to help to promote their happiness, or at least to avoid doing anything that would tend to injure them or give them unnecessary pain. On the whole, Therefore, Kant may be taken, when somewhat liberally interpreted, as one of our safest guides in morals. But the idea of perfection that he thus introduces is one that calls for further consideration.

It may be doubted whether it can be satisfactorily interpreted as meaning simply the right direction of the will.

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from a manual of Ethics by John S.Mackenzie, pages 164-195 <http://www.hedonismhotels.com/glossary>

THE STANDARD AS PERFECTION

Application of Evolution to Morals

The idea that the end at which we are to aim, or one of the ends, is the realization of the self or the development of character, leads us at once to regard the moral life as a process of growth. Although this idea has often been applied to the moral life in former ages; yet it is chiefly in recent times that the conception has been made prominent.

The whole idea of growth or development the idea of "evolution," as it is called may almost be said to be a discovery of the present century. It was first brought into prominence in the treatment of philosophical studies by Hegel (1770-1831) and Comte (1798-1857); it was applied by Lamarck, Darwin and others to the origin of species, while, in more recent years, H. Spencer and other still more recent writers have extended its applications to the origin of social institutions, forms of government, and the like, and even to the formation of the solar and stellar systems.

With these applications we are not here concerned.

We have to deal only with the application of the idea of evolution to morals. And even with this application we have to deal only in a certain aspect. We are not concerned at present with the fact that the moral life of individuals and nations undergoes a gradual growth or development in the course of years or ages. This is a fact of moral history, whereas here we are concerned only with the theory of that which is essential to the very nature of morality. When we say, then, that the idea of evolution is applicable to the moral life, we mean that the moral life is, in its very essence, a growth or development. The sense in which it is so will, it is hoped, become apparent as we proceed.

Development of Life

We may say, to begin with, that what we mean is this. There is in the moral life of man a certain end or ideal, to which he may attain, or of which he may fall short; and the significance of his life consists in the pursuit of this end or ideal, and the gradual attainment of it.

We may illustrate what we mean by reference to the forms of animal life. Among animals there are some that we naturally regard as standing higher in the scale of being than others.

We judge them to be higher by reference to certain (it may be a somewhat vague) standard that we have in our minds whether it be, as with Herbert Spencer, the standard of adaptation to their environment, or the standard of approximation to the human type, or whatever else it may be.

Now, if we are right in supposing that there is a continuous development going on throughout the species of animal existence, the main significance of this development will lie in the evolution of forms of life that approach more and more nearly to the standard or ideal type. Similarly, the evolutionary theory of Ethics is the view that there is a standard or ideal of character, and that the significance of the moral life consists in the gradual approximation to that type. Higher and lower views of development

In all development, there is a beginning, a process and an end. The developing being starts from a certain level and moves onwards towards a higher level. Now, in general, what is presented to us is neither the beginning nor the end, but the process. The lowest forms of animal life do not often come before our notice, and the nature of the lowest of all is quite obscure.

Nor do we know what possibilities there may be of still further development in the forms of animal life. The starting-point and the goal are alike concealed from us: we see only the race.

So it is also with the moral life. The earliest beginnings of the moral consciousness are hidden in obscurity; and, on the other hand, we can scarcely form a clear conception of a perfectly developed moral life. We know it only in the course of its development. Nevertheless, we cannot understand the process except by reference either to its beginning or to its end.

And we may endeavor to understand it by reference either to the one or to the other.

Hence there are two possible methods of interpreting the moral life, if we adopt the theory of development. We may explain it by reference to its beginning or to its end. The former is perhaps the more natural method; as it is most usual to explain phenomena by their causes and mode of origination. But further consideration seems to show that this is in reality the lower and less satisfactory method. Let us consider briefly the nature and merits of the two methods.

Explanation by Beginning

It seems most natural at first to endeavor to explain the moral life by tracing it back to its origin in the needs of savages, or even in the struggles of the lower animals. It is in this way that we explain ordinary natural phenomena, such as the formation of geological strata, and even the growth and decline of nations.

We go back to the beginning, or as near to the beginning as we can get, and trace the causes that have been in operation throughout the development of the object of our study. We do not inquire what the end of it will be. To inquire into this would, in general, throw little, if any, light upon its actual condition. Ought not the development of morals to be studied in the same way.

The answer seems clear. The study of Ethics, as we have already pointed out, occupies quite a different point of view from that of the natural sciences. It is not concerned with the investigation of origins and with the tracing of history, but with the determination of ideals and the consideration of the way in which these ideals influence conduct.

Now the ideal lies at the end rather than at the beginning. In dealing with natural phenomena we are concerned primarily with what is, and secondarily with the way in which it has come to be what it is. In Ethics, on the other hand, it is of comparatively little interest to know what is "Man partly is, and wholly hopes to be." It is what he hopes to be that determines the direction of his growth.

The meaning of this, however, may become clearer if we direct attention for a little to the theory of one of the earliest of those writers who have endeavored to deal with the moral life by tracing it back to its origin.

Herbert Spencer's view of Ethics

We can summarize his theory about ethics that the essence of life is the continuous adjustment of internal relations to external relations.

Criticism Herbert Spencer's view

His idea was criticized because i-e the scientific man perceives that his ideas are not fully adjusted to the facts of nature, and he pursues knowledge in order that he may adjust them more completely, but a stone is adjusted to its environment without the need of any such effort.

The scientific man is aware of a want of adjustment simply because he is aware of an unattained end—in other words, because he brings an ideal with him to which the world does not conform.

But if this be so, then surely we ought to turn the statement the other way about. We ought not to say that the deficiency of living beings, which the development of their lives is gradually removing, consists in the fact that they are not adjusted to their environment; but rather, at least in the case of self-conscious beings, that the deficiency consists in the fact that their environment is not adjusted to them. For, it is not in the environment, but in themselves, that the standard lies, with reference to which a deficiency is pronounced. If a man were content to "let the world slide," he would soon enough become adjusted to his environment; it is because he insists on pursuing his own ends that the process of adjustment is a hard one. It is because he wants to adjust his environment to himself; or rather, because he wants to adjust both himself and his surroundings to a certain ideal of what his life ought to be. Even in the case of the lower animals, indeed, it would often be as true to say that they adjust their environment to themselves as that they adjust themselves to their environment.

In any case, adjustment seems to have no meaning unless we presuppose some ideal form of adjustment, some end that is consciously or unconsciously sought. But, if so, then it is surely rather with the idea of

this end that we ought to start than with the mere idea of the process of adjustment, in which the end is presupposed. Though it seems natural to begin at the beginning in our explanation and move on, through the process, to the end; yet since in this case it is the end by which the process is determined, it is rather at the end that we ought to begin.

Views of other Evolutionists

H. Spencer's theory is distinguished from that of most other writers of the evolutionist school by the distinctions with which he recognizes an ultimate and absolute end to which conduct is directed.

Although he begins his explanation from below, from the beginning, from the simplest forms of life, he yet leads up to the conception of an absolute end.

Hence he insists on the need of treating Ethics from a teleological point of view and indeed carries his conception of an ultimate end so far that he even propounds the idea of an absolute system of Ethics, not relating to the present world at all, but rather to a world in which the adjustment to environment shall have been completely brought about.

Most other evolutionists have repudiated this absolute Ethics, and have also avoided the statement of any absolute end to which we are moving. Thus, Sir Leslie Stephen seems to content himself with the idea of health or efficiency. "A moral rule is a statement of a condition of social welfare.

Virtue means efficiency with a view to the maintenance of social equilibrium. This theory does not require any view of an ultimate end to which society is moving; but simply takes society as it finds it, and regards its preservation and equilibrium as the end to be aimed at.

Prof. Alexander's view

Prof. Alexander adopts a view which is substantially the same. Thus he says "An act or person is measured by a certain standard or criterion of conduct, which has been called the moral ideal. This moral ideal is an adjusted order of conduct, which is based upon contending inclinations and establishes equilibrium between them. Goodness is nothing but this adjustment in the equilibrated whole." This view of Ethics bears a close relation to the doctrine of the development of animal life which was set forth by Darwin.

According to Darwin's view, the development of animals' species takes place by means of a "struggle for existence," in which "the fittest" survive. This process is commonly referred to as one of "natural selection."

In the same way, the view of Sir L. Stephen and Prof. Alexander is that in the moral life there is a process of natural selection in which the most efficient or the most perfectly equilibrated type of conduct is preserved. The connection between this theory and that of Darwin has been well worked out by Prof. Alexander in an article on "Natural Selection Morale" and as this seems to me to contain perhaps best summary statement that we have in English of the attempt to explain morality from below, it may be worth while to indicate briefly its general scope and gist.

Natural Selection in Morals

"Natural Selection" says Mr. Alexander, is a name for the process by which different species with characteristic structures contend for supremacy and one prevails and becomes relatively permanent." the case of animal life the struggle is primarily one between different individuals or sets of individuals, some of which die out, while the more fit survive.

It is not exactly so in morals. "The war of natural selection is carried on in human affairs not against weaker or incompatible individuals, but against their ideals or modes of life. It does not suffer any modes of life to prevail or persist but one which is compatible with social welfare. What happens in the animal world is that certain individuals or acts of individuals happen to be born with peculiar natural gifts. These gifts turn out to be such as make them more fit to survive than other individuals and accordingly they do survive, and transmit their characteristics to their descendants, while their loss

favoured rivals die out. In the case of morals, however, we are dealing not with animals as such, but with minds." In such cases "we have something of the following kind"

"A person arises (or a few persons) whose feelings, modified by more or less deliberate reflection, incline him to a new course of conduct. He dislikes cruelty or discourtesy, or he objects to seeing women with inferior freedom, or to the unlimited opportunity of intoxication.

He may stand alone and with only a few friends to support him. His proposal may excite ridicule or scorn or hatred; and if he is a great reformer, he may endure hardship and obloquy, or even death at the hands of the great body of persons whom he offends.

By degrees his ideas spread more and more; people discover that they have similar leanings; they are persuaded by him; their previous antagonism to him is replaced by attachment to the new mode of conduct, the new political institution.

The new ideas gather every day fresh strength, until at last they occupy the minds of a majority of persons, or even of nearly all.

"Persuasion and education, in fact, without destruction, replace here the process of propagation of its own species and destruction of the rival ones, which in the natural world species become numerically strong and persistent. Persuasion corresponds to the extermination of the rivals.

For "the victory of mind over mind consists in persuasion" Thus, then, the origin of moral ideals, like the origin of species, is to be explained by a process of natural selection.

Need of Teleology

Now there can be no doubt that all this is very suggestive and instructive; but if it is to be taken as a complete account of the moral ideal, it labors under a fatal defect. It is a mere natural history of the growth of the moral life. In dealing with animal life we may well be content with a mere natural history. In this case we do not want to know much more than the nature of the species that exist and that have existed, and the circumstances that have led them to survive or perish. We are not much interested to inquire what right man has to extirpate the wolf.

Hegel View of Ethics

The general views of Hegel, so far as they bear upon Ethics, have now been made accessible to English readers by the writings of Edward Caird, William Wallace, T. H. Green, F. H. Bradley, B. Bosanquet, J. Ellis Mc Taggart and others.

His philosophy as a whole is somewhat complicated and difficult; and the essential features of it can only be very briefly indicated here. His general point of view was idealistic.

He conceived of the universe as a spiritual evolution, culminating in the life of man and the end at which man aims is the fullest realization of his spiritual nature. Human history is to be interpreted as a gradual process upwards towards the realization of the truest and most perfect form of self-consciousness.

The general view of Ethics that is thus suggested has been made more or less familiar to English students both by translations and commentaries and, more notably, by the writings of some English philosophers who were, more or less definitely, his disciples, especially T. H. Green and F. H. Bradley.

Bradley's book called *Ethical Studies* was the first book in which Hegel's view was at all definitely presented to English and it is still, in many respects, the clearest and the most brilliantly written.

A second edition has, however, been recently issued. Green's *Prolegomena to Ethics* can only be partly regarded as the transition from the point of view of Kant to a view of self-realization that is at least substantially in accordance with the view of Hegel.

The general meaning of self-realization must, I hope, have become apparent to readers of this Manual. It does not, of course, mean individual selfishness, but rather the attainment of what I have been trying

throughout to make clear as the attainment of a comprehensive point of view from which the good of all ceases to be distinguishable, in essence, from the good of each.

Each person is regarded as having his place and function in a social system that is aiming, with more or less complete consciousness, at the realization of a perfect humanity ; and what is important for each individual is to find his appropriate 'station' within that system, and to fulfill the duties that belong to that station.

It is, of course, not suggested that it is always easy to do this. But the essential point is that we must not think of ourselves as private individuals, each seeking an independent good of his own but rather as members of a social system which is seeking, with more or less clearness of vision, to realize the most perfect type of human existence. It is urged that the duty of each individual is to try to End what he can do for the service of the moral system of which he is a constituent, contributing his part, however small, to the advancement of the system to which he essentially belongs.

His true 'happiness' lies in this, not in the enjoyment of individual pleasure. Happiness, thus conceived, means, at the same time, obedience to law; but the law to which obedience is due is not the external law of the State, nor yet is it a purely internal law, such as Kant appeared to set forth in his 'categorical imperative. It is the law that is gradually shaped by the developing consciousness of the community in its efforts to attain the highest perfection of which human nature is capable.

It is evident that a view of this kind is not free from difficulties. It implies a degree of confidence in the evolutionary forces that are at work in the course of human history that it is not always easy to justify. We need not doubt 'that through the ages one increasing purpose runs' but it is clear that it does not always run quite straight.

It needs the conscious efforts of great prophets or rulers, what Carlyle called 'heroes' to guide it in the right path; and this means that the end at which we aim has to be determined by reflection, not accepted by tradition: Hence we are thrown back, after all, on the reflective consciousness of the individual. This was recognized more fully by T. H. Green than it was by Bradley; and he is, consequently, in some respects at least, the safer guide.

Some considerations bearing upon this will have to be dealt with in the sequel. Subject to such qualifications, however, we may accept the idea of self-realization through the growth of the social consciousness of humanity as at least an approximately correct formulation of the moral end. It supplies us both with a law and with a conception of happiness-the happiness that is found in fulfilling one's proper function in an organized community.

But it calls for a good deal of further determination, and does not very readily supply guidance to individuals in cases of moral difficulty. For communities may be badly organized; and societies, as well as individuals, may act wrongly.

It may be well, however, at this point, to notice a little more definitely the particular way in which the idea of self-realization was made accessible to English readers by the interpretation of Hegel, and more particularly by the writings of Green and Bradley.

The Influence of Hegelianism on Modern Ethics

The recent developments of Ethical thought in this country have been very largely influenced, directly or indirectly, by the Hegelian system. Edward Caird, in his great work on Kant, sought to show how the transition is to be made from the Kantian point of view to that of Hegel. Green, in his Prolegomena to Ethics, was engaged on the same task, with more explicit reference to the development of a systematic view of Ethics; and his work has probably been more influential than that of any other writer in leading up to a view that is at least closely akin to that of Hegel. It was, however, F. H. Bradley who first made the general point of view of Hegel accessible to English readers in his *Ethical Studies*. His treatment was largely critical of other theories, rather than directly constructive.

Mc Taggart, in his book "Studies in Hegelian Cosmology" and some of his other writings, gave a critical account of several aspects of the Hegelian theory of Ethics and his treatment of them had a very considerable influence on Rashdall's work in his *Theory of Good and Evil*.

Bosanquet, in many of his writings, was very largely influenced by the teaching of Hegel, but, in his later work, he laid the chief emphasis on the conception of Value and he may, consequently, be best regarded as having made the transition from the conception of self-realization to that which is dealt with in the following chapter of this Manual.

The transition is, however, a comparatively easy one. The realization of the highest self means the realization of the supreme values in life. But the term 'self-realization' is apt to suggest a too individualistic view of the moral end; though it would be quite unfair to suggest that, as understood either by Hegel or by his leading followers, it carried any such implication.

In any case, it is apt to strike many readers as somewhat vague. Adamson remarked 'Self-realization' has always impressed me as a conundrum rather than as its solution.' Caird tried to give it greater definiteness by speaking of 'self-realization through self-sacrifice, but this at least suggests the problem.

What is the self that is to be realized, and what is the self that is to be sacrificed? A partial answer has already been suggested by the conception of higher and lower universes. It is the comprehensive self that is to be realized, the narrow self that is to be sacrificed.

But 'comprehensive' seems too quantitative an expression to be quite satisfactory for this purpose. If, on the other hand, we say that the self that is to be realized is the self that contains the supreme values,

we are taking value as our criterion; and I think it is true to say that modern ethical speculation is tending more and more to seek the ultimate test in that conception.

This applies not merely to those who, like Bosanquet, have been led to it along the Hegelian line, but quite as much to others, of whom Dr. G. E. Moore is perhaps the most notable, who have been led to it along lines that may almost be said to be the opposite. It is a view to which idealists and realists seem to be inevitably led. In the case of Nietzsche it becomes the conception of the realization of the 'Superman' and this, according to him, involves a "Transvaluation of all values"

I think we may say that the conception of the highest mode of life may be arrived at biologically. As by Spencer, as meta-physically or as by Green, speculatively. As by Nietzsche, or by the pure intuition of what is good. As by Dr. Moore, or finally, as by Bosanquet, by the simple interpretation of Value.

But Value may be said to be the dominating conception in all these theories; and the more definite consideration of that must be left to the following chapter. In the meantime some reference to Green's method of treatment may help to make the general conception of self-realization somewhat clearer.

Green's view of Ethics

Green's doctrine is stated in his great work entitled *Prolegomena to Ethics*, one of the most considerable contributions to ethical thought that were made in England in the last century. Green taught that the essential element in the nature of man is the rational or spiritual principle within him. Man has appetites, as animals have, and, like them, he has sensations and mental images; but these, and every thing else in man's nature, are modified by the set that he has reason.

His appetites are not mere appetites: his sensations are not mere sensations. In his appetites there is always more or less explicitly present the consciousness of an end-i.e. they are desires and not mere appetites. In his sensations there is always more or less explicitly present the element of knowledge i.e. they are perceptions and not mere sensations. This is due to the fact that man is rational, self-conscious and spiritual. This is the essential fact with regard to man's nature.

Green points out, indeed, that even in animal life, and even in inanimate nature, we must assume the presence of a rational principle just as Spencer points out that even in animal life there is present the principle of adjustment. But in nature the presence of this principle is implicit. We must believe that it is there, but it is concealed or imperfectly manifested. In man it is explicit; or, at any rate, it is becoming explicit.

And the significance of the moral life consists in the constant endeavor to make this principle more and more explicit to bring out more and more completely our rational, self-conscious, spiritual nature.

How exactly this is to be done, Green admits, it is not easy to answer, just because our rational nature is not yet completely developed. The moral life is to be explained, by its end; but, as we have not reached the end, we cannot, in any complete form, give the explanation.

Still, we can to a considerable extent see in what way our rational nature has been so far developed, and in what direction we may proceed to develop it more fully.

This is a brief statement of Green's point of view; and it certainly appears to furnish us with an answer to the question with which we set out viz the question how we are to determine which is the higher and which is the lower among our universes of desire. Green's answer is—the highest universe is that which is most completely rational.

The meaning of this, however, must be somewhat more fully considered, in relation to the point of view that we have already tried to develop.

The True Self

We have seen that there are a great number of universes within which a man may live. In some of these men live only for moments at a time: in others they live habitually. Some of them are universes within which no abiding satisfaction can be found. The universe of mere animal enjoyment is of this nature. Its pleasures soon pall upon the appetite. In others we find that we have a more permanent resting place. Now the nature of the universe within which a man habitually lives constitutes, as we have seen, his character or self.

If he chances to be led into some other universe by a sudden impulse or unexpected temptation, the man scarcely considers himself to be responsible for his actions within that universe. He says that he was not himself when he acted so. He was not within his own universe.

But there is no limited universe within which we can find permanent satisfaction. As we grow older, we get crusted over with habits, and go on, with little misgiving, within the universe to which we have grown accustomed.

But, if the universe is an imperfect one, we are not without occasional pricks of conscience—i.e. we sometimes become aware of a higher universe within which we ought to be living.

“Just when we are safest. There's a sun set touch,
A fancy from a flower-bell. Some one's death,
A chorus-ending from Euripides—
And that's enough for fifty hopes and fears.
As old and new at once as nature's self,
To rap and knock and enter in our soul’.

On such occasions we begin to feel that even in the life that we ordinarily live we are not ourselves. There is a want of permanence in our habitual universe, just as there is in those into which we find ourselves occasionally drifted by passion and impulse. Just as we do not feel satisfied in these, but escape from them as rapidly as we can, and declare that we were not ourselves when we were in them; so we become conscious at times that even in our habitual lives there is something unsatisfying, and if it were not for the frost of custom we would make our escape from these also, and declare that in them also we are not ourselves. Where, then, is the universe within which we should find an abiding satisfaction! What is the true self?

The true self is what is perhaps best described as the rational self. It is the universe that we occupy in our moments of deepest wisdom and insight. To say fully what the content of this universe is, would no doubt, as Green points out, be impossible. The content of the universe of rational insight is as wide as the universe of actual fact. To live completely in that universe would be to understand completely the world in which we live and our relations to it, and to act constantly in the light of that understanding. This we cannot hope to do.

All that we can do is to endeavor to promote this understanding more and more in ourselves and others, and to act more and more in a way that is consistent with the promotion of this understanding. So to live is to be truly ourselves.

The Real Meaning of Self-Consistency

From this point of view we are better able to appreciate the real significance of the Kantian principle that the supreme law of morals is to be self-consistent. This law, as we pointed out, seemed to supply us with a more form without matter.

It is not so, however, if we interpret the statement to mean not merely that we are to self-consistent, but that we are to be consistent with the self i-e with the true self.

For this principle has a content, though the content is not altogether easy to discover.

Kant's error, we may say, consisted in this, that he understood the term Reason in a purely abstract way.

He opposed it to all the particular content of our desires; whereas, in reality, reason is relative to the whole world which it interprets.

The universe of rational insight is the universe in which the whole world-including all our desires-appears in its true relations. To occupy the point of view of reason, therefore, is not to withdraw from all our desires, and occupy the point of view of mere formal self-consistency; it is rather to place all our desires in their right relations to one another.

The universe of rational insight is a universe into which they can all enter, and in which they all find their true places.

Dirt has been defined as "matter in the wrong place" So moral evil may be said to consist simply in the misplacement of desire. The meaning of this will, it is hoped, become somewhat clearer as we proceed.

The real Meaning of Happiness

Just as we are now better able to appreciate the significance of the categorical imperative of self-consistency, so we ought now to be able to understand more fully the true significance of the principle of happiness. The error in the conception of happiness, as formerly interpreted, lay in its being thought of simply as the gratification of each single desire, or of the greatest possible sum of desires. We now see that the end is to be found rather in the systematization of desire.

Now happiness, in the true sense of the word, as distinguished from transient pleasures, consists just in the consciousness of the realization of such a systematic content. It is the form of feeling which accompanies the harmonious adjustment of the various elements in our lives within an ideal unity. Happiness, therefore, in this sense, though not, properly speaking, the end at which we aim, is an inseparable and essential element in its attainment.

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from a manual of Ethics by John S.Mackenzie, pages 195-217)

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

In our first chapter, ethics was provisionally defined as the normative science of the conduct of human beings living in societies, and throughout his book there has been frequent reference to the ways in which the actions of one individual affect other individuals.

Even if we take the view those actions, which do not affect other people, are still the concern of Ethics, so that a course that could never return to human social life would still have moral duties, we would have to admit that the life of society is the normal atmosphere, and indeed the training ground of morality. Our ideas develop in association with those of other people and are being constantly criticized and modified by the opinions of others. The psychological grounds for our regarding our moral opinions and objectives are our discovery. In normal situations and circumstances, a man does any act for his own benefit or for the benefits of other peoples of society or for other human beings. This falls under three discussions in Ethics known as Egoism, Altruism and universalism.

Ethical egoism

Ethical egoism is the normative ethical position that moral agents ought only to do what is in their own self-interest. It differs from psychological egoism, in that the last-mentioned claims that people *do* only act in their self-interest. Ethical egoism also differs from rational egoism (which holds that it is rational to act in one's self-interest) and individualism, neither of which claims that acting in one's self-interest is necessarily right. Ethical egoism is not, however, necessarily opposed to either of these latter philosophies.

Ethical egoism contrasts with ethical altruism, which holds that moral agents have an obligation to help and serve others. Ethical egoism does not, however, require moral agents to disregard the well-being of others; nor does it require that a moral agent refrain from considering the well-being of others in moral deliberation, for what is in an agent's self-interest may be incidentally detrimental, beneficial, or neutral in its effect on others. Individualism allows for the possibility of any of these, as long as what is chosen is efficacious in satisfying the self-interest of the agent.

Nor does ethical egoism necessarily entail that, in pursuing self-interest, one ought always to do what one wants to do, for, in the long term, the fulfillment of short-term desires may prove detrimental to the self. Fleeting pleasure, then, takes a back seat to protracted eudemonia. In the words of James Rachels, "Ethical egoism endorses selfishness, but it doesn't endorse foolishness."

Ethical egoism is sometimes the philosophical basis for support of libertarianism or individualist anarchism, although can also be based on altruistic motivations. These are political positions based partly on a belief that individuals should not coercively prevent others from exercising freedom of action.

Types of ethical egoism

Three different formulations of ethical egoism have been identified: individual, personal and universal. An *individual ethical egoist* would hold that all people should do whatever benefits *them*; a *personal ethical egoist* would hold that he or she should act in *his or her own* self-interest, but would make no claims about what anyone else ought to do; a *universal ethical egoist* would argue that everyone should act in ways that are in their own interest.

A philosophy holding that one should be honest, just, benevolent etc., *because* those virtues serve one's self-interest is egoistic; one holding that one should practice those virtues for reasons other than self-interest is not egoistic at all.

Proponents

Max Stirner was the first philosopher to call himself an egoist, it is questionable if he wanted to install a new idea of morality (ethical egoism) or argue against morality (amoralism). Others, such as Thomas Hobbes and David Gauthier, have argued that the conflicts which arise when people each pursue their own ends can be resolved for the best of each individual only if they all voluntarily forgo some of their aims — that is, one's self-interest is often best pursued by allowing others to pursue their self-interest as well so that liberty is equal among individuals. Sacrificing one's short-term self-interest in order to maximize one's long-term self-interest is one form of "rational self-interest" which is the idea behind most philosophers' advocacy of ethical egoism. Noted egoist Ayn Rand contended that there was a harmony of interest among humans, so that a moral agent could not rationally harm another person.

As Nietzsche (in *Beyond Good and Evil*) and Alasdair MacIntyre (in *After Virtue*) are famous for pointing out, the ancient Greeks did not associate morality with altruism in the way that post-Christian Western civilization has done. The point however is questionable: Christianity's highest norm is to love others as oneself, not more or instead of oneself, so self love is accepted. Aristotle's view is that we have duties to ourselves as well as to other people (e.g. friends) and to the *polis* as a whole. The same is true for Christian Wolff and Immanuel Kant, who claim that there are duties to us just as Aristotle did.

The term *ethical egoism* has been applied retroactively to philosophers such as Bernard de Mandeville and to many other materialists of his generation, although none of them declared themselves to be egoists. Note that materialism does not necessarily imply egoism, as indicated by Karl Marx, and the many other materialists who espoused forms of collectivist altruism.

Ethical egoism lends itself to anarchism and is another way of describing the sense that the common good should be enjoyed by all. It fits perfectly into the anarchist idea of 'do what you want and harm no other, and then no harm shall come to you'.

Arguments for

James Rachel, in an essay that takes as its title the theory's name, outlines the three arguments most commonly touted in its favor.

- "The first argument," writes Rachel, "has several variations, each suggesting the same general point:
 - "Each of us is intimately familiar with our own individual wants and needs. Moreover, each of us is uniquely placed to pursue those wants and needs effectively. At the same time, we know the desires and needs of others only imperfectly, and we are not well situated to pursue them. Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that if we set out to be 'our brother's keeper,' we would often bungle the job and end up doing more mischief than good."
 - To pursue actively the interests of others is to be officious. We should mind our own business and allow others to mind theirs.
 - To give charity to someone is to degrade him, implying as it does that he is reliant on such munificence and quite unable to look out for himself. "That," reckons Rachel, "is why the recipients of 'charity' are so often resentful rather than appreciative."
 - Altruism denies individual value and is therefore destructive both to society and its individual components, viewing life merely as a thing to be sacrificed. "Moreover, those who would *promote* this idea are beneath contempt—they are parasites who, rather than working to build and sustain their own lives, leech off those who do."
- All of our commonly-accepted moral duties, from doing no harm unto others to speaking always the truth to keeping promises, are rooted in the one fundamental principle of self-interest.

Criticisms

Some contend that the view is implausible and that those who seriously advocate it usually do so at the expense of redefining "self-interest" to include the interests of others. An ethical egoist might counter

this by asserting that furthering the ends of others is sometimes the best means of furthering the ends of oneself, or that, simply by allowing liberty to others, one's self-interest is resultantly furthered.

A moralist don't oppose egoism (or altruism), they just claim there are no reasons to think egoism is or should be ethical. You can just be a rational egoist, a homo economics, adopt instrumental rationality and don't care about ethics or morality.

Ethical egoism has also been alleged as the basis for immorality. Thomas Jefferson writes in a 1814 letter to Thomas Law:

Self-interest, or rather self-love or egoism has been more plausibly substituted as the basis of morality. But I consider our relations with others as constituting the boundaries of morality. With ourselves, we stand on the ground of identity, not of relation, which last, requiring two subjects, excludes self-love confined to a single one. To ourselves, in strict language, we can owe no duties, obligation requiring also two parties. Self-love, therefore, is no part of morality. Indeed, it is exactly its counterpart.

Ethical egoism is opposed not only by altruist philosophers; it is also at odds with the majority of religion. Most religions hold that ethical egoism is the product of a lack of genuine spirituality and shows an individual's submersion in greed. Religious egoism is a derivative of egoism, whereby religion is used to validate one's self-interest.

In *The Moral Point of View*, Kurt Baier objects that ethical egoism provides no moral basis for the resolution of conflicts of interest, which, in his opinion, form the only vindication for a moral code. Were this an ideal world, one in which interests and purposes never jarred, its inhabitants would have no need of a specified set of ethics. This, however, is not an ideal world. Baier believes that ethical egoism fails to provide the moral guidance and arbitration that it necessitates. Far from resolving conflicts of interest, in fact, ethical egoism all too often spawns them. To this, as Rachel has shown, the ethical egoist may object that he cannot admit a construct of morality whose aim is merely to forestall conflicts of interest. "On his view," he writes, "the moralist is not like a courtroom judge, who resolves disputes. Instead, he is like the Commissioner of Boxing, who urges each fighter to do his best."

Baier is also part of a team of philosophers who hold, in an altogether more serious strain of the above, that ethical egoism is paradoxical; implying that to do what is in one's best interests can be both wrong and right in ethical terms. Although a successful pursuit of self-interest may be viewed as a moral victory, it could also be dubbed immoral if it prevents another person from executing what is in *his* best interests. Again, however, the ethical egoist could retort by assuming the guise of the Commissioner of Boxing. His philosophy precludes empathy for the interests of others, so forestalling them is perfectly acceptable. "Regardless of whether we think this is a correct view," adds Rachel, "it is, at the very least, a *consistent* view, and so this attempt to convict the egoist of self-contradiction fails."

Finally, it has been averred that ethical egoism is no better than bigotry in that, like racism and homophobia, it divides people into two types — themselves and others — and discriminates against one type on the basis of some arbitrary disparity. This, to Rachel's mind, is probably the best objection to ethical egoism, for it provides the soundest reason why the interests of others ought to concern the interests of the self. "What," he asks, "is the difference between myself and others that justifies placing myself in this special category? Am I more intelligent? Do I enjoy my life more? Are my accomplishments greater? Do I have needs or abilities that are so different from the needs and abilities of others? *What is it that makes me so special?* Failing an answer, it turns out that Ethical Egoism is an arbitrary doctrine, in the same way that racism is arbitrary. We should care about the interests of other people *for the very same reason we care about our own interests*; for their needs and desires are comparable to our own."

Rachel fails to see that (as already found by Descartes) I am the only one whose thoughts and feelings I directly experience, while I can in no way have direct access to the mental states of other people, but just make fallible assumptions about their thoughts based on my perception of them.

Altruism

Altruism is selfless concern for the welfare of others. It is a traditional virtue in many cultures, and a core aspect of various religious traditions such as Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Sikhism, and many others. Also, altruism is a key aspect of many humanitarian and philanthropic causes, exemplified in leaders such as Dr. Martin Luther King, Gandhi and Mother Teresa. This idea was often described as the Golden rule of ethics. Altruism is the opposite of selfishness.

Altruism can be distinguished from feelings of loyalty and duty. Altruism focuses on a motivation to help others or a want to do good without reward, while duty focuses on a moral obligation towards a specific individual (for example, God, a king), a specific organization (for example, a government), or an abstract concept (for example, patriotism etc). Some individuals may feel both altruism and duty, while others may not. Pure altruism is giving without regard to reward or the benefits of recognition and need.

The concept has a long history in philosophical and ethical thought, and has more recently become a topic for psychologists (especially evolutionary psychology researchers), sociologists, evolutionary biologists, and ethnologists. While ideas about altruism from one field can have an impact on the other fields, the different methods and focuses of these fields lead to different perspectives on altruism. Research on altruism was sparked in particular after the murder of Kitty Genovese in 1964, which was stabbed for over half an hour in front of passive witnesses who refrained from helping her.

Altruism in social sciences

If one performs an act beneficial to others with a view to gaining some personal benefit, then it is not an altruistically motivated act. There are several different perspectives on how "benefit" (or "interest") should be defined. A material gain (for example, money, a physical reward, etc.) is clearly a form of benefit, while others identify and include both material and immaterial gains (affection, respect, happiness, satisfaction etc.) as being philosophically identical benefits. Knox (1999) ultimately argues that "Altruistic volunteers are either not truly altruistic or not rational."

For illustration of this, Knox (1999) describes circumstances which he terms as "the volunteer's folly". In his example a lawyer volunteers his time on the weekends to help build low cost housing - professing that his motivation to do so is to help provide housing for the needy. However, Knox identifies that this is not the proper way for a lawyer to serve that particular interest. Since the lawyer's work as a lawyer generates far more money than his work on the building site is worth, Knox suggests that he should simply put in more work as a lawyer and donate the proceeds of that work. This would serve his professed purpose to a higher degree, since that money would afford the project several times more work than he himself could provide to the project directly.

Some may find this logic disagreeable or counterintuitive as an ideation of altruism, because it seems to require that martyrdom — or fatal sacrifice for a greater cause — be the only actualization of altruism.

Psychological egoism can be accused of using circular logic. For instance, an egoist would not disagree with the following syllogism: "If a person has willingly performed an act, then he/she has manifested such intent in the form of that act. Fulfillment of one's desires is the primary requisite of satisfaction. Ergo, a person can only willingly perform acts that result in his/her personal enjoyment." This logic is sometimes viewed as circular or presumptuous. Specifically, egoism leans on the assumption that satisfaction is synonymous with self-satisfaction. Such a precept automatically sidesteps counterpoint, however, and remains unfalsifiable. Thus, until empirical evidence favors one view or the other, egoism must acquiesce to uncertainty.

Humans are not exclusively altruistic towards family members, previous co-operators or potential future allies, but can be altruistic towards people they don't know and will never meet. For example, some humans donate to international charities and volunteer their time to help societies less fortunate. It can however be argued that an individual would contribute to a charity to gain respect or stature within his/her own community.

Beginning with an understanding that rational human beings benefit from living in a benign universe, logically it follows that particular human beings may gain substantial emotional satisfaction from acts which they perceive to make the world a better place.

Altruism in ethology and evolutionary biology

In the science of ethology (the study of animal behavior), and more generally in the social evolution, altruism refers to behavior by an individual that increases study compatible, however, with Darwin's theory of evolution. Insistence on such cooperative behaviors between animals was first exposed by the Russian zoologist and anarchist Peter Kropotkin in his 1902 book, *Mutual Aid: A Factor of Evolution*. The fitness of another individual while decreasing the fitness of the actor. Researchers on alleged altruist behaviors among animals have been ideologically opposed to the social Darwinist concept of the "survival of the fittest", under the name of "survival of the nicest"—the latter being globally

Recent developments in game theory (see ultimatum game) have provided some explanations for apparent altruism, as have traditional evolutionary analyses. Among the proposed mechanisms are:

- Behavioral manipulation
- Bounded rationality (for example, Herbert Simon)
- Conscience
- Kin selection including eusociality
- Memes (by influencing behavior to favor their own spread, for example, religion)
- Reciprocal altruism, mutual aid
- Selective investment theory- a theoretical proposal for the evolution of long-term, high-cost altruism
- Sexual selection, in particular, the Handicap principle
- Reciprocity (social psychology)
 - Indirect reciprocity (for example, reputation)
 - Strong reciprocity
- Pseudo-reciprocity

The study of altruism was the initial impetus behind George R. Price's development of the Price equation which is a mathematical equation used to study genetic evolution. An interesting example of altruism is found in the cellular slime moulds, such as *Dictyostelium mucoroides*. These protists live as individual amoebae until starved, at which point they aggregate and form a multicellular fruiting body in which some cells sacrifice themselves to promote the survival of other cells in the fruiting body. Social behavior and altruism share many similarities to the interactions between the many parts (cells, genes) of an organism, but are distinguished by the ability of each individual to reproduce indefinitely without an absolute requirement for its neighbors.

Jorge Moll and Jordan Grafman, neuroscientists at the National Institutes of Health and LABS-D'Or Hospital Network (J.M.) provided the first evidence for the neural bases of altruistic giving in normal healthy volunteers, using functional magnetic resonance imaging. In their research, published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA in October, 2006, they showed that both pure monetary rewards and charitable donations activated the mesolimbic reward pathway, a primitive part of the brain that usually lights up in response to food and sex. However, when volunteers generously placed their interests of others before their own by making charitable donations, another brain circuit was selectively activated: the subgenual cortex septal region. These structures are intimately related to social attachment and bonding in other species. Altruism, the experiment suggested, was not a superior moral faculty that suppresses basic selfish urges but rather was basic to the brain, hard-wired and pleasurable.

A new study in which it is seen by some as breathing new life into the model of group selection for Altruism, known as "Survival of the nicest". Bowles conducted a genetic analysis of contemporary foraging groups, including Australian aboriginals, native Siberian Inuit populations and indigenous tribal groups in Africa. It was found that hunter-gatherer bands of up to 30 individuals were considerably more closely related than was previously thought. Under these conditions, thought to be similar to those of the middle and upper Paleolithic, altruism towards other group-members would improve the overall fitness of the group.

If an individual defended the group but was killed, any genes that the individual shared with the overall group would still be passed on. Early customs such as food sharing or monogamy could have leveled out the "cost" of altruistic behavior, in the same way that income taxes redistribute income in society. He assembled genetic, climactic, archaeological, ethnographic and experimental data to examine the cost-benefit relationship of human cooperation in ancient populations. In his model, members of a group bearing genes for altruistic behavior pay a "tax" by limiting their reproductive opportunities to benefit from sharing food and information, thereby increasing the average fitness of the group as well as their inter-relatedness. Bands of altruistic humans would then act together to gain resources from other groups at this challenging time in history.

Altruist theories in evolutionary biology were contested by Amotz Zahavi, the inventor of the signal theory and its correlative, the handicap principle, based mainly on his observations of the Arabian Babbler, a bird commonly known for its surprising (alleged) altruistic behaviors.

Altruism in religion

Most, if not all, of the world's religions promote altruism as a very important moral value. Hinduism, Jainism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism, Judaism, and Sikhism place particular emphasis on altruistic morality.

Altruism was central to the teachings of Jesus found in the Gospel especially in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain. From biblical to medieval Christian traditions, tensions between self-affirmation and other-regard were sometimes discussed under the heading of "disinterested love," as in the Pauline phrase "love seeks not its own interests." In his book *Indoctrination and Self-deception*, Roderick Hendry tries to shed light on these tensions by contrasting them with impostors of authentic self-affirmation and altruism, by analysis of other-regard within creative individuation of the self, and by contrasting love for the few with love for the many. If love, which confirms others in their freedom, shuns propagandas and masks, assurance of its presence is ultimately confirmed not by mere declarations from others, but by each person's experience and practice from within. As in practical arts, the presence and meaning of love become validated and grasped not by words and reflections alone, but in the doing.

Though it might seem obvious that altruism is central to the teachings of Jesus, one important and influential strand of Christianity would qualify this. St Thomas Aquinas in the *Summa Theologica*, I: II Question 26, Article 4 states that we should love ourselves more than our neighbor. His interpretation of the Pauline phrase is that we should seek the common good more than the private good but this is because the common good is a more desirable good for the individual. 'You should love your neighbor as yourself' from Leviticus 19 and Matthew 22 is interpreted by St Thomas as meaning that love for our self is the exemplar of love for others. He does think though, that we should love God more than ourselves and our neighbor, taken as an entirety, more than our bodily life, since the ultimate purpose of love of our neighbor is to share in eternal beatitude, a more desirable thing than bodily well being. Comte was probably opposing this Thomistic doctrine, now part of mainstream Catholicism, in coining the word Altruism, as stated above.

Thomas Jay Lord has argued in several books that altruism is but one possible form of love. And altruistic action does not always love action. Lord defines altruism as acting for the good of the other, and he agrees with feminists who note that sometimes love requires acting for one's own good when the demands of the other undermine overall well-being.

Universalism

Universalism has many aspects and can be classified as a religion, theology and philosophy that generally hold all persons and creatures are related to God or the Divine and will be reconciled to God. A church or community that calls itself *Universalistic* may emphasize the universal principles of most religions and accept other religions in an inclusive manner, believing in a universal reconciliation between humanity and the divine. For example monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity, and Islam still claim a universal value of their doctrine and moral principles because they feel they are inclusive.

A belief in one common truth is also another important tenet. The living truth is seen as more far-reaching than national, cultural, or religious boundaries.

The term universalistic religion has been used to refer to religions which are open to all and have no ethnic considerations which would bar or limit anyone from being accepted as a member.

Christianity

In Christianity, Universalism refers to the belief that all humans can be saved through Jesus Christ and eventually come to harmony in God's kingdom. A related doctrine, apokatastasis, is the belief that all mortal beings will be reconciled to God, including Satan and his fallen angels. Universalism was a fairly commonly held view among theologians in early Christianity: In the first five or six centuries of Christianity there were six known theological schools, of which four (Alexandria, Antioch, Cesarea, and Edessa or Nisibis) were Universalist, one (Ephesus) accepted conditional immortality, and one (Carthage or Rome) taught the endless punishment of the lost. The two major theologians opposing it were Tertullian and Augustine.

History of the Universalisms in the Seventeenth-Century and Eighteenth-Century

In the seventeenth-century and eighteenth-century Europe and America, other Christian reformers discovered little biblical support for the Christian concept of hell. These reformers came to believe in a universally loving God and felt that God would grant all human beings salvation. They became known as the Universalists.

Hinduism

Hindu Universalism denotes the ideology that all religions are true and therefore worthy of toleration and respect. Veneration for all other religions was articulated by Gandhi:

"After long study and experience, I have come to the conclusion that all religions are true; all religions have some error in them; all religions are almost as dear to me as my own Hinduism, in as much as all human beings should be as dear to one as one's own close relatives. My own veneration for other faiths is the same as that for my own faith; therefore no thought of conversion is possible."

In Ananda Marga, a branch of Hinduism, Universalism refers to the idea that energy and matter are evolved from cosmic consciousness. Thus, all created beings are of one universal family. This is an expansion of humanism to include everything as family, based on the fundamental truth that the universe is a thought projection from the Supreme.

Judaism

Judaism teaches that God chose the Jewish people to be in a unique covenant with God, and one of their beliefs is that Jewish people were charged by the Torah with a specific mission — to be a light unto the nations, and to exemplify the covenant with God as described in the Torah to other nations. Not explicitly a Universalist theology, this view, however, does *not* preclude a belief that God also has a relationship with other peoples — rather, Judaism holds that God had entered into a covenant with all mankind as Noahides, and that Jews and non-Jews alike have a relationship with God.

Islam

Muslims believe that ALLAH has sent revelations to prophets throughout human history, of which the Holy Qur'an delivered to Muhammad is the last, intended to reiterate and bring final clarity to God's instructions, in order to bring peace and harmony to humanity through Islam (submission to God). Islam expressly recognizes the legitimacy of prior monotheistic religions, such as Judaism and Christianity, at least as they were originally revealed. Muhammad (The last prophet, peace be upon him) and his successors in the Khilafat sought to put into practice the regime of justice commanded by God in the Qur'an to ensure the security of the lives and property of non-Muslims under the dhimmi system, as well as according them certain rights of worship. The Qur'an identifies Jews, Christians, Zoroastrians,

and "Sabi'un" or "baptists" (usually taken as a reference to the Mandeans and related Mesopotamian groups) as "people of the book" entitled to recognition and protection as religious communities. At various times this status has been extended to other religious groups, such as Manichaeans and Hindus, although other Muslims have disagreed with their dhimmi status, and even rejected it for Zoroastrians and Mandeans despite the fairly clear command of the Qur'an.

Thus Islam carries a kind of universalist idea in its core concept of God's revealing work to all humankind, even though for most Muslims this does not entail the belief that all will be saved in the end. It is believed that Islam, as the final form of religion God revealed, offers the best system by which salvation can be attained, and its worldwide spread is seen as a development towards a final unity of humankind within this religion.

The Muslim ideal of universal brotherhood is the Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) prescribed by Islam. Each year close to three million people from every corner of the globe assemble in Mecca to perform Hajj and worship God. No individual can be identified as a king or pauper because every man is dressed in ihram clothing. Although some forms of Islam espouse predestination ideas, most schools of thought within the religion place ultimate responsibility with individual human decision; and since Islam has no concept of human debilitation comparable to the Christian concept of original sin, in theory there is nothing preventing a Universalist resolution of human fate within the Islamic belief system.

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from An Introduction to Ethics by William Lillie, pages239-259, and also from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ethical_egoism)

RIGHTS AND DUTIES

Right has been defined in Oxford Dictionary as follows,
Right is justifiable claim on legal or moral grounds to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way.

There are many kinds of rights which a man has in his life. The kinds of right vary due to time and place, however, some of them are universal, and we mention here only their names here. Legal rights, ritual rights, moral rights, spiritual rights, conjugal rights, natural rights and fundamental rights etc.

What is a right?

Many moral controversies today are couched in the language of rights. Indeed, we seem to have witnessed an explosion of appeals to rights—gay rights, prisoners' rights, animal rights, smokers' rights, fetal rights, and employee rights. The appeal to rights has a long tradition. The American Declaration of Independence asserted that "all men...are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights...among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." In 1948, the United Nations published the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, stating that all human beings have "the right to own property...the right to work...the right to just and favorable remuneration... the right to rest and leisure."

What is a right? A right is a justified claim on others. For example, if I have a right to freedom, then I have a justified claim to be left alone by others. Turned around, I can say that others have a duty or responsibility to leave me alone. If I have a right to an education, then I have a justified claim to be provided with an education by society.

The "justification" of a claim is dependent on some standard acknowledged and accepted not just by the claimant, but also by society in general. The standard can be as concrete as the Constitution, which guarantees the right of free speech and assures that every American accused of a crime "shall enjoy the right to a speedy trial by an impartial jury," or a local law that spells out the legal rights of landlords and tenants.

Moral rights are justified by moral standards that most people acknowledge, but which are not necessarily codified in law; these standards have also, however, been interpreted differently by different people.

Fundamental rights

John S. Mackenzie listed five rights as fundamental rights. First is the right to life, means that the life of the man should be protected and safeguarded from dangers and losses. Second is the right to freedom i.e. it is the right of man to go freely and travel as he wishes, without any bar upon him. Third right is to hold property. Fourth right is of contract and fifth right is of education. The right of education means to learn what he wants and where he wants without any discrimination against his dignity as human being.

It should be kept in mind that the action which is duty and right action differs in two ways. (1) It implies that only one action is right for us at the particular moment in question, because if it were equally right to do two alternative actions, we would not be able to say of either of them it is our duty to do it. (2) It emphasizes that the action is not merely fitting but that is obligatory. Dr Moore expanded this 2nd kind in 3 points. (1) Duties are right actions which many people are tempted to avoid doing. (2) the most prominent good effects of duties are on people other than the doer of the action. (3) They arouse sentiments of moral approval in a way that merely right actions do not.

Negative and Positive Rights

One of the most important and influential interpretations of moral rights is based on the work of Immanuel Kant, an eighteenth century philosopher. Kant maintained that each of us has a worth or a dignity that must be respected. This dignity makes it wrong for others to abuse us or to use us against

our will. Kant expressed this idea in a moral principle: humanity must always be treated as an end, not merely as a means. To treat a person as a mere means is to use a person to advance one's own interest. But to treat a person as an end is to respect that person's dignity by allowing each the freedom to choose for him or herself.

Kant's principle is often used to justify both a fundamental moral right, the right to freely choose for oneself, and also rights related to this fundamental right. These related rights can be grouped into two broad categories—negative and positive rights. Negative rights, such as the right to privacy, the right not to be killed, or the right to do what one wants with one's property, are rights that protect some form of human freedom or liberty. These rights are called negative rights because such rights are a claim by one person that imposes a "negative" duty on all others—the duty not to interfere with a person's activities in a certain area. The right to privacy, for example, imposes on us the duty not to intrude into the private activities of a person.

Kant's principle is also often used to justify positive or, as they are often called, welfare rights. Where negative rights are "negative" in the sense that they claim for each person a zone of non-interference from others, positive rights are "positive" in the sense that they claim for each person the positive assistance of others in fulfilling basic constituents of human well-being like health and education. In moral and political philosophy, these basic human needs are often referred to as "welfare" concerns (thus this use of the term "welfare" is similar to but not identical with the common American usage of "welfare" to refer to government payments to the poor). Many people argue that a fundamental right to freedom is worthless if people aren't able to exercise that freedom. A right to freedom, then, implies that every human being also has a fundamental right to what is necessary to secure a minimum level of well being. Positive rights, therefore, are rights that provide something that people need to secure their well being, such as a right to an education, the right to food, the right to medical care, the right to housing, or the right to a job. Positive rights impose a positive duty on us—the duty actively to help a person to have or to do something. A young person's right to an education, for example, imposes on us a duty to provide that young person with an education. Respecting a positive right then requires more than merely not acting; positive rights impose on us the duty to help sustain the welfare of those who are in need of help.

Conflict of Rights

Whenever we are confronted with a moral dilemma, we need to consider whether the action would respect the basic rights of each of the individuals involved. How would the action affect the basic well-being of those individuals? How would the action affect the negative or positive freedom of those individuals? Would it involve manipulation or deception—either of which would undermine the right to truth that is a crucial personal right? Actions are wrong to the extent that they violate the rights of individuals.

Sometimes the rights of individuals will come into conflict and one has to decide which right has priority. We may all agree, for example, that everyone has a right to freedom of association as well as a right not to be discriminated against. But suppose a private club has a policy that excludes women from joining. How do we balance the right to freedom of association—which would permit the club to decide for itself whom to admit—against the right not to be discriminated against—which requires equal treatment of women? In cases such as this, we need to examine the freedoms or interests at stake and decide which of the two is the more crucial for securing human dignity. For example, is free association or equality more essential to maintaining our dignity as persons?

Rights, then, play a central role in ethics. Attention to rights ensures that the freedom and well-being of each individual will be protected when others threaten that freedom or well-being. If an individual has a moral right, then it is morally wrong to interfere with that right even if large numbers of people would benefit from such interference.

But rights should not be the sole consideration in ethical decision-making. In some instances, the social costs or the injustice that would result from respecting a right are too great, and accordingly, that right may need to be limited. Moreover, an emphasis on rights tends to limit our vision of what the "moral life" entails. Morality, it's often argued, is not just a matter of not interfering with the rights of others. Relying exclusively on a rights approach to ethics tends to emphasize the individual at the expense of the

community. And, while morality does call on us to respect the uniqueness, dignity, and autonomy of each individual, it also invites us to recognize our relatedness—that sense of community, shared values, and the common good which lends itself to an ethics of care, compassion, and concern for others.

Duty

A duty may be defined as the obligation of an individual to satisfy a claim made upon him by the community, or some other individual member or the members of that community.

Many of us feel that there are clear obligations we have as human beings, such as to care for our children, and to not commit murder. Duty theories base morality on specific, foundational principles of obligation. These theories are sometimes called *deontological*

The first is that championed by 17th century German philosopher Samuel Pufendorf, who classified dozens of duties under three headings: duties to God, duties to oneself, and duties to others.

A second duty-based approach to ethics is *rights theory*. Most generally, a "right" is a justified claim against another person's behavior - such as my right to not be harmed by you. Rights and duties are related in such a way that the rights of one person imply the duties of another person.

A third duty-based theory is that by Kant, which emphasizes a single principle of duty. Influenced by Pufendorf, Kant agreed that we have moral duties to oneself and others, such as developing one's talents, and keeping our promises to others. However, Kant argued that there is a more foundational principle of duty that encompasses our particular duties. It is a single, self-evident principle of reason that he calls the "categorical imperative." A categorical imperative, he argued, is fundamentally different from hypothetical imperatives that hinge on some personal desire that we have.

Theories of Duty

Many of us feel that there are clear obligations we have as human beings, such as to care for our children, and to not commit murder. Duty theories base morality on specific, foundational principles of obligation. These theories are sometimes called *deontological*, from the Greek word *deon*, or duty, in view of the foundational nature of our duty or obligation. They are also sometimes called *nonconsequentialist* since these principles are obligatory, irrespective of the consequences that might follow from our actions. For example, it is wrong to not care for our children even if it results in some great benefit, such as financial savings. There are four central duty theories.

The first is that championed by 17th century German philosopher Samuel Pufendorf, who classified dozens of duties under three headings: duties to God, duties to oneself, and duties to others. Concerning our duties towards God, he argued that there are two kinds: (1) a theoretical duty to know the existence and nature of God, and (2) a practical duty to both inwardly and outwardly worship God. Concerning our duties towards one, these are also of two sorts: (1) duties of the soul, which involve developing one's skills and talents, and (2) duties of the body, which involve not harming our bodies, as we might through gluttony or drunkenness, and not killing oneself. Concerning our duties towards others, Pufendorf divides these between absolute duties, which are universally binding on people, and conditional duties, which are the result of contracts between people. Absolute duties are of three sorts: (1) avoid wronging others; (2) treat people as equals, and (3) promote the good of others. Conditional duties involve various types of agreements; the principal one of which is the duty is to keep one's promises.

A second duty-based approach to ethics is *rights theory*. Most generally, a "right" is a justified claim against another person's behavior - such as my right to not be harmed by you. Rights and duties are related in such a way that the rights of one person imply the duties of another person. For example, if I have a right to payment of \$10 by Smith, then Smith has a duty to pay me Rs.10. This is called the correlativity of rights and duties. The most influential early account of rights theory is that of 17th century British philosopher John Locke, who argued that the laws of nature mandate that we should not harm anyone's life, health, liberty or possessions. For Locke, these are our natural rights, given to us by God. Following Locke, the United States Declaration of Independence authored by Thomas Jefferson recognizes three foundational rights: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Jefferson and others rights theorists maintained that we deduce other more specific rights from these, including the rights of property, movement, speech, and religious expression. There are four features traditionally associated with moral rights. First, rights are *natural* insofar as they are not invented or created by governments. Second, they

are *universal* insofar as they do not change from country to country. Third, they are *equal* in the sense that rights are the same for all people, irrespective of gender, race, or handicap. Fourth, they are *inalienable* which means that I can not hand over my rights to another person, such as by selling myself into slavery.

A third duty-based theory is that by Kant, which emphasizes a single principle of duty. Influenced by Pufendorf, Kant agreed that we have moral duties to oneself and others, such as developing one's talents, and keeping our promises to others. However, Kant argued that there is a more foundational principle of duty that encompasses our particular duties. It is a single, self-evident principle of reason that he calls the "categorical imperative." A categorical imperative, he argued, is fundamentally different from hypothetical imperatives that hinge on some personal desire that we have, for example, "If you want to get a good job, then you ought to go to college." By contrast, a categorical imperative simply mandates an action, irrespective of one's personal desires, such as "You ought to do X." Kant gives at least four versions of the categorical imperative, but one is especially direct: Treat people as an end, and never as a means to an end.

That is, we should always treat people with dignity, and never use them as mere instruments. For Kant, we treat people as an end whenever our actions toward someone reflect the inherent value of that person. Donating to charity, for example, is morally correct since this acknowledges the inherent value of the recipient. By contrast, we treat someone as a means to an end whenever we treat that person as a tool to achieve something else. It is wrong, for example, to steal my neighbor's car since I would be treating her as a means to my own happiness. The categorical imperative also regulates the morality of actions that affect us individually. Suicide, for example, would be wrong since I would be treating my life as a means to the alleviation of my misery. Kant believes that the morality of all actions can be determined by appealing to this single principle of duty.

A fourth and more recent duty-based theory is that by British philosopher W.D. Ross, which emphasizes *prima facie* duties. Like his 17th and 18th century counterparts, Ross argues that our duties are "part of the fundamental nature of the universe." However, Ross's list of duties is much shorter, which he believes reflects our actual moral convictions:

- Fidelity: the duty to keep promises
- Reparation: the duty to compensate others when we harm them
- Gratitude: the duty to thank those who help us
- Justice: the duty to recognize merit
- Beneficence: the duty to improve the conditions of others
- Self-improvement: the duty to improve our virtue and intelligence
- Nonmaleficence: the duty to not injure others

Ross recognizes that situations will arise when we must choose between two conflicting duties. In a classic example, suppose I borrow my neighbor's gun and promise to return it when he asks for it. One day, in a fit of rage, my neighbor pounds on my door and asks for the gun so that he can take vengeance on someone. On the one hand, the duty of fidelity obligates me to return the gun; on the other hand, the duty of non-maleficence obligates me to avoid injuring others and thus not return the gun. According to Ross, I will intuitively know which of these duties my actual duty is, and which my apparent or *prima facie* duty is. In this case, my duty of non-maleficence emerges as my actual duty and I should not return the gun.

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from An Introduction to Ethics by William Lillie, pages 259-272)

MORAL INSTITUTIONS

The social imperative

This idea means that, according to H. Spencer, (as he discussed in his book, Data of Ethics) we must consider the ideal man as existing in the ideal social state. A state is supreme social institute that is the hub of our social and moral activities.

It is impossible for a state to be strong and socially peaceful for its members, when it the justice is its very basic pillar and integral part of its policy.

A society is called just when the ideal life of all its members is promoted as efficiently as possible.

Concept of justice

Justice concerns the proper ordering of things and persons within a society. As a concept it has been subject to philosophical, legal, and theological reflection and debate throughout history. A number of important questions surrounding justice have been fiercely debated over the course of western history: What is justice? What does it demand of individuals and societies? What is the proper distribution of wealth and resources in society: equal, meritocratic, according to status, or some other arrangement there is a myriad of possible answers to these questions from divergent perspectives on the political and philosophical spectrum.

According to most theories of justice, it is overwhelmingly important: John Rawls, for instance, claims that "Justice is the first virtue of social institutions, as truth is of systems of thought." Justice can be thought of as distinct from and more fundamental than benevolence, charity, mercy, generosity or compassion. Studies have indicated that reactions to fairness are "wired" into the brain and that, "Fairness is activating the same part of the brain that responds to food in rats... This is consistent with the notion that being treated fairly satisfies a basic need". Research conducted in 2003 at Emory University, Georgia, involving Capuchin Monkeys demonstrated that other cooperative animals also possess such a sense and that "inequality aversion may not be uniquely human. Indicating that ideas of fairness and justice may be instinctual in nature.

Social institutions

There are five Social institutions.

Family, Workshop, Church, Friendship and civic community are social institutions. A human being starts learning process from the stage of family and step by step increases his experience by learning more and more from above-mentioned levels and institutions.

These institutions play pivotal roll for the development of ethical values in a man.

All the institutions that are generally considered as social institutions are continually undergoing changes, which are rendered necessary by the progressive civilization of mankind. In carrying out such changes it is important to see that they are not made with a view to merely temporary advantages, and that the advantages which they secure are not bought with any loss of human efficiency. So the social progress is dependant upon changes in society.

State as supreme controller of social relations

It is a fact that the state is supreme controller of social relations, because state makes laws and sees that they enforced. It also carries on various kinds of work that can not conveniently be left to private enterprise. It undertakes, for instance, the provision of the means of national defense, the conveyance of letters, and in some countries the conducting of railways. The extent, to which it is desirable that such work should be undertaken by the state, cannot be discussed in an ethical treatise. But it is important to insist that any who seeks to answer this question, must answer it by a consideration of the degree to which such action tends to promote the highest life of the citizens of a state.

The family

The family is very basic and initial moral institute where we learn basics of our life which leave permanent effects on our personality.

The family is based on natural affection. Its chief objects are to provide adequate protection and care for the helplessness of childhood, and at the same time to provide an adequate sphere for the highest forms of friendship and love.

It is thought, as a rule, the former object can be better secured by the affection than it could be by any state arrangements, and that the latter object is best fulfilled within a narrow circle.

The control of parents, however, requires being in many ways limited. Thus it seems necessary to enforce the proper education of children, and to prevent them from being employed in unsuitable work at too early an age. The relation of husband and wife in the family is properly one of equality but where this is not secured by mutual affection, it seems impossible for any state regulations to prevent the subordination of one to the other, without an intolerable interference with individual liberty.

This is, therefore, a matter on which it is important to develop a strong public opinion. A good deal, however, can be done by law in removing disabilities which stand in the way of the recognition of perfect equality.

The right of education

This is the last right which it seems necessary to notice here, is the right of education. In this case the right and obligation are so closely united that it is scarcely possible to distinguish them.

Every one, we may say, has both the right and obligation of being educated according to his capacity, since education is necessary for the realization of the rational self.

This is a right which has been but hardly recognized even in some highly civilized countries, and even now in many of them the highest kinds of education are practically inaccessible to the mass of people. But it is clear that in a well-ordered state every one ought to have the means of developing his faculties to the best advantage.

Every woman, man, youth and child has the human right to education, training and information, and to other fundamental human rights dependent upon realization of the human right to education.

Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The human right of all persons to education is explicitly set out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenants, the Convention on the Rights of the Child and other widely adhered to international human rights treaties and Declarations -- powerful tools that must be put to use in realizing the human right to education for all!

The right of property

The right of property involves the obligation to use it wisely for the general good. In communities where the fulfillment of this obligation cannot in the main be relied on, the right of property can not be granted.

In primitive communities there is practically not such right.

Everything is possessed in common.

It is only as men become civilized and educated that they begun to be capable of being entrusted with property and even then it is usually necessary that the right should be carefully guarded against misuse.

Plato advocated the theory of private property and said that there should be a community of goods.

Aristotle said that in an ideal state every one should have the free use of necessary instruments but should be taught to use them for the common good.

Individualism and society

Jean-Jacques Rousseau's "social contract" maintains that each individual is under implicit contract to submit his or her own will to the "general will." This advocacy of subordinating the individual will to a collective will is in fundamental opposition to the individualist philosophy. An individualist enters into

society to further his or her own interests, or at least demands the right to serve his or her own interests, without taking the interests of society into consideration (an individualist need not be an egoist). The individualist does not lend credence to any philosophy that requires the sacrifice of the self-interest of the individual for any higher social causes. Rousseau would argue, however, that his concept of "general will" is not the simple collection of individual wills and precisely furthers the interests of the individual (the constraint of law itself would be beneficial for the individual, as the lack of respect for the law necessarily entails, in Rousseau's eyes, a form of ignorance and submission to one's passions instead of the preferred autonomy of reason).

Societies and groups can differ, in the extent to which they are based upon predominantly "self-regarding" (individualistic and arguably self-interested) rather than "other-regarding" (group-oriented, and group, or society-minded) behavior. Ruth Benedict argued that there is also a distinction, relevant in this context, between "guilt" societies (e.g., medieval Europe) with an "internal reference standard", and "shame" societies (e.g., Japan, "bringing shame upon one's ancestors") with an "external reference standard", where people look to their peers for feedback on whether an action is "acceptable" or not (also known as "group-think").

The extent to which society or groups are "individualistic" can vary from time to time, and from country to country. For example, Japanese society is more group-oriented (e.g., decisions tend to be taken by consensus among groups, rather than by individuals), and it has been argued that "personalities are less developed" (than is usual in the West). The USA is usually thought of as being at the individualistic (its detractors would say "atomistic") end of the spectrum (the term "Rugged Individualism" is a cultural imprint of being the essence of Americanism), whereas European societies are more inclined to believe in "public-spiritedness", state "socialistic" spending, and in "public" initiatives.

John Kenneth Galbraith made a classic distinction between "private affluence and public squalor" in the USA, and private squalor and public affluence in, for example, Europe, and there is a correlation between individualism and degrees of public sector intervention and taxation.

Individualism is often contrasted with either totalitarianism or collectivism, but in fact there is a spectrum of behaviors ranging at the societal level from highly individualistic societies through mixed societies to collectivist. Also, many collectivists (particularly supporters of collectivist anarchism or libertarian socialism) point to the enormous differences between liberty-minded collectivism and totalitarian practices.

Individualism, sometimes closely associated with certain variants of individualist anarchism, libertarianism or classical liberalism, typically takes it for granted that individuals know best and that public authority or society has the right to interfere in the person's decision-making process only when a very compelling need to do so arises (and maybe not even in those circumstances). This type of argument is often observed in relation to policy debates regarding regulation of industries, as well as in relation to personal choice of lifestyle.

Social progress

Social progress is defined as the changing of society toward the ideal. The concept of social progress was introduced in the early, 19th century social theories, especially those of social evolutionists like August Comte and Herbert Spencer. It was present in the Enlightenment's philosophies of history.

Social justice

Social justice, sometimes called civil justice, refers to the concept of a society in which justice is achieved in every aspect of society, rather than merely the administration of law. It is generally thought of as a world which affords individuals and groups fair treatment and an impartial share of the benefits of society. (Different proponents of social justice have developed different interpretations of what constitutes fair treatment and an impartial share.) It can also refer to the distribution of advantages and disadvantages within a society.

Social justice is both a philosophical problem and an important issue in politics, religion and civil society. Most individuals wish to live in a just society, but different political ideologies have different conceptions of what a 'just society' actually is. The term "social justice" is often employed by the political left to

describe a society with a greater degree of economic egalitarianism, which may be achieved through progressive taxation, income redistribution, or even property redistribution, policies aimed toward achieving that which developmental economists refer to as equality of opportunity.

Social Justice features as an apolitical philosophical concept (insofar as any philosophical analysis of politics can be free from bias) in much of John Rawls' writing. It is a part of Catholic social teaching and is one of the Four Pillars of the Green Party upheld by the worldwide green parties. Some of the tenets of social justice have been adopted by those who lie on the left or center-left of the political spectrum (e.g. Socialists, Social Democrats, etc). Social justice is also a concept that some use to describe the movement towards a socially just world. In this context, social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality.

Corrective Justice

This theory was presented by Mill. Mill was a British philosopher, political economist, civil servant and Member of Parliament, was an influential liberal thinker of the 19th century. He was an exponent of utilitarianism, an ethical theory developed by Jeremy Bentham, although his conception of it was very different from Bentham's. He was a forceful proponent in the fight for government intervention in social reform.

He says that the desire to punish a person who has done harm, and the knowledge or belief that there is some definite individual or individuals to whom harm has been.

(Source. This lesson has been summarized from a manual of Ethics by John S.Mackenzie, pages 286-304)
http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/John_Stuart_Mill

Lesson No. 09

THE DUTIES

There are many duties a man has to perform in his life; generally these are 7 in numbers as follow,

- 1)Duty of beneficence: A duty to help other people (increase pleasure, improve character)
- 2)Duty of non-maleficence: A duty to avoid harming other people.
- 3)Duty of justice: A duty to ensure people get what they deserve.
- 4)Duty of self-improvement: A duty to improve ourselves.
- 5)Duty of reparation: A duty to recompense someone if you have acted wrongly towards them.
- 6)Duty of gratitude: A duty to benefit people who have benefited us.
- 7)Duty of promise-keeping: A duty to act according to explicit and implicit promises, including the implicit promise to tell the truth.

These are called prima facie duties, because when a person tries to decide how to act, each of these duties need to be taken into consideration when deciding which duty should be acted upon. When more than one of these 'duties' applies to a person in some situation, only one should be acted upon. Assume, for example, that I promise to watch a movie with a friend. I now have a prima facie duty to go with her to watch the movie. However, on my way to pick my friend up, I see a car accident. The person who was clearly in the wrong insists that it is the innocent person's fault. I now have a prima facie duty of justice to wait for the police to arrive at the accident and report what I saw. What is my duty? Ross would probably say that the duty of justice trumped the duty of promise-keeping in this instance. I can, after all, explain the situation to my friend, and make it up to her somehow. In another situation, however, the duty of promise-keeping may be more significant than the duty of justice.

Social justice

Social justice is both a philosophical problem and an important issue in politics, religion and civil society. Most individuals wish to live in a just society, but different political ideologies have different conceptions of what a 'just society' actually is. The term "social justice" is often employed by the political left to describe a society with a greater degree of economic egalitarianism, which may be achieved through progressive taxation, income redistribution, or property redistribution. The right wing also uses the term social justice, but generally believes that a just society is best achieved through the operation of a free market, which they believe provides equality of opportunity and promotes philanthropy and charity. Both the right and the left tend to agree on the importance of rule of law, human rights, and some form of a welfare safety net (though typically the left supports this last element to a greater extent than the right).

Social Justice features as an apolitical philosophical concept (insofar as any philosophical analysis of politics can be free from bias) in much of John Rawls' writing. It is fundamental to Catholic social teaching, and is one of the Four Pillars of the Green Party upheld by the worldwide green parties. Some of the tenets of social justice have been adopted by those who lie on the left or center-left of the political spectrum (e.g. Socialists, Social Democrats, etc). Social justice is also a concept that some use to describe the movement towards a socially just world. In this context, social justice is based on the concepts of human rights and equality.

Social order

Social order is a concept used in sociology, history and other social sciences. It refers to a set of linked social structures, social institutions and social practices which conserve, maintain and enforce "normal" ways of relating and behaving.

A "social order" is a relatively stable system of institutions, pattern of interactions and customs, capable of continually reproducing at least those conditions essential for its own existence. The concept refers to all those facts of society which remain relatively constant over time. These conditions could include

property, exchange and power relations, but also cultural forms, communication relations and ideological systems of values.

So we, being a useful member of society, respect the social order.

Duties of Perfect obligation and duties of imperfect obligation

This theory was introduced by Kant. He divided the duty into two kinds and made difference between them as duties of Perfect obligation and duties of imperfect obligation.

According to his reasoning, we first have a perfect duty not to act by maxims that result in logical contradictions when we attempt to universalize them. The moral proposition "It is permissible to steal" would result in a contradiction in conceivability. The notion of stealing presupposes the existence of property, but was *a* universalized, then there could be no property, and so the proposition has logically negated itself.

Imperfect duty

Second, we have imperfect duty, which is the duty to act only by maxims that we would desire to be universalized. Since it depends somewhat on the subjective preferences of humankind, this duty is not as strong as a perfect duty, but it is still morally binding.

Respect

Respect is defined in many ways and it is impossible to be said for any definition that is final and confirm. In general, it is defined as to give regards others and their belongings as we expect from others. Mr. John S. Mackenzie described in his book "A manual of ethics" many commandments of respect. These commandments are named as follows, Respect for life, Respect for freedom, Respect for character, Respect for property, Respect for social order, Respect for truth and Respect for progress.

Casuistry

Casuistry is the term of ethics; it is defined as follows,

The determination of right and wrong in questions of conduct or conscience by the application of general principles of ethics.

Casuistry consists in the effort to interpret the precise meaning of commandments, and to explain which is to give way when a conflict arises. It is evident enough that conflicts must arise. If we are always respect to life, we must sometimes appropriate property e-g casuistry draws rules for breaking rules, so we should follow a higher law for saving our society and self in this mortal life.

Casuistry is an applied ethics term referring to case-based reasoning. Casuistry is used in juridical and ethical discussions of law and ethics, and often is a critique of principle or rule-based reasoning.

Critics use the term pejoratively for the use of clever but unsound reasoning, especially in relation to moral questions. Casuistry is reasoning used to resolve moral problems by applying theoretical rules to particular instances.

Examples

For example, while a principle-based approach might claim that lying is always morally wrong, the casuist would argue that, depending upon the details of the case, lying might or might not be illegal or unethical. For instance, the casuist might conclude that a person is wrong to lie in legal testimony under oath, but might argue that lying actually is the best moral choice if the lie saves a life (Thomas Sanchez and others thus theorized a doctrine of mental reservation). For the casuist, the circumstances of a case are essential for evaluating the proper response.

Typically, casuistic reasoning begins with a clear-cut paradigmatic case (from paradigm, the Greek word paradeigma, "pattern" and "example", in turn derived from paradeiknunai, "demonstrate"). In legal reasoning, for example, this might be a precedent case, such as pre-meditated murder. From it, the casuist would ask how closely the given case currently under consideration matches the paradigmatic case. Cases like the paradigmatic case ought to be treated likewise; cases unlike the paradigm ought to be treated differently. Thus, a man is properly charged with pre-meditated murder if the circumstances

surrounding his case closely resemble the exemplar pre-meditated murder case. The less a given case is like the paradigm, the weaker the justification is for treating that case like the paradigmatic case.

Meanings

Casuistry is a method of case reasoning especially useful in treating cases that involve moral dilemmas. It is also a branch of applied ethics. Casuistry is the basis of case law in common law, and the standard form of reasoning applied in common law.

The casuist morality

Casuistry takes a relentlessly practical approach to morality. Rather than using theories as starting points, casuistry begins with an examination of cases. By drawing parallels between paradigms, so called "pure cases," and the case at hand, a casuist tries to determine a moral response appropriate to a particular case.

Casuistry has been described as "theory modest". One of the strengths of casuistry is that it does not begin with, nor does it overemphasize, theoretical issues. Casuistry does not require practitioners to agree about ethical theories or evaluations before making policy. Instead, they can agree that certain paradigms should be treated in certain ways, and then agree on the similarities, the so-called warrants between a paradigm and the case at hand.

Since most people, and most cultures, substantially agree about most pure ethical situations, casuistry often creates ethical arguments that can persuade people of different ethnic, religious and philosophical beliefs to treat particular cases in the same ways. For this reason, casuistry is widely considered to be the basis for the English common law and its derivatives.

Casuistry is prone to abuses wherever the analogies between cases are false.

Casuistry is a form of practical argument that explores the relationship between assumed moral paradigms (*prima facie* duties) and problematic instances (difficult cases).

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(Source. This lesson has been summarized from a manual of Ethics by John S.Mackenzie, pages 304-328) http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/John_Stuart_Mill, <http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Casuistry>, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Casuistry>, <http://www.absoluteastronomy.com/topics/Casuistry>

Moral Pathology

Each society has to face many kinds of evils, vices and crimes. The word vice has been derived from a Latin word “vitium” means defect or blemish. So the every society has its own way of social control for which it frames certain laws and also mentions the sanctions with them to minimize or eliminate crimes. Here I would like to quote Salmond’s definition of crime: Crime is an act deemed by law to be harmful for the society as a whole though its immediate victim may be an individual. These sanctions are nothing but the punishments. ‘The first thing to mention in relation to the definition of punishment is the ineffectiveness of definitional barriers aimed to show that one or other of the proposed justifications of punishments either logically include or logically excluded by definition.’ Punishment has the following features:

It involves the deprivation of certain normally recognized rights, or other measures considered unpleasant

It is consequence of an offence

It is applied against the author of the offence

It is applied by an organ of the system that made the act an offence

The kinds of punishment given are surely influenced by the kind of society one lives in. Though during ancient period of history punishment was more severe as fear was taken as the prime instrument in preventing crime. But with change in time and development of human mind the punishment theories have become more tolerant to these criminals. Debunking the stringent theories of punishment the modern society is seen in loosening its hold on the criminals. The present scenario also witnesses the opposition of capital punishment as inhumane, though it was a major form of punishing the criminals earlier. The law says that it does not really punish the individual but punishes the guilty mind.

As punishment generally is provided in Criminal Law it becomes imperative on our part to know what crime or an offence really is. Here I prefer to repeat Salmond’s definition of crime: Crime is an act deemed by law to be harmful for the society as a whole though its immediate victim may be an individual. He further substantiates his point of view through the following illustration a murderer injures primarily a particular victim, but its blatant disregard of human life puts it beyond a matter of mere compensation between the murderer and the victim’s family.

Thus it becomes very important on behalf of the society to punish the offenders. Punishment can be used as a method of reducing the incidence of criminal behavior either by deterring the potential offenders or by incapacitating and preventing them from repeating the offence or by reforming them into law-abiding citizens. Theories of punishment contain generally policies regarding theories of punishment namely: Deterrent, Retributive, Preventive and Reformative.

Punishment, whether legal or divine, needs justification. Because the justification of legal punishment has been given greater consideration by philosophers than has the justification of divine punishment by theologians, the philosophical concepts and ‘theories of punishment’ (i.e. the justifications) will be used as a basis for considering divine punishment.

Many a time this punishment has been termed as a mode of social protection. The affinity of punishment with many other measures involving deprivation by the state morally recognized rights is generally evident. The justifiability of these measures in particular cases may be controversial, but it is hardly under fire. The attempt to give punishment the same justification for punishment as for other compulsory measures imposed by the state does not necessarily involve a particular standpoint on the issues of deterrence, reform or physical incapacitation. Obviously the justification in terms of protection commits us to holding that punishment may be effective in preventing social harms through one of these methods.

As punishments generally punish the guilty mind it becomes very important on the part of the researcher to what crime really is. But it is quite difficult on the part of the researcher to say whether or not there must be any place for the traditional forms of punishment. In today’s world the major question that is raised by most of the penologist is that how far are present ‘humane’ methods of punishment like the

reformatory successful in their objective. It is observed that prisons have become a place for breeding criminals not as a place of reformation as it was meant to be.

Kinds and theories of Punishment

There are three theories of punishment in general; these are Retributive theory of punishment, Reformatory theory of punishment, Preventive theory of punishment.

Deterrent or Preventive Theory

One of the primitive methods of punishments believes in the fact that if severe punishments were inflicted on the offender would deter him from repeating that crime. Those who commit a crime, it is assumed, derive a mental satisfaction or a feeling of enjoyment in the act. To neutralize this inclination of the mind, punishment inflicts equal quantum of suffering on the offender so that it is no longer attractive for him to carry out such commission of crimes. Pleasure and pain are two physical feelings or sensation that nature has provided to mankind, to enable him to do certain things or to desist from certain things, or to undo wrong things previously done by him. It is like providing both a powerful engine and an equally powerful brake in the automobile.

Impelled by taste and good appetite, which are feelings of pleasure a man over-eats. Gluttony and surfeit make him obese and he starts suffering disease.

This causes pain. He consults a doctor and thereafter starts dieting. Thus the person before eating in the same way would think twice and may not at all take that food. In social life punishment introduces the element of 'pain' to correct the excess action of a person carried out by the impulse (pleasure) of his mind. We all like very much to seize opportunities, but abhor when we face threats. But in reality pain, threat or challenges actually strengthens and purifies a man and so an organization.

The basic idea of deterrence is to deter both offenders and others from committing a similar offence. But also in Bentham's theory was the idea that punishment would also provide an opportunity for reform.

Retributive theory

The most stringent and harsh of all theories retributive theory believes to end the crime in itself. This theory underlines the idea of vengeance and revenge rather than that of social welfare and security. Punishment of the offender provides some kind solace to the victim or to the family members of the victim of the crime, who has suffered out of the action of the offender and prevents reprisals from them to the offender or his family. The only reason for keeping the offender in prison under unpleasant circumstances would be the vengeful pleasure of sufferer and his family. J.M.Finnis argues in favor of retributism by mentioning it as a balance of fairness in the distribution of advantages and disadvantages by restraining his will. Retributivists believe that considerations under social protection may serve a minimal purpose of the punishment.

Traditional retributism relied on punishing the intrinsic value of the offence and thus resort to very harsh methods. This theory is based on the same principle as the deterrent theory, the Utilitarian theory. To look into more precisely both these theories involve the exercise of control over the emotional instinctual forces that condition such actions. This includes our sense of hatred towards the criminals and a reliance on him as a butt of aggressive outbursts.

Sir Walter Moberly states that the punishment is deemed to give the men their dues. "Punishment serves to express and to satisfy the righteous indignation which a healthy community treats as transgression. As such it is an end in itself.

"The utilitarian theories are forward looking; they are concerned with the consequences of punishment rather than the wrong done, which, being in the past, cannot be altered. A retributive theory, on the other hand, sees the primary justification in the fact that an offence has been committed which deserves the punishment of the offender." As Kant argues in a famous passage: "Judicial punishment can never be used merely as a means to promote some other good for the criminal himself or civil society, but instead it must in all cases be imposed on him only on the ground that he has

committed a crime; for a human being can never be manipulated merely as a means to the purposes of someone else. He must first of all be found to be deserving of punishment before any consideration is given of the utility of this punishment for himself or his fellow citizens."

This theory aims at rehabilitating the offender to the norms of the society i.e. into law-abiding member. This theory condemns all kinds of corporal punishments. These aim at transforming the law-offenders in such a way that the inmates of the peno-correctional institutions can lead a life like a normal citizen. These prisons or correctional homes as they humanly treat the inmates and release them as soon as they feel that they are fit to mix up with the other members of the community.

The reformation generally takes place either through probation or parole as measures for reforming criminals. It looks at the seclusion of the criminals from the society as an attempt to reform them and to prevent the person from social ostracism. Though this theory works stupendously for the correction of juveniles and first time criminals, but in the case of hardened criminals this theory may not work with the effectiveness. In these cases come the importance of the deterrence theories and the retributive theories. Thus each of these four theories has their own pros and cons and each being important in it, none can be ignored as such.

Reformative Theory:

It emphasizes on the renewal of the criminal and the beginning of a new life for him.

The most recent and the most humane of all theories are based on the principle of reforming the legal offenders through individual treatment. Not looking to criminals as inhuman this theory puts forward the changing nature of the modern society where it presently looks into the fact that all other theories have failed to put forward any such stable theory, which would prevent the occurrence of further crimes. Though it may be true that there has been a greater onset of crimes today than it was earlier, but it may also be argued that many of the criminals are also getting reformed and leading a law-abiding life altogether. Reformative techniques are much close to the deterrent techniques.

Reform in the deterrent sense implied that through being punished the offender recognized his guilt and wished to change. The formal and impressive condemnation by society involved in punishment was thought to be an important means of bring about that recognition. Similarly, others may be brought to awareness that crime is wrong through another's punishment and, as it were, 'reform' before they actually commit a crime. But, although this is indeed one aspect of rehabilitation, as a theory rehabilitation is more usually associated with treatment of the offender. A few think that all offenders are 'ill' and need to be 'cured' but the majority of criminologists see punishment as a means of educating the offender. This has been the ideal and therefore the most popular theory in recent years. However, there is reason to believe this theory is in decline and Lord Windlesham has noted that if public opinion affects penal policy, as he thinks it does, then there will be more interest shown in retribution in the future.

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Hegel and his theory of punishment

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (August 27, 1770 – November 14, 1831) was a German philosopher, and with Johann Gottlieb Fichte and Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, one of the creators of German idealism.

Hegel influenced writers of widely varying positions, including both his admirers (Marx, Bradley, Sartre, Kojève, and his detractors (Schelling, Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Russell). Hegel developed a comprehensive philosophical framework, or "system", the subject and object of knowledge, and psychology, the state, history, art, religion, and philosophy. In particular, he developed a concept of mind or spirit that manifested itself in a set of contradictions and oppositions that it ultimately integrated and united, such as those between nature and freedom, and immanence and transcendence, without eliminating either pole or reducing it to the other. His influential conceptions are of speculative logic or "dialectic," "absolute idealism," "Spirit," negativity, sublation (*Aufhebung* in German), the "Master/Slave" dialectic, "ethical life," and the importance of history to account in an integrated and developmental way for the relation of mind and nature.

The retributive theory of punishment, as explained in the preceding discussions, is essentially that of Hegel, but as stated by Hegel, it is too elaborate and involves too much reference to the general philosophical system, to be properly considered in such a manual as this. The general contention, however, is comparatively simple. It is that punishment that is demanded by the criminal. It may even describe as his reward, and, thus regarded, the view becomes essentially identical with the very simple conception of the Aristotle, according to which it may rightly be described as negative reward. The same may be said to be implied in the biblical phrase that "the wages of sin is death."

The meaning of this may be a little more fully explained. It is rightly said that "virtue is its own reward" when one acts rightly, there is normally no call for any external reward, though in certain circumstances, some reward may be felt to be appropriate. When the right thing is done with clear consciousness of all that is involved in it, it achieves its purpose by realizing some form of good. The actor may suffer in doing, and, in that case, it may be right that he should receive some suitable compensation, or he may fail, in spite of all his efforts, to accomplish the purpose at which he aims. But the intrinsic reward of his action is found in the accomplishment of the end at which he aimed. On the other hand, the man who aims at destruction is entitled to a negative reward. It is his right, and he ought to get it.

The society that punishes him is not defrauding him of his due, but giving him what he deserves, what he has earned. Ordinarily language recognizes this, and it is quite in accordance with common sense. The punishment may help to cure him, and incidentally to warn and cure others, just as the intrinsic reward of a good action may stimulate and encourage others to do likewise.

But, of course, this presupposes that his action is deliberate. If he is insane or mentally deranged, he is not entitled to this punishment any more than one who brings about a good result ignorantly or by accident is entitled to the reward that is directly or indirectly involved in it.

Incidentally, the successful action of the well-intentioned man may encourage others to go and do likewise, and, similarly, the punishment of the criminal may serve to deter others from following in footsteps. But these are incidental results of good and evil actions, rather than the direct outcome of the actions themselves.

Thus, interpreted, the Hegelian theory of punishment seems to be the most satisfactory theory that has been put forward. It helps to explain why it is that men who are not liable to any external punishment for their evil deeds or negligence tend to seek to impose upon themselves some form of penance.

They feel that they have not got their deserts. The natural result is repentance. All this applies to the deliberate actions of normally human beings. It does not apply to those who are wholly or partially insane, and it may be well to add a little here about this.

(Source http://groups.google.com/group/alt.angst/browse_thread/thread/66eebb1dc8d86cca and http://www.legalserviceindia.com/articles/pun_theo.htm)

Lesson No. 11**ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF HINDUISM**

Ethics, which concerns itself with the study of conduct, is derived, in Hinduism, from certain spiritual concepts; it forms the steel-frame foundation of the spiritual life. Though right conduct is generally considered to belong to legalistic ethics, it has a spiritual value as well. Hindu ethics differs from modern scientific ethics, which is largely influenced by biology; for according to this latter, whatever is conducive to the continuous survival of a particular individual or species is good for it. It also differs from utilitarian ethics, whose purpose is to secure the maximum utility for a society by eliminating friction and guaranteeing for its members a harmonious existence. Hindu ethics prescribes the disciplines for a spiritual life, which are to be observed consciously or unconsciously as long as man lives.

Hindu Ethics is mainly Subjective or Personal

Hindu ethics is mainly subjective or personal, its purpose being to eliminate such mental impurities as greed and egoism, for the ultimate attainment of the highest good. Why Hindu ethics stresses the subjective or personal value of action will be discussed later. Hindu thinkers have also considered objective ethics, which deals with social welfare. It is based upon the Hindu conception of Dharma, or duty, related to a man's position in society and his stage in life. Objective ethics, according to the Hindu view, is a means to an end, its purpose being to help the members of society to rid themselves of self-centeredness, cruelty, greed, and other vices, and thus to create an environment helpful to the pursuit of the highest good, which transcends society. Hinduism further speaks of certain universal ethical principles that apply to all human beings irrespective of their position in society or stage in life.

Social welfare

The ethical doctrines of the Hindus are based upon the teachings of the Upanishads and of certain secondary scriptures, which derive their authority from the Vedas. But though their emphasis is mainly subjective, the Upanishads do not deny the value of social ethics. For instance, we read: "As the scent is wafted afar from a tree laden with flowers, so also is wafted afar the scent of a good deed." Among the social virtues are included 'hospitality, courtesy, and duties to wife, children, and grandchildren.' In one of the Upanishads, a king, in answer to a question by a Rishi regarding the state of affairs in his country, says: "In my kingdom there is no thief, no miser, no drunkard, no man without an altar in his home, no ignorant person, no adulterer, much less an adulteress."

Ethical actions calculated to promote social welfare is enjoined upon all who are identified with the world and conscious of their social responsibilities. Without ethical restraint, there follows social chaos, which is detrimental to the development of spiritual virtues. According to the Upanishads, the gods, who are the custodians of society, place obstacles in the path of those who seek liberation from samsara, or the relative world, without previously discharging their social duties? As a person realizes the unreality of the world and the psychophysical entity called the individual, his social duties gradually fall away; but they must not be forcibly given up. If the scab is removed before the wound is healed, a new sore forms. Every normal person endowed with social consciousness has a threefold debt to discharge: his debt to the gods, to the Rishis, and to the ancestors. The debt to the gods, who favor us with rain, sun, wind, and other natural amenities, is paid through worship and prayer. The debt to the Rishis, from whom we inherit our spiritual culture, is paid through regular study of the scriptures. The debt to the ancestors, from whom we have received our physical bodies, is paid through the procreation of children, ensuring the preservation of the line.

With the blessings of the gods, the Rishis, and the ancestors, one can cheerfully practice disciplines for the realization of the highest good, in which all worldly values find fulfillment.

How, by suitable ethical disciplines, the brutish man may become a decent man, a decent man an aristocrat, and the aristocrat a spiritual person, has been explained by a story in one of the Upanishads.

Once a god, a man, and a demon – the three offspring of the Creator – sought his advice for self-improvement. To them the Creator said: "Da." As the syllable 'Da' is the first letter of three Sanskrit

words, meaning, respectively, self-control, charity, and compassion, the Creator was in effect asking the god to practice self-control, the man to practice charity, and the demon to practice compassion.

In human society there exist aristocrats, average men, and demoniacal men. The aristocrat, in spite of his education, refinement, generosity, and gentleness, may lack in self-control and go the excess in certain matters like eating, drinking, or gambling. Hence he needs self-control to improve his character further.

The average man, in spite of his many human qualities, is often greedy; he wants to take what belongs to others. Liberality or charity is his discipline for self-improvement. The demoniacal person takes delight in treating others with cruelty and ruthlessness, which can be suppressed through the practice of compassion.

The Upanishads say that the Creator, even today, gives the same moral advice to different types of human beings through the voice of the thunderclap, which makes the reverberating sound 'Da-da-da.'

The caste system in Hinduism

The Bhagavad-Gita says that the Lord Himself divided human beings into four groups, determined by their actions and virtues.

Plato divided the state into three classes, castes, or professions, namely, philosopher-rulers, warriors, and the masses. Nietzsche says that every healthy society contains three mutually conditioning types.

According to the Hindu scriptures, a normal society consists of the Brahmins, who are men of knowledge, of science, literature, thought, and learning; the Kshatriyas, who are men of action and valor; the Vaisyas, who are men of desires, possessiveness, and acquisitive enterprise; and lastly the Sudras, who are men of little intelligence, who cannot be educated beyond certain low limits, who are incapable of dealing with abstract ideas, and who are fit only for manual labor. Each of them, in the words of Nietzsche, has its own hygiene, its own domain of labor, its own sentiment of perfection, and its own special superiority. In the Vedas the four castes are described as four important parts of the body of the Cosmic Person: the head, the arms, the thighs (or the stomach), and the feet. This analogy suggests the interdependence of the four castes for the common welfare of all; it also suggests that the exploitation of one by another undermines the strength of the whole of society. The rules regarding the four castes sum up the experience, sagacity, and experimental morals of long centuries of Hindu thinkers.

The Bhagavad-Gita describes the virtues of the four castes, and their duties. The qualities of a Brahmin are control of the mind and the senses, austerity, cleanliness, forbearance, scholarship, insight, and faith. He possesses a minimum of worldly assets, accepts voluntary poverty, and is satisfied with simple living and high thinking. Both a priest and a teacher, he is the leader of society and an adviser to king and commoner. A custodian of the culture of the race, he occupies his high position in society by virtue of his spirituality.

The qualities of a Kshatriya are heroism, high spirit, firmness, resourcefulness, and dauntlessness in battle, generosity, and sovereignty.

Agriculture, cattle rearing, and trade are the duties of a Vaisya. The main duty of a Sudra is action entailing physical labor.

The Basis of the Caste System

The basis of the caste system, according to the Hindu view, is men's self-evident inborn inequality; physical, intellectual, and spiritual. An individual is born into a higher or lower caste as a result of actions performed by him in his previous life, and each person, therefore, is himself responsible for his position. By discharging the duties determined by his caste, a man becomes qualified for birth in a higher caste in a future life. If one does not accept the doctrine of rebirth and the law of karma, then the inequity from which members of lower castes often suffer cannot be explained.

A second element in the organization of the caste system is varna or color. Even in the remote past of history, people of different racial groups marked by different complexions inhabited the Indian subcontinent, which formed the basis of their divisions. They were assigned places in the caste system according to their physical or mental aptitudes. In this manner Hindu society solved the problem of alien minorities in its midst. Gradually the contrast between colors was toned down by intermarriages.

As the population increased and other complexities set in, the qualities of the individual became less easy to determine and heredity was gradually accepted as a sort of working principle to determine the caste. The son inherited the professional duties of the father as well as some of his physical and mental traits. But in olden times, when a Brahmin did not live up to his virtues, he was demoted, and a Sudra, by the acquisition of higher qualities, was promoted. Conduct was more important than birth. One of the Upanishads narrates the touching story of Satyakama, a young boy who wanted to study the Vedas, a privilege accorded only to one who was born in the Brahmin caste. When the boy asked his mother about his lineage, she said:

"I do not know, my child, of what ancestry you are. In my youth I was preoccupied with many (household) duties and with attending (on guests) when I conceived you. I do not know of what ancestry you are. I am Jabala by name, and you are Satyakama. So you may speak of yourself as Satyakama Jabala (the son of Jabala)".

When the teacher whom Satyakama approached for Vedic knowledge heard this, he was impressed with the boy's truthfulness and outspoken nature and concluded that his father must have been a Brahmin.

For many centuries the caste system worked in a super manner, creating and consolidating the Indian culture, which reached its height when the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras all dedicated their activities to the common welfare. The Brahmins had a monopoly of the knowledge of the scriptures, which was the source of their power; eventually they became greedy for more and began to exploit the lower castes. They demanded privileges and respect even when they did not possess Brahminical qualities. Similarly, the Kshatriyas and the Vaisyas exploited the Sudras, who formed the majority of the population. The social laws became rigid, and in the absence of freedom Hindu society stagnated. On account of exploitation, the masses became weak and the country fell an easy prey to powerful invaders from the outside.

Contact with the West revealed to the Hindu leaders many drawbacks in their society and made them aware of the need for drastic changes in the caste system. The lower castes are being given greater facilities for education, and no one is being debarred from government jobs on account of his caste. It is to be hoped that this social system, will again create an environment in which men and women will be able to practice the virtues stressed in Hinduism for the realization of the final goal of human evolution.

The Bhagavad-Gita states that the secret of prosperity, strength, morality, and all round social welfare lies in the harmonious working together of the spiritual and the royal power. Sankaracharya points out that a conflict between the Brahmins and the Kshatriyas, causes the disintegration of society. If India gives up the caste system in principle and in practice, she will surely lose her spiritual backbone. There is, however, no room for the caste system in an industrialized society, which is controlled largely by the power of wealth and labor. It is the goal of a secular classless society to create equality on the level of the Sudras, whereas Indian society, through the caste system, has aimed at creating equality by rising all to the level of the Brahmins.

Swami Vivekananda has brilliantly pointed out the good and evil of the rule of society by the four castes in a letter to an American friend written during the last decade of the nineteenth century.

The Sudra rule

"Human society is, in turn, governed by the four castes- the priests, the soldiers, the traders, and the laborers. Each state has its glories as well as defects. When the priest (Brahmin) rules, there is tremendous exclusiveness on hereditary grounds- the persons of the priests and their descendants are hemmed in with all sorts of safeguards- none but they have any knowledge. Its glory is that at this period is laid the foundation of the sciences. The priests cultivate the mind, for through the mind they govern.

The military (Kshatriya) rule is tyrannical and cruel; but they are not exclusive, and during that period the arts and social culture attain their height. The commercial (Vaisya) rule comes next. It is awful in its silent crushing and blood-sucking power. Its advantage is that, as the trader himself goes everywhere, he is a good disseminator of the ideas collected during the two previous states. They are still less exclusive than the military, but culture begins to decay.

Last will come the labor (Sudra) rule. Its advantages will be the distribution of physical comforts- its disadvantages (perhaps) the lowering of culture. There will be a great distribution of ordinary education, but extraordinary geniuses will be less and less.

The Four Stages of Life

Apart from caste, a person's duties, in the Hindu tradition, are determined by the stage of life to which he belongs. Life, which is regarded by Hinduism as a journey to the shrine of truth, is marked by four stages, each of which has its responsibilities and obligations. In that journey a normal person should leave no legitimate aspiration unfulfilled; otherwise physical and mental sickness will follow, putting roadblocks in the way of his further spiritual progress.

The first stage of life covers the period of study, when a student cultivates his mind and prepares himself for future service to society. He lives with his teacher in a forest retreat and regards the latter as his spiritual father. He leads an austere life and conserves his energy, spurning the defilement of the body and mind through evil words, thoughts, or deeds. He shows respect to his elders and teachers, and becomes acquainted with the cultural achievements of the race. Students, rich and poor, live under the same roof and receive the same attention from the teacher and his wife. When the studies are completed, the teacher gives the pupil the following instruction, as described in one of the Upanishads:

"Speak the truth. Practice Dharma. Do not neglect the study (of the Vedas). Having brought to the teacher the gift desired by him, (enter the householder's life and see that) the line of progeny is not cut off. Do not swerve from the truth.

Do not swerve from Dharma. Do not neglect personal welfare. Do not neglect prosperity. Do not neglect the study and teaching of the Vedas. Do not neglect your duties to the gods and the Manes. Treat your mother as God. Treat your father as God. Treat your teacher as God. Treat your guest as God. Whatever deeds are faultless, these are to be performed- not others. Whatever good works have been performed by us, those should be performed by you- not others. Those Brahmins who are superior to us- you should comfort them by giving those seats. Now, if there arises in your mind any doubt concerning any act, or any doubt concerning conduct, you should conduct yourself in such matters as Brahmins would conduct themselves- Brahmins who are competent to judge, who (of their own accord) are devoted (to good deeds) and are not urged (to their performance) by others, and who are not too severe, but are lovers of Dharma. Now, with regard to persons spoken against, you should conduct yourself in such a way as Brahmins would conduct themselves- Brahmins who are competent to judge, who (of their own accord) are devoted (to good deeds) and are not urged to their performance by others, and who are not too severe, but are lovers of Dharma. This is the rule. This is the teaching. This is the secret wisdom of the Vedas. This is the command (of God). This you should observe. This alone should be observed".

Marriage, the second stage

With marriage, a person enters the second stage. A normal person requires a mate; his biological and emotional urges in this respect are legitimate. Debarred from marriage are those alone who have a dangerous ailment that may be transmitted to children, or those rare souls who, as students, forsake the world at the call of the spirit. Neither a confession of a sin nor a concession to weakness, marriage is a discipline for participation in the larger life of society. Children endow marriage with social responsibilities; Hinduism does not regard romance as the whole of the married life. Husband and wife are co-partners in their spiritual progress, and the family provides a training ground for the practice of unselfishness. A healthy householder is the foundation of a good society, discharging his duties as a teacher, a soldier, a statesman, a merchant, a scientist, or a manual worker. He should be ambitious to acquire wealth and enjoy pleasures, but not by deviating from the path of righteousness. The following are the five great duties of a householder; the study and teaching of the Vedas; daily worship of the gods

through appropriate rituals; gratification of the departed ancestors by offering their spirits food and drink according to the scriptural injunctions; kindness to domestic animals; and hospitality to guests, the homeless, and the destitute.

Third stage

When the skin wrinkles, the hairs turn gray, or a grandchild is born, one is ready for the third stage of life in the forest or in a quiet place. At this stage, the pleasures and excitements of youth appear stale and physical needs are reduced to a minimum. The third period of life is devoted to scriptural study and meditation on God.

Fourth stage

During the fourth stage, a man renounces the world and embraces the monastic life. Social laws no longer bind him. The call of the infinite becomes irresistible to him; even charity and social service appear inadequate. He rises above worldly attachments, finite obligations, and restricted loyalties; he is a friend of his fellow human beings, of the gods, and of the animals. No longer tempted by riches, honor, or power, a monk preserves equanimity of spirit under all conditions. He turns away from the vanities of the world, devoting himself to the cultivation of God-consciousness, which is a man's true friend both here and hereafter. During the fourth stage, a disciplined life attains to its full blossoming. Well has it been said: 'When a man is born he cries and the world laughs; but let him lead a life that when he dies, he laughs and the world cries.'

Dharma

The key to the individual and social ethics of Hinduism is the conception of Dharma, whose full implications cannot be conveyed by such English words as religion, duty, or righteousness. Derived from a root, which means to support, the word signifies the law of inner growth by which a person is supported in his present state of evolution and is shown the way to future development. A person's Dharma is not imposed by society or decreed by an arbitrary god, but is something with which he is born as a result of his actions in previous lives. Dharma determines a man's proper attitude toward the outer world and governs his mental and physical reactions in a given situation. It is his code of honor.

Hinduism emphasizes the relative nature of Dharma, and does not recognize absolute good or evil; evil may be described as what is less good. One cannot stipulate what is absolutely good or evil for all men at all times. The attempts to do so, and to judge all people by a single concept of Dharma or impose upon all a single idea of righteousness, has been the cause of much injustice to humanity. If one wants to give a comprehensive definition of good and evil, one may say that what helps men toward the realization of God or the unity of existence is good, and its reverse is evil. But one faces difficulties when one tries to work out practical details. A soldier unsheathes his sword to vindicate law and justice, whereas a saint lays down his own life for the same purpose.

The injunction of non-killing cannot therefore have a universal application, at least at the present state of human evolution. A man must not give up his imperfect Dharma, determined by his inborn nature; all actions have elements of imperfection in them. He should follow his own Dharma and should not try to imitate the Dharma of another, however perfect the latter may be. By performing his duties in a spirit of worship without seeking any personal result, a man ultimately realizes God, in whom alone all duties and values of life find fulfillment. The Mahabharata narrates the stories of a housewife and an untouchable butcher who, by following their respective Dharmas, realized the highest truth and became teachers of the knowledge of Brahman.

Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha

The affirmative attitude of Hinduism toward life has been emphasized by its recognition of four legitimate and basic desires: Dharma or righteousness, Artha or wealth, Kama or sense pleasure, and Moksha or freedom through communion with God or the Infinite. Of these, three belong to the realm of worldly values; the fourth (Moksha) is called the supreme value. The fulfillment of the first three paves the way for Moksha. Enjoyment, if properly guided, can be transformed into spiritual experience.

The suppression of legitimate desires often leads to an unhealthy state of body and mind, and delays the attainment of liberation.

Dharma, or righteousness, we have already seen, to be the basis of both individual progress and social welfare. Artha, or wealth, is legitimate; money is indispensable in the present state of society. Voluntary poverty, as practiced by religious mendicants, is something quite different; pious householders provide for the monks' few necessities in recognition of their efforts to keep alive the highest spiritual ideal. But a man of the world without money is a failure; he cannot keep body and soul together. According to an injunction of Hinduism, first comes the body and next the practice of religion. Furthermore, money is needed to build hospitals, schools, museums, and educational institutions, which distinguish a civilized from a primitive society. Money gives leisure, which is an important factor in the creation of culture. But money must be earned according to Dharma; otherwise it debases a man by making him greedy and cruel.

The object of the third legitimate desire is Kama, or the enjoyment of sense pleasure. This covers a vast area- from the enjoyment of conjugal love, without which the creation cannot be maintained, to the appreciation of art, music, or poetry. Life becomes drab unless one cultivates aesthetic sensitivity. But sense pleasures, if not pursued according to Dharma, degenerate into sensuality. Wealth and sense pleasure, which are only means to an end, are valuable in so far as their enjoyment creates a genuine yearning for spiritual freedom in the mind of the enjoyer. The hedonists alone regard sense pleasure as an end in itself.

The Charvaka School of thinkers, out-and-out materialists, rejects righteousness and spiritual freedom and admits only two values, namely, those related to wealth and sense pleasure. The Upanishads make a sharp distinction between the ideal of the pleasant and of the good, and declares that the former, created by ignorance, ultimately brings about suffering and misery. Hindu philosophers regard even Dharma, or duty, for its own sake, as empty and dry. It is a worthy end in so far as it helps the soul to attain its spiritual goal. But the illumined person serves the world not from a sense of duty, but because of his overflowing love for all created beings.

The fourth legitimate desire, equally irresistible, is related to Moksha, or freedom from the love and attachment prompted by the finite view of life. Man, who in essence is spirit, cannot be permanently satisfied with worldly experiences. The enjoyment of desires cannot be satisfied by enjoyment, any more than fire can be quenched by pouring butter into it; the more they are fulfilled, the more they flare up. Nor can man attain his divine stature through correct social behavior, economic security, political success, or artistic creation. Charity for the needy may be a corrective for selfishness, but cannot be the ultimate goal of his soul's craving. Even patriotism is not enough: as history shows, undue emphasis on patriotism was a major cause of the downfall of the Greek city-states. After fulfilling all his worldly desires and responsibilities a man still wants to know how he can suppress his inner restlessness and attain peace. So at last he gives up attachment to the world and seeks freedom through the knowledge of the spirit.

Personal Ethics over Social Ethics

A few words may be said here to explain why Hindu philosophers emphasized personal ethics over social ethics. Their argument was that since society consisted of individuals, if individuals were virtuous, social welfare would follow as a matter of course. Second, the general moral tone was very high in the ancient Hindu society, where everybody was expected to do his appropriate duties, which included, among other things, rendering help to one's less fortunate fellow beings. As the country was prosperous and men were generous and hospitable, no need was felt for organized charity, which even in Europe and in America has been a comparatively new development. The organized social service in the modern West is, to a large extent, a form of sentimentalism in reaction against the doctrine of utilitarianism and the industrialization of Western society due to the extraordinary growth of science and technology.

Third, the Hindus regarded spiritual help as of more enduring value than material help: the hungry would feel again the pinch of hunger, and the sick would again be sick; but a spiritual person could easily bear with calmness his physical pain and privations. Finally, Hindu philosophers believed that the sum total of physical happiness and suffering remains constant. Suffering, like chronic rheumatism, only moves from one place to another but cannot be totally eradicated. It is not easy to substantiate the claim

of progress, if it means the gradual elimination of evil and increase of good. It is true that we are living in a changing world, but it need not be true that we are living in a progressive world. Every age has its virtues and limitations; but can anyone really show that men today are enjoying more happiness, peace, and freedom than their forebears? The Hindu philosophers, without encouraging the illusion that a perfect society could be created, always exhorted people to promote social welfare as a part of spiritual discipline. We must do well to others, because by means of selfless action we can purify our hearts and transcend the relative world of good and evil. Social service has only an instrumental, not an ultimate, value.

But the need for emphasis on social ethics in modern India cannot be denied. For times have changed; the conception of Dharma, which was the foundation of Hindu life, both individual and social, has greatly lost its hold upon the people. The struggle for existence in an increasingly competitive society has become keen, and wealth is not justly distributed. The strong often invoke the law of karma to justify their exploitation of the poor, who are helpless in their suffering. There exists in India a widespread misery due to ignorance, poverty, ill health, and general backwardness. The rich and the powerful are often too selfish to remove these drawbacks. Hinduism in the past has no doubt produced many saints; but the precious gems of their spiritual realizations have been preserved in heaps of dirt and filth.

A certain measure of compliance with the general principles of social ethics may well have helped to preserve the Hindu social system from total disintegration during the dark period of Indian history. But on account of insufficient emphasis on social responsibilities, there is in Hindu society a lack of the vitality characteristic of Western society. Therefore India is now emphasizing the value of social ethics; the government is trying to create a welfare state. Whatever may be the pattern of development in the new India, she should not forget the ultimate goal of ethics, namely, the liberation of the soul from the bondage of the phenomenal world.

From what has been said above it will be clear that social ethics is efficacious in so far as it helps a person to curb his selfishness. But Hindu philosophers have recognized that social duty also has its limitations. Duty is often irritating; behind it is the idea of compulsion and necessity. Thus a person constantly engaged in the discharge of his duty finds no time for prayer, meditation, study, recreation, or other things, which his soul craves. If the kingdom of heaven is within a man, he cannot attain it by always looking frantically outside. It is often under the guise of duty that a man indulges his greed, passion, desire for domination, or morbid attachment. When stretched too far duty becomes a disease. As Vivekananda has said: 'Duty is the midday sun which scorches the tender plant of spirituality.'

Hindu philosophers encourage the performance of duties, but they exhort men to perform them not from a sense of compulsion but through love. Unless a man is inspired by love, he cannot cheerfully perform his duty at home, in the office, in the factory, or on the battlefield. This love is not, however, sentimentality, but springs from the perception of God in all living beings. Work done under the impulsion of duty deepens a man's attachment to the world, but when performed through love it brings him nearer to freedom.

The healthy social environment created by objective ethics provides men with an opportunity to cultivate the more important subjective ethics. The disciplines of subjective ethics for the liberation of the soul have been stressed in the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads. The Gita says: 'Let a man lift himself up by his own self; let him not depress himself; for he himself is his friend and he himself is his enemy. To him who has conquered himself by himself, his own self is a friend, but to him who has not conquered himself, his own self is hostile like an external enemy.'

Disciplines of Subjective Ethics

The chief disciplines of subjective ethics are austerity, self-control, renunciation, non-attachment, and concentration. Austerity enables a man to curb his impulses for inordinate enjoyment of physical comforts and also for the acquisition of supernatural powers, which exalt him far above the world of man, nay, even above the world of the gods. In the Upanishads, austerity or tapas often denotes intense thinking, the same sort of thinking that precedes creative work, making a man indifferent about his personal comforts or discomforts. But later austerity degenerated into bodily torture as practiced by spurious Yogis with a view to performing miracles for selfish purposes, thus depriving this noble virtue of its original significance.

Let us try to understand the meaning of self-control. The sense organs, which are ordinarily inclined toward material objects and employed to seek only the pleasant, should be controlled in order to create that inner calmness without which profound spiritual truths cannot be grasped. But self-control does not mean the weakening of the organs, as is explained in the Katha Upanishad by the illustration of the chariot. The body is compared to the chariot, the embodied soul to its master, the intellect or discriminative faculty to the driver, the mind to the reins, the senses to the horses, and sense-objects to the roads. The chariot can serve its purpose of taking the master to his destination if it is well built, but if the driver can discriminate between the right and the wrong road, if the reins are strong, if the horses are firmly controlled, and if the roads are well chosen.

Likewise, the spiritual seeker should possess a healthy body and vigorous organs, unerring discrimination, and a strong mind. His discrimination should guide his senses to choose only those objects, which are helpful to the realization of his spiritual ideal. If the body, the mind, or any of his faculties is injured or weakened, he cannot attain the goal, just as the rider cannot reach his destination if the chariot and its accessories are not in the right condition. Thus the two important elements emphasized in the practice of self-control are discrimination and will power. The middle path, which makes a man 'temperate in his food and recreation, temperate in his exertion in work, temperate in sleep and waking,' has been extolled by the Bhagavad-Gita and also by Buddha.

Renunciation is another discipline for self-perfection. A good example of it is seen in the institution of monasticism. A monk takes the vow of renouncing enjoyments in the 'three worlds'—earth, the mind-region, and heaven. The four stages of life, already described, are a training ground for this important discipline. Non-attachment and concentration are the other disciplines for self-perfection.

Ethics is principally concerned with conduct, which is in turn guided by will, pious or impious. The impious will leads to unrighteous conduct and produces evil, whereas the pious will leads to righteous conduct and is conducive to the highest good. With the help of ethical disciplines one suppresses unrighteousness and stimulates righteousness.

Unrighteousness may be physical, verbal, or mental. Physical unrighteousness is expressed through cruelty, theft, and sexual perversion; verbal unrighteousness through falsehood, rudeness, insinuation, and gossip; mental unrighteousness through ill will, covetousness, and irreverence.

Righteousness is also threefold: physical, verbal, and mental. Physical righteousness is expressed through charity, succor to the distressed, and service to all; verbal righteousness through gentle speech conducive to the welfare of others; and mental righteousness through kindness, detachment, and reverence. Righteousness and unrighteousness cover both personal and social duties. Broadly speaking, virtue is defined as what is conducive to the welfare of others, and vice as what causes them pain and misery.

Patanjali, in his Yoga philosophy, enumerates the important virtues as follows: non-injury, truthfulness, and abstention from theft, chastity, and non-attachment to material objects. Non-injury and truthfulness is sovereign virtues emphasized by all religious Hindus, from the Vedic seers (Rishis) to Mahatma Gandhi. The practice of non-injury also includes gentleness and abstention from harsh words. Mahatma Gandhi applied non-injury as a discipline for the individual and for the nation. Chiefly by means of non-violence, India, under his leadership, secured her political freedom from alien rule.

Truthfulness implies the ascertainment of facts by such valid proofs as direct perception, correct inference, and reliable testimony. In addition, truthfulness demands that facts must be described without any intentional deceit or unnecessary verbiage. Such truthfulness is often in diplomatic statements and political discussions. Half-truths and evasions are regarded as lies. But truthfulness, in order to be effective, must not unnecessarily hurt the feelings of others, its purpose being the welfare of others. When such a purpose is not served the wise remain silent. A Hindu injunction says: 'Speak the truth; speak the pleasant, but not the unpleasant truth.'

Abstention from theft requires not only that one should not appropriate another's property unlawfully but also that one should abstain from greediness. What it really amounts to is indifference to the material advantages of life. Cruelty, greed, or similar blemishes generally taint the accumulation of physical objects beyond a certain limit.

The practice of chastity, highly extolled by Hindu philosophers, includes abstention from lewdness in thought, speech, and action. According to a strict definition, as applied to monks, a man becomes unchaste not merely through the sexual act, but even when he listens to or utters lewd words, engages in a sport or looks at an object which arouses lust, exchanges secrets with a member of the opposite sex, or expresses the desire or makes the effort for carnal gratification. Both the body and the heart must be kept unsullied by a spiritual seeker, the body being the temple of God and the heart its inner shrine.

The Bhagavad-Gita speaks of the spiritual virtues as the 'divine treasures' with which an aspirant provides himself in his search for God. Their opposites—for instance, ostentation, arrogance, self-deceit, anger, rudeness, and ignorance—belong to those who are born to the heritage of the demons. Here is a graphic description from the Gita of men of demoniac nature:

They do not know what to do and what to refrain from. Purity is not in neither them, nor good conduct, nor truth. They say: 'the world is devoid of truth, without a moral basis, and without a God. It is brought about by the union of male and female, and lust alone is its cause— what else?' Holding such a view, these lost souls, of little understanding and fierce deeds, rise as the enemies of the world for its destruction. Giving themselves up to insatiable desires, full of hypocrisy, pride, and arrogance, they hold false views through delusion and act with impure resolve. Beset with innumerable cares, which will end only with death, looking on the gratification of desire as their highest goal, and feeling sure that this is all; bound by a hundred ties of hope, given up wholly to lust and wrath, they strive by unjust means to amass wealth for satisfaction of their passions. [They say to themselves:] 'This desire I have gained today, and that longing I will fulfill. This wealth is mine, and that also shall be mine. That enemy I have slain, and others, too, I will slay. I am the Lord of all, I enjoy; I am prosperous, mighty, and happy. I am rich; I am of high birth. Who else is equal to me? I will offer sacrifice, I will give, I will rejoice.' Thus deluded by ignorance, bewildered by many fancies, addicted to the gratification of lust, they fall to the lowest depths of degradation.

Three Gateways of Hell

According to the Bhagavad Gita, the 'three gateways of hell' leading to the ruin of the soul are lust, wrath, and greed, and the five cardinal virtues are purity, self-control, detachment, truth, and non-violence. Called universal virtues, they admit of no exceptions arising from caste, profession, place, or occasion. They are compulsory for all spiritual seekers aspiring after freedom, and they differ from ordinary moral standards, by which one treats differently men and animals, one's fellow countrymen and foreigners, relatives and strangers.

Jainism, which is an offshoot of Hinduism, speaks of an action as immoral if it is impelled by the impious thought of the agent and moral if there is pious thought behind it. Forgiveness is regarded as the highest virtue. Jain ethics aims more at self-culture than at social service, though in actual practice the Jains of India are most forward in alleviating miseries, especially those of dumb animals and insects.

Buddhist philosophers hold that it is not words or tangible actions alone that are moral or immoral, but also the disposition of the mind. Thus unrighteousness begins to accumulate from the day when a man resolves to earn his living by plundering and killing others, though the resolution itself may remain unfulfilled for a long time. Likewise, a man begins to accumulate virtue from the day he makes a pious resolution, even though the conscious action may take place much later. Furthermore, Buddhism admits of institutional morality; the founder of an institution is responsible for its good and bad effects upon others. Thus the founder of an alms-house engages in a meritorious action, whereas the founder of a temple where animals are slaughtered is guilty of an immoral act.

Greek ethics stresses the social virtues, the two most prominent ones being justice and friendship. Of these, the former emphasizes proper respect for the rights of others, and the latter is a social quality.

Many thinkers, both Eastern and Western, find it difficult to reconcile ethics with non-dualism. It is argued that ethical laws can have meaning only in a world of duality, and non-dualism denies the reality of such a world. This contention is based upon a misconception of non-dualism. It is true that from the absolute standpoint Brahman alone is real and the universe and individual souls, as such, are unreal. But from the relative standpoint neither the physical universe nor individual souls can be repudiated, nor birth and death, pain and pleasure, good and evil, virtue and vice, and the other pairs of opposites. As

long as a person sees imperfection, he cannot remain indifferent to ethical virtues; but when everything appears as Brahman, no question of ethics arises. Admitting the empirical reality of the phenomenal universe, the non-dualistic Vedanta has formulated its ethics, cosmology, theology, and philosophy with a view to enabling the embodied soul to realize its oneness with Brahman.

The Non-dualistic Ethics

The non-dualistic ethics can be regarded from two standpoints: ascetic or negative, and affirmative. Let us first consider the ascetic aspect. Under the influence of nescience or ignorance there appears an individual soul who regards the world of diversity as real. First he forgets the non-dual nature of his soul, and next entertains the wrong belief that he is separate from others. He sees a physical and social environment to which he reacts in diverse ways: he develops love or hate for certain individuals, and remains indifferent toward the rest. Thus it is not merely forgetfulness of one's true nature but also the perception of other individuals as separate from oneself that is the cause of suffering. The idea of ego, which arises when the soul through ignorance identifies itself with the body and senses, is the source of all evil, selfishness is sin. Hence a man seeking freedom and peace should give up identification with the body and the sense organs, and all private and personal attachments. Therefore non-dualistic ethics, in one of its phases, preaches the ascetic or the negative discipline of the suppression of ego.

Now let us consider the affirmative aspect of the non-dualistic ethics. Man is more than the narrow and finite self; he is Brahman, the All, and it is his duty to recognize his oneness with all. But a theoretical recognition is not enough; his daily action must demonstrate it. A man trying to understand the nature of his relationship with others should be told that all individuals, being of the nature of the spirit, are in essence identical with one another. Consequently it is his duty to avoid discrimination between one being and another, and cultivate a feeling of kindness and love for all. For the non-dualist this love is not confined to men, but extends to all living creatures. Love for one's neighbor means love for every living being, and this all embracing love is based upon the fact all living beings have souls, though all souls may not have reached the same state of spiritual growth. The universal love taught by non-dualism is based upon the realization of the fundamental oneness of all living beings. The apparent difference between one being and another is entirely due to ignorance; the wise see the same spirit everywhere. Even the exclusive love shown by the ignorant is an expression of the universal love based upon the non-duality of the spirit. Whether one knows it or not, the oneness of existence is the only source of mutual attraction. The husband loves the wife not for the sake of the wife but for the sake of the spirit, which dwells in both.

Now, the question arises whether a man, still cultivating ethical disciplines, can transcend the strife and contradictions, which are the characteristics of the phenomenal world, and experience the peace and freedom, which his higher nature seeks. Is ethics an end in itself, or does it lead to a higher state in which all ethical laws are transcended?

Hindu philosophers believe that no real freedom or peace is possible as long as man is identified with the domain of ethical laws. Moral life cannot be dissociated from struggle—an incessant struggle against evil and imperfection, which seem to be always present on the relative plane. Ethics is concerned with life, as it ought to be lived. A moral man constantly says to himself: 'I ought to have done this, I ought not to have done that.' Therefore oughtness is the very crux of morality and implies an unceasing struggle for self-improvement. Moral life belongs to the plane of imperfection. No one can be merely moral and at the same time perfect; for oughtness and imperfection goes together. Where there is no imperfection there is no ought; the ought to itself implies imperfection.

The struggle against evil cannot be won on the moral level for morality cannot redeem the sinner. The woman taken in adultery, as described in the Bible, was condemned by her judges according to the moral laws of the time, but could not be redeemed by them. The redemption came from a spiritual man, der reine Tor, who had transcended moral laws and was the embodiment of innocence and guilelessness. How could the moral judges, themselves still struggling against evil, enable the woman to rid herself of her Sin? One is redeemed through love and grace, which belong to the realm of spirit. Dirt cannot be completely washed away by water, which is less dirty, but only by water that has no trace of dirt.

Hindu philosophers have suggested the means of enjoying spiritual freedom even while engaging in the performance of action. Both optional duties, through which the agent seeks particular ends, and

obligatory duties, which ought to be done by all spiritual seekers endowed with social consciousness, should be performed according to the moral laws. But the actions of the enlightened performed in a spirit of love and non-attachment, cannot bind the doer; the secret of freedom is non-attachment. This non-attachment is not a negative attitude; it is not indifference. On the contrary, it denotes a superior power of the mind, which enables one to preserve inner peace and equanimity in success and failure. The practice of non-attachment by both the dualist and the non-dualist, relate to Karma Yoga.

Both enlightened dualists and non-dualists, free from ego, transcend the moral ought. In their activity they are not impelled by the compulsion of duty, but by love. Action flows spontaneously from the fullness of their hearts. To them the ideas of work with the purpose of improving the world is meaningless. Devotees of God see the world as God's world, His playground, and regard themselves as His playmates. Non-dualists see everywhere and in everything only the spirit, ever perfect, ever free, and ever illumined. The world-process is the spontaneous manifestation of the spirit, as the waves are of the ocean, there being neither rhyme nor reason behind the cosmic activity. To project, support, and dissolve names and forms is the very nature of Brahman, say the Upanishads. Only the ignorant read a motive into the creation. Their little brains fool them all the time.

Work of lasting benefit of humanity has been done by blessed souls like Christ and Buddha, who were free from ego and moral struggle, and inspired by selfless love for all. On the other hand, the work done by many social reformers or philanthropists has a limited value. It is said that nowadays men become philanthropists only after making their first million; even in a noble act of charity there is a conscious or unconscious desire for fame, power or recognition. Too often a philanthropist is trying to soothe a guilty conscience or escape the boredom of life. And how different modern charity is from the charity of St. Francis, inspired by his love, humility, chastity, poverty, and complete self-denial. Only an illumined person, whose ego has either been burnt in the fire of self-knowledge or totally transformed by love of God, has no trace of selfish motive. Sankaracharya says that a man should first of all see God in himself, and then serve others as manifestations of God. Such a man alone can perform really unselfish and therefore fruitful action. His moral struggles are over. He is no longer deceived by the notion of good and evil. He does not refrain from evil from fear of punishment or engage in good works from hope of reward; moral virtues become his natural attributes, the by-products of his spiritual freedom. In the words of the Upanishad: 'Evil does not overtake him, but he transcends evil. He becomes sinless, taintless, free from doubts, and a knower of truth.'

(Source) <http://www.hinduism.co.za/ethics.htm>

Lesson No. 12

Ethical Teachings of Buddhism

The ethical teachings in Buddhism and moral principles are governed by examining whether a certain action, whether connected to body or speech is likely to be harmful to one's self or to others and thereby avoiding any actions which are likely to be harmful. In Buddhism, there is much talk of a skilled mind. A mind that is skilful avoids actions that are likely to cause suffering or remorse.

Moral conduct for Buddhists differs according to whether it applies to the laity or to the Sangha or clergy. A lay Buddhist should cultivate good conduct by training in what are known as the "Five Precepts". These are not like, say, the Ten Commandments, which, if broken, entail punishment by God. The five precepts are training rules, which, if one were to break any of them, one should be aware of the breach and examine how such a breach may be avoided in the future. The resultant of an action (often referred to as Karma) depends on the intention more than the action itself. It entails less feelings of guilt than its Judeo-Christian counterpart. Buddhism places a great emphasis on 'mind' and it is mental anguish such as remorse, anxiety, guilt etc. that is to be avoided in order to cultivate a calm and peaceful mind. The five precepts are:

The five precepts

- 1) **To undertake the training to avoid taking the life of beings.** This precept applies to all living beings not just humans. All beings have a right to their lives and that right should be respected.
- 2) **To undertake the training to avoid taking things not given.** This precept goes further than mere stealing. One should avoid taking anything unless one can be sure that is intended that it is for you.
- 3) **To undertake the training to avoid sensual misconduct.** This precept is often mistranslated or misinterpreted as relating only to sexual misconduct but it covers any overindulgence in any sensual pleasure such as gluttony as well as misconduct of a sexual nature.
- 4) **To undertake the training to refrain from false speech.** As well as avoiding lying and deceiving, this precept covers slander as well as speech which is not beneficial to the welfare of others.
- 5) **To undertake the training to abstain from substances which cause intoxication and heedlessness.** This precept is in a special category as it does not infer any intrinsic evil in, say, alcohol itself but indulgence in such a substance could be the cause of breaking the other four precepts.

These are the basic precepts expected as a day to day training of any lay Buddhist. On special holy days, many Buddhists, especially those following the Theravada tradition, would observe three additional precepts with a strengthening of the third precept to be observing strict celibacy. The additional precepts are:

The additional precepts

- 6) **To abstain from taking food at inappropriate times.** This would mean following the tradition of Theravadin monks and not eating from noon one day until sunrise the next.
- 7) **To abstain from dancing, singing, music and entertainments as well as refraining from the use of perfumes, ornaments and other items used to adorn or beautify the person.** Again, this and the next rule.
- 8) **To undertake the training to abstain from using high or luxurious beds** are rules regularly adopted by members of the Sangha and are followed by the layperson on special occasions.

Laypersons following the Mahayana tradition, who have taken a Bodhisattva vow, will also follow a strictly vegetarian diet. This is not so much an additional precept but a strengthening of the first precept;

to undertake the training to avoid taking the life of beings. The eating of meat would be considered a contribution to the taking of life, indirect though it may be.

Sangha, the Buddhist clergy

The Buddhist clergy, known as the Sangha, are governed by 227 to 253 rules depending on the school or tradition for males or Bhikkhus and between 290 and 354 rules, depending on the school or tradition for females or Bhikkhunis. These rules, contained in the Vinaya or first collection of the Buddhist scriptures, are divided into several groups, each entailing a penalty for their breach, depending on the seriousness of that breach. The first four rules for males and the first eight for females, known as Parajika or rules of defeat, entail expulsion from the Order immediately on their breach. The four applying to both sexes are: Sexual intercourse, killing a human being, stealing to the extent that it entails a goal sentence and claiming miraculous or supernatural powers. Bhikkhunis' additional rules relate to various physical contacts with males with one relating to concealing from the order the defeat or parajika of another. Before his passing, the Buddha instructed that permission was granted for the abandonment or adjustment of minor rules should prevailing conditions demand such a change. These rules apply to all Sangha members irrespective of their Buddhist tradition.

The interpretation of the rules however differs between the Mahayana and Theravada traditions. The Theravadins, especially those from Thailand, claim to observe these rules to the letter of the law, however, in many cases, the following is more in theory than in actual practice. The Mahayana Sangha interprets the rule not to take food at an inappropriate time as not meaning fasting from noon to sunrise but to refrain from eating between mealtimes. The fasting rule would be inappropriate, from a health angle, for the Sangha living in cold climates such as China, Korea and Japan. When one examines the reason that this rule was instituted initially, the conclusion may be reached that it is currently redundant. It was the practice in the Buddha's time for the monks to go to the village with their bowls to collect food. To avoid disturbing the villagers more than necessary, the Buddha ordered his monks to make this visit once a day, in the early morning. This would allow the villagers to be free to conduct their day-to-day affairs without being disturbed by the monks requiring food. Today, of course, people bring food to the monasteries or prepare it on the premises so the original reason no longer applies. As many of you would be aware, in some Theravadin countries, the monks still go on their early morning alms round, but this is more a matter of maintaining a tradition than out of necessity. Also, a rule prohibiting the handling of gold and silver, in other words - money, is considered by the Mahayana Sangha a handicap were it to be observed strictly in today's world. They interpret this rule as avoiding the accumulation of riches that leads to greed. Theravadin monks tend to split hairs on this rule as, although most will not touch coins, many carry credit cards and cheque books.

Violence, War and Peace

Let me now deal briefly with the Buddhist attitude to violence, war and peace. The Buddha said in the Dhammapada:

*Victory breeds hatred. The defeated live in pain. Happily the peaceful live giving up victory and defeat. (Dp.15,5) and

* Hatreds never cease by hatred in this world; through love alone they cease. This is an eternal law. (Dp.1, 5)

The first precept refers to the training to abstain from harming living beings. Although history records conflicts involving the so-called Buddhist nations, these wars have been fought for economic or similar reasons. However, history does not record wars fought in the name of propagating Buddhism. Buddhism and, perhaps, Jainism are unique in this regard. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama has never suggested armed conflict to overcome the persecution and cruelty perpetrated by the Communist Chinese occupation forces. He has always advocated a peaceful and non-violent solution. Venerable Maha Ghosananda, the Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia has urged Cambodians to put aside their anger for the genocide of the Khmer Rouge and to unify to re-establish their nation. He has written:

The suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes great compassion. Great compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes

a peaceful family. A peaceful family makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world.

Orders of Emperor Asoka

Going back to the early history of Buddhism, Emperor Asoka, who, after a bloody but successful military campaign, ruled over more than two thirds of the Indian subcontinent, suffered great remorse for the suffering that he had caused, banned the killing of animals and exhorted his subjects to lead kind and tolerant lives. He also promoted tolerance towards all religions that he supported financially. The prevalent religions of that time were the sramanas or wandering ascetics, Brahmins, Ajivakas and Jains. He recommended that all religions desist from self-praise and condemnation of others. His pronouncements were written on rocks at the periphery of his kingdom and on pillars along the main roads and where pilgrims gathered. He also established many hospitals for both humans and animals. Some of his important rock edicts stated:

- 1) Asoka ordered that banyan trees and mango groves be planted, rest houses built and wells dug every half-mile along the main roads.
- 2) He ordered the end to killing of any animal for use in the royal kitchens.
- 3). He ordered the provision of medical facilities for humans and beasts.
- 4). He commanded obedience to parents, generosity to priests and ascetics and frugality in spending.
- 5). All officers must work for the welfare of the poor and the aged.
- 6). He recorded his intention to promote the welfare of all beings in order to repay his debt to all beings.
- 7.) He honors men of all faiths.

Not all Buddhists follow the non-violent path, however. A Buddhist monk, Phra Kittiwutthi of the Phra Chittipalwon College in Thailand, is noted for his extreme right-wing views. He said that it was not a breach of the first precept to kill communists. He said that if Thailand were in danger of a communist takeover, he would take up arms to protect Buddhism. Sulak Sivaraksa, a Thai peace activist, reports in his book, "Seeds of Peace" that Phra Kittiwutthi has since modified his stance by declaring, "to kill communism or communist ideology is not a sin". Sulak adds that the monk confessed that his nationalist feelings were more important than his Buddhist practice and that he would be willing to abandon his yellow robes to take up arms against communist invaders from Laos, Cambodia or Vietnam. By doing so, he said, he would be preserving the monarchy, the nation and the Buddhist religion. In contrast to the views of Phra Kittiwutthi, Sulak Sivaraksa reports that the Vietnamese monk, Thich Nhat Hanh is of the view that 'preserving Buddhism does not mean that we should sacrifice people's lives in order to safeguard the Buddhist hierarchy, monasteries or rituals. Even if Buddhism as such were extinguished, when human lives are preserved and when human dignity and freedom are cultivated towards peace and loving kindness, Buddhism can be reborn in the hearts of human beings.

In conclusion, I will briefly mention some other issues mentioned in the Syllabus.

The third precept on training in restraint of the senses includes sexuality. A Buddhist should be mindful of the possible effects on themselves and on others of improper sexual activity. This precept would include adultery because this also a breach the precept of not taking what does is not freely given. A relationship with someone who is committed to another is stealing. Similarly in cases of rape and child abuse, one is stealing the dignity and self-respect of another. One is also the cause of mental pain, not to mention physical pain so one is causing harm to another living being. Therefore, such behavior is breaking several precepts.

Social life in Buddhism

Marriage is not a sacrament in Buddhism as it is in other religions. Marriage is governed by civil law and a Buddhist is expected to observe the prevailing law in whatever country they live. In the Theravadin tradition, monks are prohibited by their Vinaya rules to encourage or perform a marriage ceremony. The rule states:

Should a Bhikkhu engage to act as a go-between for a man's intentions to a woman or a woman's intentions to a man, whether about marriage or paramourage, even for a temporary arrangement, this entails initial and subsequent meeting of the Sangha.

In many Theravadin countries, the couple will, following their marriage in a civil ceremony, invite the monks to their home to perform a blessing ceremony. They will offer food and other requisites to the monks and invite their family and friends to participate. In the Mahayana tradition the same rule conveys an entirely different meaning. It reads:

Should a Bhikkshu, seek to establish a conducive situation by means of which a man and a woman engage in sexual misconduct, either by himself, by order, or by means of messages, and as a result of his activities the man and woman should meet, he has committed an offence.

De-facto relationships of Buddhists

This rule does not preclude marriage but, rather, deals with the monk assuming the role of a procurer for immoral purposes. In Western countries, following the Christian precedent, many Mahayana monks become registered marriage celebrants so that, if called upon, a marriage ceremony can be performed in the temple. Generally, in countries where the law allows, Buddhists accept de-facto relationships. Promiscuity would be frowned upon as sexual misconduct but an ongoing relationship between two people, either within or outside of marriage would be considered moral conduct. As one of the essential Buddhist teachings is that everything is impermanent and subject to change, the irrevocable breakdown of a relationship between a couple would be understood in this light, so divorce would not be considered improper.

As far as bioethical questions are concerned, it is mainly a matter of the attitude of the different traditions or schools of Buddhism. This is tied to the concept of rebirth and when it occurs. According to the Theravadin tradition, rebirth occurs immediately upon death. The body of the deceased is no longer considered as a part of the former being, so such things as autopsies, organ transplants etcetera are allowable. In fact, many Theravadins, especially in Malaysia, encourage the donation of human organs as being the highest form of giving. Often, especially at Vesak, the celebration of the birth, enlightenment and passing away of the Buddha, blood donations are performed in the temple grounds. The Mahayana, on the other hand, believes that there is an intermediate state between incarnations, known as Antarabhava. Most people following this tradition try to avoid touching or moving the body for, at least eight hours after death. This, of course, means that the organs would by then be useless for transfer to another human being.

Respect for the environment

The Buddhist work ethic and business and professional ethics would, ideally be closely tied to respect for the environment. It is well described in E.F.Schumacher's book "Small is Beautiful":

"While the materialist is mainly interested in goods, the Buddhist is mainly interested in liberation. But Buddhism is the Middle Way and therefore in no way antagonistic to physical well-being. The keynote of Buddhist economics is simplicity and non-violence. From an economist's point of view, the marvel of the Buddhist way of life is the utter rationality of its pattern - amazingly small means leading to extraordinarily satisfying results."

Opinion of Ken Jones

Ken Jones in a paper called "Buddhism and Social Action" comments: "Schumacher outlines a 'Buddhist economics' in which production would be based on a middle range of material goods (and no more), and on the other a harmony with the natural environment and its resources.

The above principles suggest some kind of diverse and politically decentralized society, with co-operative management and ownership of productive wealth. It would be conceived on a human scale, whether in terms of size and complexity or organization or of environmental planning, and would use modern technology selectively rather than being used by it in the service of selfish interests. In Schumacher's words, 'it is a question of finding the right path of development, the Middle Way, between materialist heedlessness and traditionalist immobility, in short, of finding Right Livelihood'".

Despite the theory surrounding Buddhist business practice, greed still seems to be the order of the day in many Buddhist countries. In Thailand, a monk in the north, Acharn ponsaktajadhammo, has been

leading a campaign against the environmental vandalism of the timber industry. Tree felling in Northern Thailand has caused erosion, flooding and has economically ruined small farmers. For his environmental efforts, Acharn Ponektajadhammo has had death threats and was recently arrested. In Japan, another country where the majority of the population is Buddhist, the killing of whales and dolphins is still prevalent. Animals seem to find no place in the group culture of Japanese society.

As may be seen from the foregoing, Buddhist ethical principles are very noble and in an ideal world their practice would lead to peace and harmony but, unfortunately, as the Buddha has taught, people are motivated by greed hatred and delusion - even Buddhists.

(Source) <http://www.buddhanet.net/e-learning/budethics.htm>

THE ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF CHRISTIANITY

It is a characteristic of Christianity that the ethical teachings of its Founder are inseparably connected with his religious teachings. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" is not given by him as a separate and detached precept, but as one of two. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart; and with all thy soul, and with thy entire mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second like unto it is this; thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth the whole law and the prophets." Observe that the two precepts are not simply placed side by side, they are united: "on these two." In like manner the first four of the Ten Commandments present duties to God, the others present duties to men; the opening petitions of the Lord's Prayer are that God may be honored, the others that we may be blessed. In the great judgment scene described by Jesus, where he himself will sit as king, the rewards and punishments of the future life are made to turn upon the performance or the neglect of duties to him in the person of his people. Everything religious in Christianity is made to furnish a motive to morality.

We all condemn the fanatics who would make religion sufficient without ethics. Some teachings of this sort are absurd, and some disgusting. But on the other hand, shall we think it wise to regard ethics as sufficient without religion? Is it not true that he who would divorce religion and morality is an enemy to religion, and at best only a mistaken friend to morality?

Morality and Religion in ancient times

Among the Greeks and Romans, in the historical period, these two were little connected. The same persons did not even generally teach them; the priests taught religion, the philosophers taught morality. Some of the actions ascribed to the deities themselves were grossly immoral. The Jewish contemporaries of Jesus were severely rebuked by him for their traditional directions as to Corban. A man might refuse food to his own father by saying that this particular food was Corban, a thing offered to God, thus setting aside for the sake of a supposed religious service the profound moral obligation and the express commandment of God's law, to honor father and mother. So likewise Jesus pronounced woes upon the hypocritical Pharisees for scrupulously tithing the least important vegetables that grew in their gardens, and then leaving "undone the weightier matters of the law, justice and mercy and faith"

Ethical obligation, according to the Savior's teachings, is enforced by the yet higher religious obligation. Our duties to men are really a part of our all-comprehensive duty to God. Why must I love my neighbor as myself? If it were placed on utilitarian grounds, meaning personal utility, then I ought to love my neighbor as myself because it will benefit me, that is, because I love myself better than my neighbor. If the utility consulted were general, then why ought I to care as much for the general good as for my own? We are back where we started. Herbert Spencer, with all the ability and earnestness shown in his "Data of Ethics" makes a reply that I think men in general cannot recognize as philosophically conclusive or practically cogent. Natural sympathy with others, we are told, if frequently exercised, hardens by force of habit into altruism, a sense of obligation to others.

Is that all? Nay, I must love my neighbor as myself because I am the creature and the child of God, whom I must love with all my heart, more than my neighbor and more than myself. Shall we then, it may be asked, accuse every man who is not definitely religious of being gravely immoral? Nay, individual moral convictions may be largely the result of inheritance, education and present environment, and may subsist notwithstanding the individual lack of those religious convictions which are their proper, and, as a general fact, their actual support.

What we ought to do

Observe further that Jesus not only tells us what we ought to do, but shows how we may be able to do so. He presents in his own character and life an inspiring example, satisfying our noblest ideal of morality, and yet conforming itself to the conditions of our own existence. He tells how we may obtain divine assistance in obeying his precepts. Many other teachers have given wholesome precepts, but left men to keep them in their unaided strength. Jesus tells of a divinely wrought change so thorough as to be called a new birth, of a divine spiritual help that our heavenly father will readily give. It is in this, and

not simply in the great superiority of his precepts, that we find the unapproachable excellence of the Christian ethics.

In connection with this point we must remember that Jesus constantly pre-supposes the sinfulness of human nature. Many ethical precepts, and even whole systems of ethics, appear to assume that men have no particular bias toward evil. But it is far otherwise with him; and he meets the demands of the situation by providing atonement, renewal and divine sanctification.

Another thing quite without parallel is the unique authority that these ethical instructions derive from the faultless life and character of the Teacher himself. Every other instructor in morals comes manifestly short of his own standard, as indeed befalls the teacher in every other department of practical human exertion. Even the lessons given by the best parents to their children are subject to inevitable discount on account of the faults in parental character and conduct of which the children are aware and the parents are conscious. Here alone among all moral instructors the example is absolutely equal to the precept.

Originality of teachings of Jesus

Are the ethical teachings of Jesus original? Some have thought this a question of great importance. Opponents have taken immense pains to show that certain of his precepts find a partial in previously existing pagan writings; and some Christian apologists have been nervously unwilling to recognize the fact. It needs no great reflection to see that a wise teacher of morals must bring his instructions into close connection with what men already know, or what they will instinctively recognize as true when suggested by his lessons. If you are teaching a child, you do not present ideas entirely apart from and above the child's previous consciousness; you try to link the new thoughts to what the child has thought of before. We need not then be at all unwilling to admit that for the most part Jesus only carried farther and lifted higher and extended more widely the views of ethical truth that had been dimly caught by the universal human mind, or had at least been seen by the loftiest souls. This was but a part of the wisdom of his teachings. The most familiar and striking instance is the so-called golden rule, something more or less similar to which is ascribed to various contemporaries of Jesus and to earlier teachers. Thus Hillel said, "What is hateful to thee, do not do to another," and he was but repeating a passage in the book of Tobit, "What thou hatest, do to no one."

A Greek biographer of Aristotle relates that being asked how we should behave towards our friends he answered, "As we should wish them to behave towards us"; and Isocratic had previously said, "What you are angry at when inflicted on you by others, this do not do to others." A similar negative form of the precept is also frequently quoted from Confucius, "What you do not like when done to yourself, do not do to others." But Confucius really taught, though not in form, the positive side of the same idea. A follower asked, "Is there one word which may serve as a rule of practice for all one's life?" Confucius replied, "Is not reciprocity such a word? What you do not want done to yourself, do not do to others." Dr. R. H. Graves a distinguished missionary for many years in Canton, who went from Baltimore, replies to my inquiries that "reciprocity", seems to be a fairly correct translation. And this saying of the Anav lects is in the doctrine of the mean so illustrated as to leave no doubt that Confucius intended a positive, and not merely a negative precept. I have taken pains to bring out this fact as a matter of simple justice and exact truth. And indeed if we did not gladly "seize upon truth where're 'tis found," we should not be faithful to the spirit of Jesus.

A recent writer (* Matheson, "Landmarks of New Testament Morality.") has pointed out that the Christian ethical system harmoniously combines principles that had been separately emphasized by the Greek philosophers. The Epicurean laid stress on self-love; the Stoic on love for others; the Platonist on love to God, in a certain limited sense. There can indeed be no basis for moral conduct other than "the love of self, the love of humanity, the love of God; and the religion which unites these has become the foundation of absolute morality." This is not at all saying that Jesus derived these ideas from the pagan philosophers. In fact they reside in the moral nature of man, and his relations to the nature of things and to the Creator. Jesus combines in harmonious completeness truths which one or another had separately and imperfectly taught.

The Old Testament ethical teachings he assumes as already received among his hearers, and in a general way endorses. The two foundation precepts, as to love of God and love of our neighbor, were both drawn from the Law of Moses, though not there given together, nor either of them presented as

fundamental. But have we not been frequently told of late that Jesus undertook to revolutionize the Old Testament ethics? Did he not supplant the Law of Moses by his own authoritative and better teachings? No, nothing of the kind. He expressly declared in the Sermon on the Mount, that he came not to destroy the law, as some Jews imagined the Messiah would do in order to make life easier, but came to complete the law. And the examples which follow this statement are not at all examples of teaching contrary to the Law of Moses, but in every case of going further in the same direction.

Thus the law condemned killing; he condemns hate and anger. The law forbade adultery; he declared that a lustful look is virtual adultery. The law forbade false swearing; he goes further and commands not to swear at all. The only saying he condemns is the phrase, "and hate thine enemy"; but this was not a part of the law, it was a rabbinical addition, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." And the only case in which he appears to condemn an ethical teaching actually found in the Old Testament is really to the same effect as the others. The Mosaic law of divorce was really a restriction upon the otherwise existing facility of divorce, in that the preparation of a document gave time for reflection and the possession of it afforded some protection to the wife turned away. Jesus was going further in the same direction when he restricted divorce within narrower limits. And while he said that Moses for the hardness of their hearts allowed divorce for various causes, his own teaching expressly went back to the original constitution of human beings as laid down in the Old Testament. There is thus no ground for the assertion that Jesus taught as a revolutionary reformer, or proposed to set aside the Old Testament ethics as essentially erroneous. He always went further in the same direction and completed the law.

Rabbinical sayings and teachings of Jesus

It is often asserted by some modern writers that the Founder of Christianity derived much of his teaching from the current traditions of rabbinical sayings, as shown by the existence of similar ideas or expressions in the Talmud and other late Jewish writings. The alleged proofs of this indebtedness are few and curiously inadequate. It is folly to say that Jesus derived the golden rule from his older contemporary, Hillel, for we have seen that it existed centuries before. The statement is frequently made that the Lord's Prayer is all found in the Talmud or in the liturgies now used in synagogues. I have investigated all the proofs of this adduced by accessible writers, and the facts are as follows: the only exact parallels presented in the Talmud and the liturgies are to the address, "Our Father, who art in heaven," and the two petitions, "Hallowed be thy name" and "Bring us not into temptation."

There are phrases somewhat resembling "Thy kingdom come," and "Deliver us from the evil one." There is no parallel to "Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth," or to "Give us this day our daily bread," or to the petition which Jesus emphasized by repeating it after the prayer, "Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors." Thus the most characteristic petitions of the prayer are wholly without Jewish parallel, and the scattered phrases similar to some of its expressions are such as devout Jews could hardly fail sometimes to employ. The image of the mote and the beam, and two or three other expressions elsewhere employed by Jesus, are found in the Talmud. They may have been proverbial. Or it is entirely possible that the Talmud and other late Jewish writings really borrowed sometimes from the New Testament. The Jews in Alexandria early borrowed largely from the Greek philosophers, and at a later period the Jews are said to have borrowed from the Arabs; why might they not adopt an occasional phrase from the Christian writers, whom they could so easily claim as really of their own race? Thus the charge of indebtedness to Hillel, or to the traditions in general, so far as I can find evidence, quite breaks down.

Let us next consider that the ethical teachings of Jesus do not usually undertake to give mere rules, but to set forth principles. The Jewish traditions had run everything into rules. They called it making a fence around the law, to encompass it with all manner of minute directions, which would keep men away from breaking the law. It is a general tendency of mankind to save them the trouble of thinking, by expressing principles in the form of rules. Many schools and some colleges undertake to regulate the whole behavior of the student by a set of rules; and churches sometimes show the same tendency. Jesus evidently set himself against this disposition. He did not wish his followers to be burdened by stiff and narrow rules; he taught them principles, which are at once more comprehensive and more flexible. And the thinking which is required in order to apply principles brings with it a most valuable part of our moral discipline.

“Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn before him another”

Some sayings of Jesus have often been taken for rules which were meant only as striking statements of a principle; for example, "Whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also." If any proof be needed that this was not meant as a rule, let us judge of the Saviour's meaning from the course which he himself pursued, for he, as we have said before, is the one teacher whose example never fell short of his precepts. When one of the high priest's officers struck him at the trial, we do not read that he turned the other cheek. He calmly remonstrated: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou me?" Here, as in many other cases, we can interpret his saying by his action. In like manner he said, "Resist not him that is evil;" and many have taken this as a rule and have inferred that war is always wrong, and that a man must never defend himself when attacked. Yet Jesus did not tell the believing centurion at Capernaum to abandon his calling, nor in any case intimate that it was wrong to be a soldier. We must remember that the Savior was often a field-preacher, or a preacher in public squares. It was necessary to hold the attention of his audience, whom no decorum restrained from leaving. Some had never heard him before, some would never hear him again; it was necessary to drive a truth into unsympathetic minds, to fix it there in permanent remembrance. He did this partly by a great variety of images and illustrations, and partly by paradoxical statements which would compel reflection and ensure recollection. Thus the saying, "Turn to him the other cheek also" has been very often misunderstood, and may have been misunderstood by some of those who first heard it; but did any one ever forget that saying?

Better that many should misunderstand, than that none should remember. We interpret such sayings by their general connection, or by the Savior's own example, or his teaching on other occasions. This is a very different thing from explaining away his teachings because not in accordance with our views or wishes; this is only trying to determine what he really meant. He said, "Swear not at all," and many persons, including some devoted Christians, have understood that he forbids taking an oath in a court of justice. Yet they ought to have noticed that he himself did that very thing. The high priest presiding in the Sanhedrin said, "I put thee on oath by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God." To answer at all was to answer on oath; and Jesus answered. So then his prohibition of swearing must have related to the sadly common use of oaths in ordinary conversation. His example interprets his precept.

Again he said, "Give to him that asketh thee." People suppose that here is a rule for unrestricted observance, though perhaps no one in real life ever attempted to carry it out. But in the same discourse he said, "Ask, and it shall be given you." In this latter case he goes on to compare the heavenly Father's giving to that of parents. These, with all their human infirmity, "know how" to give good things to their children, and will not weakly give what the children ask through mistake; much more must the Father in heaven know how to give, and withhold where that would be truer kindness. Then if the promise as to God's giving what we ask is limited by the nature of the case, so must be the direction to give to others what they ask of us.

Love to enemies

He also says, "Love your enemies. . . . That ye may be sons of your Father who is in heaven." Yet the heavenly Father does not love enemies as he loves friends; he cannot love enemies with a love of complacency, as he loves the obedient and holy. "He maketh his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sendeth rain on the just and the unjust." So we should love our enemies, and gladly do them good; but this does not mean that we ought to love them as we love our friends.

In like manner then we must interpret what the Savior said as to revenge. The Law of Moses confined the requital of injuries to exact retaliation, "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," while natural human passion would tend to make the requital far surpass the injury. Jesus goes further in the same direction as the law, and entirely forbids revenge. So great an evil is revenge, so carefully must we avoid it, that he says, better give the litigant the exempted garment as well as the other, better invite still further exactions from the impressing officer, better turn the other cheek for a second blow, than to practice revenge. I repeat, we must not explain away the Savior's sayings to suit our own notions, but we must seek to ascertain his real meaning. And I think it is clear that some of these sayings were not at all designed to be taken as rules, but were only a paradoxical or otherwise striking expression of a principle.

Because of these paradoxical expressions many have declared the morality taught by Jesus to be unpractical, and so have disregarded any and all of his teachings as much as they please. Some sincerely devout persons have excused themselves for falling short of other precepts on the ground that several of

his sayings could not be literally obeyed. Some Christians have made a point of refusing to bear arms, or to practice any sort of resistance to wrong. Count Tolstoy, a man of great imagination and dramatic power, but morbid and a trifle fantastical, supposes himself to have discovered, as a new thing in the world, that Jesus meant these paradoxical statements of a principle for precise rules. He does not know that the same notion has been held by some persons in almost every age and country. And the gifted old nobleman tries to live according to his discovery, so far as his own wiser instincts and the control of those around him will allow.

Tell him that if such notions were generally adopted it would break up society, and like many others of his countrymen at the present day, he would reply that society ought to be completely demolished, so that we may see if the survivors cannot build something better. In like manner Ibsen in one of his dramas makes the hero attempt to act upon these sayings as rules, but shows that the result must be to crush the individual attempting it, and supposes himself thereby to prove that the existing constitution of society in Christian countries is wholly contrary to the real teachings of the Founder of Christianity. But did Jesus ever mean thus to teach? Has he not been simply misunderstood?

We turn now to consider the great motive which Jesus connects with his ethical teachings. That motive, as already intimated, and as well known, is Love. The love of God is to be supreme. The love of one's neighbor is to be in equipoise with the love of self. This makes a distinct recognition of self-love as essentially right. And Jesus elsewhere appeals to self-interest in the highest sense, saying, "It is profitable for thee," "What shall it profit a man?" Nor was this self-love forbidden by the self renunciation which he enjoined. One who proposed to be his follower must renounce himself, and take up his cross, and follow on as ready to be crucified. And so it is added, "Whosoever shall lose his life for my sake shall find it." Self-renunciation for his sake was thus encouraged by a higher self-love.

In sinful beings self-love constantly gravitates downwards towards selfishness. The remedy is to keep it balanced by love of our neighbor, while love to God is exalted above both, and holds them in symmetrical relation. A man's duties to himself, as accordant with and implied in Christ's teachings, would form a wholesome subject of reflection and discussion. An English literary man tells us, "The philosophy of the past said, Know thyself; the philosophy of the present says, Improve thyself." In sooth, neither of these will make much progress without the other.

Yet the powerful instinct of self-love needs far less encouragement in ethico-religious teaching than the disposition to love our neighbor. Accordingly, the one is simply implied in the teachings of Jesus, the other is repeatedly and strongly urged. The race antagonisms and national animosities which so abounded in the world that Christianity entered, which caused every foreigner to be instinctively regarded as an enemy, led the Jewish Rabbinical instructors to quibble with the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." They would say, certainly, but who is my neighbor? A dog of a Gentile is not my neighbor.

An abominable Samaritan is not my neighbor. And so there arose the fashion of making an addition to the law, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy." It is easy to exclaim against the scribes and lawyers for such a gloss; but it ought to be a warning. We are all in danger of adding to, or subtracting from, or somehow modifying, a law of man or a law of God that interferes with our interests, passions or prejudices. We read that a certain lawyer, that is, a professional student of the Law of Moses, undertook one day to test the wisdom of Jesus by asking "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? And he said unto him, what is written in the law? How readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with thy entire mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Here we see that at least some of the Jewish teachers were already accustomed to put the two commandments together. And Jesus said unto him,

Thou hast answered right; this do and thou shalt live. But he, desiring to justify himself, said unto Jesus, and who is my neighbor?" This shows the process above mentioned. He wished to justify himself for a conscious lack of general benevolence by restricting the definition of the term neighbor. Having perceived this, we see the point of the Savior's reply in the parable of the Good Samaritan. A Jew fell among robbers, who left him half dead. Two of his own people, not merely private citizens, but one a priest and the other a Levite, successively saw his hapless plight and kept on the other side of the way.

Presently he was relieved, with kindest care, by a Samaritan. Let us be thankful that with all our modern bad feeling of many kinds, we find it hard to realize the burning hatred which existed between the Jews

and the Samaritans: hatred compounded of race antagonism, oft-repeated national strife, utter non-intercourse socially or even in business, and religious bigotry and jealousy. The point is then that a neighbor, in the sense of the law, is even one of the most hostile and hated, scorned and loathed, of human beings, when you find him needing human help. Notice in this case, as heretofore, how strongly the Great Teacher presents a general truth by a single illustrative example. If Jew and Samaritan were to be neighbors, in the sense of the law there could be no limit within the bounds of universal humanity. Wherever we see need, we see a neighbor. And the priest and the Levite, stepping along the opposite side of the road, are a warning to all religious officials, who have no taste, or fancy they have no time, for the relief of suffering humanity.

We must observe that in general Jesus did not merely enjoin the duty of caring for others. The whole tendency of his teachings, his example, the spirit he infuses, has always been to awaken a burning enthusiasm for the relief, the improvement, and the increased welfare of our fellow-men. Make liberal concession, far more liberal than any known facts might indicate, as to the human kindness often manifested before Christ came, yet every one must acknowledge that Christianity has in this respect given a new meaning to such words as benevolence and humanity. With all the misapprehensions and corruptions of Christian teaching which have prevailed, with all the grievous imperfections and inconsistencies so widely existing among professed Christians, yet the story of Christian benevolence, in its various departments and throughout the Christian ages, shines among the fairest and most inspiring pages of human history. And how far its best specimens fall short of the original author and exemplar!

Many have considered that the Savior's teachings as to forgiveness were impracticable; that to forgive seven times a day, to forgive till seventy times seven, to forgive those who trespass against us, or else we cannot hope that our Heavenly Father will forgive our trespasses against him, belongs to some lofty ideal that we may admire like the stars, but to which ordinary humanity can never climb up. But is there not an important distinction here between forgiveness and the love of enemies? We may illustrate again by the example of God himself. He does not forgive his enemies until they repent and change into friends; yet he loves his enemies who have not repented, and sends upon them rain and sunshine, the common blessings of his Providence.

So we ought to love those who have wronged us, and be glad to do them any kindness which would not promote their evil designs against us; but we are under no obligation, in fact we have no right to forgive them in the strict sense of the term, to restore them to our confidence and affection, until they repent, until we have good reason to believe that they will henceforth act otherwise. If this be the correct idea of Christian forgiveness, it is not impracticable, and we should not exempt or excuse ourselves from performing the duty so often enjoined. As to love of enemies, with all the imperfection of our actual Christianity, it has wrought a great change in the views and feelings of mankind. Among the ancients "that man considered himself fortunate who on his death-bed could say, in reviewing his past life, that no one had done more good to his friends or more mischief to his enemies.

This was the celebrated felicity of Sulla; this is the crown of Xenophon's panegyric on Cyrus the Younger." The author of "Ecce Homo" adds, "When therefore people deliberately consider it mean to forgive extreme injuries, they are really setting a limit, not to the duty of forgiveness, but to the possibility of genuine repentance. The words 'there are some injuries that no one ought to forgive,' mean really 'there are some injuries of which it is impossible to repent.'" And again, "The forgiveness of injuries, which was regarded in the ancient world as a virtue indeed, but an almost impossible one, appears to the moderns in ordinary cases a plain duty. . . And so a new virtue has been introduced into human life." Many in Christian countries still practice unforgiving hatred and even ferocious revenge, but few defend it, and all know that it is utterly forbidden by Christianity.

A kindred subject will be our Lord's teachings as to the poor. The Jews have always been in eminent degree lovers of money, and gifted in acquiring it, being in that, as in most respects, one of the foremost races of mankind. They interpreted the Old Testament promises of providential reward and punishment to the effect that if a man was prosperous and rich it showed him to be an uncommonly good man, a favorite of heaven; and if he was poor and suffering, this was the punishment of his uncommon sinfulness. So the friends of Job insisted that he must have been guilty of great sins, though nobody knew what they were, for here was the manifest penalty and proof in his great sufferings. If a Jew had passed by and observed the scene described in the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, his natural thought would have been, yonder man of wealth must be a very good man, and this poor wretch at the

gate must have been very wicked. Now the author of the parable made it teach the opposite of their views in this case.

He did not mean that all rich men are bad, and will one day lift up their eyes, being in torment, nor that all poor men are good, but he gave a case in point, diametrically opposed to Jewish opinion. Yet even here the dying beggar was carried by angels into the bosom of Abraham, who had been a Prince of the East, a man of great wealth. Jesus rebuked the Jewish error as to riches and poverty, showed himself the friend of the poor and found among them the great majority of his followers. Yet the family at Bethany, whom he especially loved, was manifestly rich. One of the sisters had a box of perfumery, which was declared by a man interested in money-values, named Judas Iscariot, to be worth more than three hundred denaries.

Now a denary was the common price of a day's labor, and, allowing for Sabbaths and feast days, this box of perfumery was worth more than a whole year's work of a laboring man. Mary of Bethany could not have possessed it, or if possessing by gift or inheritance, could not have rightly used it in an unpractical way, had they not been a wealthy family-which also accounts for the fact that "many of the Jews" went out from Jerusalem to the suburban village to comfort the sisters when their brother died. The Savior had the previous day commended the holy enthusiasm of a poor widow, who gave more than all the rich, gave all she had to live on. And here he justifies Mary for using this costly article of luxury in a quite unpractical expression of affection, though there were thousands of poor in the great city two miles away.

The occasion was extraordinary, she was showing that she understood better than the Twelve the Master's intimations of his approaching death, and that the recognition of it did not weaken her faith or her love, and "she did what she could" to cheer him as the dark shadows gathered. But though the incident was extraordinary in its circumstances, it certainly proves that wealthy people may sometimes lawfully express affection to God or man by costly gifts, though there be many all around who are poor and needy.

The words of Jesus to the young ruler

The words of Jesus to the young ruler, "Sell all thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me," are often spoken of as if he had enjoined this upon all who propose to follow him. Yet there is no record of his laying such requirement upon any one else, except that Matthew the publican and the two sons of Zebedee left their business to follow him as permanently attached disciples. The "one thing" lacked by the young ruler was that he should not only care much for eternal life, but care more for it than all things else. The test was, whether he would sacrifice what he valued most in this world, out of supreme devotion to Jesus. That which he valued most was his vast wealth, and this test he could not stand. The test for another man would be whether out of devotion to Jesus he could abandon sinful pleasures, or relinquish worldly ambitions. The principle involved is that the service of God must be supreme. In a certain sense, "religion must be everything, or it is nothing." One who retains or acquires wealth, one who pursues ambition or indulges in pleasures, must subordinate all to his Christian discipleship, or he is no disciple.

It was to Jewish hearers an almost unequalled paradox to say, "How hard is it for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle." Various and strange attempts have been made to explain away this comparison. Yet it is an obvious hyperbole-the largest familiar animal passing through the smallest familiar orifice, representing impossibility. The Talmud has a similar saying, only substituting the elephant, a still larger animal. The disciples understood Jesus as meaning an impossibility, for they replied, "Who then can be saved?" If the rich cannot, who can be? And Jesus answered, "With men it is impossible; but with God all things are possible." On the other hand, the Sermon on the Mount begins with a series of sayings quite the reverse of Jewish opinion. This opinion was, Happy the rich, the well-fed, the merry, those who taste the sweetness of revenge. Jesus says, Happy the poor, the hungry, the mourners, the meek and merciful, the peacemakers.

Why should the poor be called happy? Because they were more likely to accept the good news of the Messianic reign, and thus to enjoy its high spiritual blessing; because the poor in possessions were more likely to become the poor in spirit. This reconciles for us the phrase in Luke, "Happy are ye poor," with that in Matthew, "Happy are the poor in spirit." In like manner the Savior more than once set it forth as a sign of his Messiah ship; a sign predicted by Isaiah, "To the poor the gospel is preached." It requires an

almost impossible effort of historical imagination to appreciate the change which Christianity has wrought in the feelings of mankind with regard to the poor.

Still, alas! Even in Christian countries, they are often despised and neglected and wronged. But this much at least is true, that all men know it ought to be otherwise, and that very many strive, in various and helpful ways, to have it otherwise. Jesus of Nazareth has been the best friend the poor have ever had in human history; and his faithful and wise followers will try in this also to be like him. Yet we have seen that he was no enemy of wealth, that he had special friends and devoted followers who were wealthy; and there is nothing in his teachings to encourage the notion that equality in human possessions is desirable or possible.

In this connection it may be well to make a slight digression, and notice a very common and very grave misunderstanding as to the generosity of the Savior's followers in Jerusalem during the years that immediately succeeded his departure. The phrase is used in Acts, "they had all things common"; and it is stated that even the holders of real estate would sell it and bring the money to the Apostles for the support of the brethren. Hence the idea has grown widely current that these Christians at Jerusalem were really communists that every one who joined them at once gave up his entire possessions to a common fund and there was no longer any private ownership; and from this supposed fact various inferences have been drawn by friend and foe. But it is not a fact. It can be proven from the record that they were not Communists.

When Ananias sold a piece of land, and brought a part of the proceeds to the Apostles, making the impression that he had brought all, as others were doing, Peter said to him, "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? And after it was sold, was it not in thy power?" His sin was not in withholding a part, but in lying to inspired men, lying against God. Now this language of Peter is absolutely incompatible with the idea that every Christian at once gave up all his property to a common fund. The Apostle declares that the property was his own while it remained unsold; and that after it was sold, the money was in his own power. He was under no necessity of selling, or of turning over the proceeds. Think of it, and this clearly shows that no real Communism prevailed among them. What then is meant by the phrase, "they had all things common"? It means that they held all their property as for the common benefit. Listen: "and not one of them said that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." No one said that any part of his property was his own; it was his own, but he did not so speak of it; he regarded and treated his property as held for the benefit of his brethren.

A reader of the Greek will notice that here and throughout the following passage every verb is in the imperfect tense, showing what happened from time to time, as the brethren saw need and felt moved: "as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold, and laid them at the Apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto each, according as any one had need." Every verb is in the imperfect tense. (Acts 4: 32-35; likewise in 2:43-47.) One Christian this month, and another the next month, would bring money, even selling property for the purpose; and this went on during the several years embraced in the first six chapters of Acts.

Thus you see that this was not at all a case of Communism. It was a case of extraordinary generosity, called for by extraordinary needs. Many of these first believers had come up to the great Pentecost, with only money enough for a short visit and a return, and here they were remaining for months and years; others had been fishermen on the Lake of Galilee, and at Jerusalem had no means of livelihood; others were poor Jews at Jerusalem, accustomed to receive help from the contributions of wealthy Jews in foreign countries, and cut off from this as soon as they became Christians. Rejoicing together in their new faith and hope and love, those of them who had property gladly contributed, as they saw occasion, for the support of their brethren. All this ceased of course when the disciples were scattered in every direction by the persecution that arose in connection with Stephen. And it is greatly to be regretted that this magnificent example of Christian generosity should be popularly mistaken for an attempt at Communism, and even sometimes represented as turning out to be impracticable, and thereby showing itself to be unwise.

The fact that in this and various other cases the ethical teachings of Christianity have been widely misunderstood, must not prevent us from recognizing and endeavoring fully to appreciate how much the Savior really taught that was new to the world, and among the greatest blessings ever brought to mankind. When he said "give to him that asketh," it was (as we have seen) not a mere rule, requiring or authorizing us to scatter alms with blind negligence, since God, who is held forth as our example, gives

to those who ask him, but gives wisely; and yet it is a precept that stirs every true Christian heart to benevolence.

Whether we shall give to needy individuals upon casual application, or shall in general prefer to give through carefully organized effort, is a question of expediency and practical wisdom; but in some way, yea, in all ways that are not palpably unwise, we must give. And it is in accordance with the whole spirit of Christianity that we should not merely relieve human suffering, but that we should strive to prevent it. The principles which Jesus taught will be found to apply with the most flexible adaptation to whatever may be required and justified by our growing knowledge of sanitary and social conditions.

I should be very glad, if we had time, to dwell on many details of the Savior's ethical instruction. Especially should I like to show - what we all know in a general way - how he has put unspeakable honor upon the lowlier and more passive virtues, which the pride of human strength is so apt to neglect or even to despise. But it is impossible now to attempt any detailed exhibition of his moral teachings. I know of no one who questions that as a whole they are greatly superior to those of any other teacher, or of all other teachers combined. The only drawback with some minds has been the existence of certain sayings supposed to be impracticable, and these I have tried to show have been simply misunderstood. The only ethical teachings now compared by any one with those of Jesus are the ethics found in the Buddhist writings. Let us gladly recognize all in these that is true and wholesome, and the great good they have done on a wide scale in the Asiatic world, as supplanting ideas that formerly prevailed among many races.

The recent fashion of favorably comparing Buddhism with Christianity has been thought by some to find countenance in Sir Edwin Arnold's poem, "The Light of Asia." It may have been justifiable in a poem that he should borrow Christian terms, and add no small tinge of Christian sentiments, in order to make pleasing poetry for Christian readers; the trouble is that many have failed to distinguish in this case between a poem and a history. As I heartily admire many parts of "The Light of Asia," I am glad to quote words taken down from the author's lips during his recent voyage across the Pacific by a man whom I personally know to be of the highest character and intelligence.

Sir Edwin said to Dr. Ashmore, "I have been criticized for an implied comparison between Buddhism and Christianity in regard to doctrines derived from them and principles contained in them respectively. No such object was in mind. For me Christianity rightly viewed is the crowned queen of religions, immensely superior to every other, and though I am so great an admirer of much that is great in Hindu philosophy and religion, I would not give one verse of the Sermon on the Mount away for twenty epic poems like the Mahabharata, nor exchange the golden rule for twenty new Upanishads."

It may be mentioned in conclusion that some propose to exalt the moral teachings of Jesus by saying that for them no further religion is necessary. They will live by the Sermon on the Mount alone. But he who spoke that great and inspiring discourse gave many other teachings, ethical and spiritual. Were they superfluous? Shall we be really honoring him, or acting wisely and safely for ourselves, if we presume to select one discourse of his and treat all the rest of his teaching and his work as unnecessary and useless?

Besides, who does really live up to the Sermon on the Mount? Who can afford to slight the religion of Jesus, upon the assumption of fully conforming to his ethical instructions? To end as we began. He gave ethical and religious teachings together - he stands as not merely a teacher, but a Savior. Others have taught well and helpfully, though not in a way comparable to his teaching, as to how we ought to live; he alone can also give the spiritual help we need in order actually to live as his teachings require.

Ten Commandments

Exodus is the book that tells of the formation of a national group from a collection of slave laborers in Egypt. Joseph led the children of Israel into Egypt to escape famine in Canaan. Moses led them out hundreds of years later to escape what had become bondage and abuse under the Pharaohs. A forty-year journey to the Promised Land included a stop at Mount Sinai where Moses received the Law: The Ten Commandments.

These Commandments came at a time when the Israelites were gelling as a people, which would represent God to the world. Hundreds of years in the polytheistic culture that was Egypt had no doubt dulled their sensitivity to the one true God: YHWH. As a tribe of nomads, living as one large

community, they needed some basic rules of conduct and a belief in a higher power than Moses who would enforce them.

The Ten Commandments given to Moses are these: (abbreviated form)

- a. You shall not worship any other god but YHWH.
- b. You shall not make a graven image.
2. You shall not take the name of YHWH in vain.
3. You shall not break the Sabbath.
4. You shall not dishonor your parents.
5. You shall not murder.
6. You shall not commit adultery
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall not commit perjury.
9. You shall not covet.

Many Christians will say that the “You shall nots” are too negative and that we need to be more positive since the revelations and teachings of Jesus. These ten teachings are not the old clothes of Judaism, but have been relevant to human relationships throughout the ages.

1. The first Commandment forbids us to put anything before God. It applied to the Jewish people then as the gods of their neighbors often tempted them: The Baals and the Asherah poles. It applied to Germany sixty years ago where god was a god of racial purity. It can apply to us in our modern world where acquisition is the god of the day. God is demanding that first of all, we give Him prominence.

2. Commandment number two includes an explanation in the expanded version found in Exodus 20. It describes the types of images that might be made and...“you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.” No image of God will ever be found in a Synagogue and the Romans were astonished to find no statues in the Holy of Holies when they destroyed the temple in 70AD. “For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.” The wholeness of God cannot be captured in a picture or statue. God will not tolerate images, which might replace Him as an object of worship.

3. What does it mean to take God’s name in vain? It’s an attitude problem. Many use God’s name daily because they have a poor vocabulary. God’s concern here is with respect for “the name”. God’s very name represents who he is; His power, nature and character. It is a powerful name and should be spoken with respect. To take God’s name in vain is to discount His position and authority.

4. Some of the Commandments can be turned into positive statements: Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. There are whole denominations that have been created over interpretations of this command. What is its purpose? In the circumstances where it was given, to a nomadic agricultural society, one could work every day. 24/7 is expected of the ambitious today. Maybe there is a natural rhythm to life where we need one day out of seven to recuperate and rest for the next six days. This commandment has protected workers from unscrupulous masters for centuries. The day of rest was originally Saturday. The early Christians decided to use Sunday. St. Paul said that we shouldn’t judge each other over Sabbaths. We need to take one day off per week. It’s good for us.

5. Honor your father and mother. This commandment has a promise attached. “...that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” Family is important. If we continue honoring our parents through our life, our children will see us and hopefully get the message. It is one key to an orderly society.

6. Do not murder. Did God have to say it? Murder must refer to people taking the law into their own hands and killing. It cannot refer to war or capital punishment. These are dealt with elsewhere in the Bible. The Children of Israel waged great wars in God’s name. This commandment refers to our personal responsibility for the death of others. It is a rule for the individual.

7. What does adultery mean? It means what it always meant; cheating on your spouse. Jesus carried it one step further when commenting on this commandment. He said, “whoever looks at a woman to lust

for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matt.5: 28) In our age of easy access to sex, the commandment applies to much that goes for entertainment in the year 2000.

8. Do not steal. We all know what that means and we don't rob the bank or the supermarket. Where most of us need help is in the "gray" areas like income tax returns, lotteries and expense accounts.

9. Perjury is usually translated as "false witness". When we're called to testify in court we are asked to swear on a Bible that we will be honest. What is the value when so many today do not even believe that the Bible is God's word? To be caught lying in court is perjury. The ancient Hebrews answered to judges and I expect that this injunction meant more then and helped the judges to administer justice. Gossip and slander must fall under this heading.

10. Do not covet anything that is your neighbors'. This is greed and envy, focusing on what others have and what we don't have. This is the one commandment that is hardest to obey. We see things every day that we want. It's the basis of our commercial society. "Create a need then fill it." is the lesson taught to new salespeople.

Jesus was called on by the Scribes to answer "Which is the first commandment of all?" (Mk.12: 28) He replied "The first of all the commandments is: Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with your entire mind, and with all your strength. This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. There is no other commandment greater than these." (Mk.12: 29-31)

These words of Jesus do not cancel the commandments; they focus them and point to the purpose to which they all lead. The point of the Ten Commandments is this: I am God and these are the rules I want you to follow. They have not failed us in over 2,000 years

http://elbourne.org/baptist/broadus/jesus/jesus_broadus_02.html

Lesson No. 14

ETHICS AND MORALITY IN ISLAM

One of the most important aspects of a Muslim's life is for him to have a high standard of morals. The Islamic system of Morality is known as "Tassawuf" literally means to wear the dress of or to be Sufi. The Islamic system of Morality circumambulates round the purification of heart and this process is called "Tazkia" means purification and those who do this act are known as Sufia. There are large numbers of such peoples in Islamic history and no period of history is free from them, even in the world of today there are many truthful peoples of this kind for the reformation of the hearts of the peoples. Some of them are as follows,

Junaid Baghdadi, Ali Hajveri, (author of a very book on this theme known as Kashf-ul-Mahjoob) Khawaja Baqi-Billah, Imam Ghazali (The author of Ahya-ul-Uloom) Imam Qushairi, Bayazeed Bustami, Mujjaddid Alaf-i-Sani, Qasim Nanotavi, Bahauddin Zakariya Multani, Baba Farid etc.

This is an integral part of "Seerat-un-Nabi" and much has been written and being written on this motif. There is a library of books on this topic. Some famous books are as follows, Seerat-un-Nabi by Shabli Noumani, "Seerat-al-Mustafa by Molana Idrees Kandhalvi, Nashrut-teeb by Molana Ashraf Ali Thanvi, Rahmatul-lil-Aalameen by Qazi Salman Mansoor Puri, Aab-a-Hayat by Molana Qasim Nanotvi etc.

Islamic Concept of Life and Morality

The viewpoint of Islam is that the universe is the creation of *Allah* who is One. He alone is its Master, Sovereign and Sustainer, and it is functioning under His command. He is All-powerful, Omnipotent, Omnipresent and Omniscient. He is Subbuh and Quddus (that is, free from all defects, mistakes, weaknesses and faults and is holy in every respect). His godhood is free from partiality and injustice.

Man is His creature, subject and servant and is born to serve and obey Him. These correct courses of life for man are to live in complete obedience to Him. And it is for *Allah*, not man, to determine the mode of that worship and obedience.

At certain times *Allah* has raised Prophets for the guidance of humanity and has revealed His books through them. It is the duty of man to live his life according to the dictates of *Allah* and to follow the Divine guidance.

Man is answerable to *Allah* for all his actions and will be called on to render an account of them in the Hereafter. Man's short life on earth is really an opportunity to prepare for that great test. He will be impartially assessed on his conduct in life by a Being who keeps a complete record not merely of his movements and actions and their influence on all that is in the world $\frac{3}{4}$ from the tiniest speck of dust to the highest mountains but also of his innermost thoughts and feelings and intentions.

Prototype Monomania of the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W)

Since the beginning of Islam, Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) was mainly concerned with teaching and disciplining Muslims to have the best manners and the best personal characteristics. His personal life and behavior were reflective of his teachings, which were revealed to him by Allah (S.W.T.). In the Noble *Qur'an*, in *surat* Al-Qalam, Allah (S.W.T.) describes prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) saying: what can be translated as, **"And verily, you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character."** (Verse 4)

The prophet's (S.A.W.) high standard of manners made him a model for all human beings to follow. The prophet (S.A.W.) used to emphasize how important good manners are for Muslims. For example, Imams Bukhari and Muslim reported that the prophet mentioned the following:

- "The best of you is the best among you in conduct."

In another authentic narration, the prophet (S.A.W.) mentioned that:

- The heaviest thing to be placed in the balance of a believing slave on the Day of Judgment will be good behavior. And Allah hates the one who uses bad language.”

Someone once asked the prophet (S.A.W.) what deed would lead a man to paradise, and he answered:

- Taqwa of Allah (*piety*) and good conduct.”

In other *hadiths* the prophet (S.A.W.) made distinctions among Muslims based on their behaviors; the prophet (S.A.W.) said:

- “The most perfect man in his faith, among the believers, is the one whose behavior is the most excellent; and the best of you are those who are the best to their wives.”

He even clarified that people will be on different levels in Paradise based on their good manners saying:

- “The dearest and nearest among you to me on the Day of Resurrection will be the one who is the best in conduct...”

Now we shall talk about ethics in Islam, and how it is different from other ethical systems today.

Unlike other systems, the ethical system in Islam derives from a divine source. This divine source is the revelation from Allah (S.W.T). Therefore, this system cannot be changed, or manipulated to fit our desires. It applies no matter what the time or place. This system has not been changed for thousands of years, it cannot be changed today, and it will never change until the Day of Judgment. No one, no matter whom, has the authority to change or alter this system, even if the whole world wants to change it. What was considered good morals in the past will remain as good moral throughout time. What was considered, as bad moral in the past will remain as bad morals forever, even if society accepts it as a norm? The system of ethics is not affected by cultural norms, because Allah (S.W.T) is the One who determined what is acceptable and not acceptable.

The Noble *Qur'an* is very detailed and clearly mentions the significance of good manners, just like it mentions the importance of belief, the importance of worship, and all our daily affairs.

The Noble *Qur'an* mentions several good acts of morality repeatedly, for example:

- (1) Dealing with your parents in the best manner
- (2) Being nice to your relatives and neighbors
- (3) Taking care of orphans and the poor
- (4) Telling the truth and being honest
- (5) Being sincere in all of your intentions
- (6) Fulfilling your promises
- (7) Treating all people fairly

The Noble *Quran* goes as far as to teach us the way that we should walk. Allah (S.W.T.) says, in *surat* Luqman, what can be translated as, **“And, be moderate in your walking.”** (Verse 19), and in *surat* Al-Furqan, Allah (S.W.T.) says what can be translated as, **“ And the servants of the most Beneficent (Allah) are those who walk on the earth in modesty.”** (Verse 63), and also, in *surat* Al-Isra', Allah (S.W.T.) says what can be translated as, **“And walk not on earth with conceit and arrogance. Verily, you can neither slit nor penetrate the earth, nor can you attain a stature like the mountains in height.”** (Verse 37)

The Noble *Qur'an* even tells us the proper etiquette of visiting one another. Allah (S.W.T.) says, in *surat* An-Noor, What can be translated as, **“O you who believe! Enter not house other than your own,**

until you have asked permission and greeted those in them that is better for you, in order that you may remember. And if you find no one therein, still, enter nor until permission has been given. And if you are asked to go back, go back, for it is purer for you, and Allah is All-knower of what you do. There is no sin for that you enter (without taking permission) houses uninhabited (when) you have any interest in them. And Allah has knowledge of what you reveal and you conceal.” (Verse 27 to 29)

The Noble *Qur'an* also teaches us the way we should behave in a gathering, Allah (S.W.T.) says, in *surat* Al-Mujadilah, what can be translated as, **“O you who believe! When you are told to make room in assemblies do so, Allah will provide enough room for you.”** (Verse 11)

If we were to actually practice the sayings and actions of the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) we would find that there are many lessons to learn when eating and drinking, dressing and sleeping, traveling and greeting, taking permission, even sneezing, yawning and even more.

And unlike other ethical systems, Islam's moral system is a very detailed and complete package. Islam addresses every aspect of human life, no matter how minor, has not been left untouched. It is a complete package—it does not lack anything that needs to be completed nor does it have any defects that need to be amended. It ranges from smallest details of domestic life to the field of national and international behavior. It guides us at every stage in life and makes us free from exclusive dependence on other sources of knowledge, although we may, of course, use these as an aid to this primary source.

Islam guides our morals that deal with the individual, the community, and Muslims and non-Muslims alike. It also guides us on how to deal with rulers and how to honor and respect scholars; Islam even directs us on how to act during times of peace and war.

It even guides us on the treatment of animals. The prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) said:

- “Fear Allah when you treat the animals, take care of them, keep them in good health no matter whether you ride on them or are raising them for their meat.”
- In another *hadith*, the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) said: “...when you slaughter an animal, make your slaughter in the best manner. Let one of you sharpen his knife and give ease to the animal (in order to reduce the pain).”
- The companions once asked the prophet Muhammad (S.A.W.) “Do we earn reward if we treat animals in good manner? He answered: *“Yes; surely, you earn rewards whenever you treat any living being in a good manner.”*

No other ethical system can match up with Islam's ethical system. Only Allah (S.W.T.) Al-Hakeem, with His great wisdom, could have made such a system that teaches humans how to deal with every aspect of their lives. This is because Islam is not a man made system; it is the *deen* (complete code of life) of Allah, He (S.W.T.) made it complete and integrated. Only Allah (S.W.T.) Al-A'leem with His great knowledge that is infinite. No man has, can or will ever come up with a system that is so perfect. If you want a successful and happy life, then just apply Islam to it, and you will have wonderful results.

Sanction behind morality in Islam

The concept of the moral and ethical values in Islam and the man's place in universe also provides the sanction that must lie at the back of every moral law, that is, the love and fear of *Allah*, the sense of accountability on the Day of Judgment and the promise of eternal bliss and reward in the Hereafter. Although Islam aims to cultivate a mass ethos, which may induce individuals and groups to observe the principles of morality it lays down as well as helps the evolution of a political system that will enforce the moral law through its legislative and executive powers, Islam's moral law does not really depend on these external factors. It relies on the inherent desire for good in every man that is derived from belief in *Allah* and the Day of Judgment.

Before laying down any moral injunctions, Islam seeks to implant firmly in man's heart the conviction that his dealings are with *Allah*, who sees him at all times and in all places; that he may hide himself from

the whole world but not from *Allah*; that he may deceive everyone but *Allah*; that he can flee from the power of any person but not from *Allah*; that while the world can see only man's outward life, *Allah* knows his innermost intentions and desires; that while man may, in his short sojourn on earth, do whatever he likes, he has to die one day and present himself before the Divine court of justice where no special pleading or deception will be of any avail and where his future will be decided with complete impartiality. It is this belief in accountability to *Allah* that is the real force behind the moral law of Islam. If public opinion and the powers of the state give it support, so much the better; otherwise, this faith alone can keep a Muslim individual and a Muslim community on the straight path of virtue.

Islam has set the basis of the Islamic society and set its code of ethics that grants people a secure, happy and warm life. The word Islam in itself means peace attained through submission to the Divine will. There is no contradiction between the seeking happiness and the quest for virtue.

The norms that have characterized belief and action in Islam have their initial inspiration in two main sources. One is scriptural, embodying the message revealed by Allah to Prophet Mohammad (PBUH), and recorded in the Qur'an. The second is Prophet Mohammad's life (Sunnah). So a true Muslim can't take the Qur'an as the only source for Islam and ignore the Sunnah, or take the Sunnah and ignore the Qur'an.

In one of the Surrah's of the Qur'an entitled al-Furqan (Surrah no. 25), revelation - addressed to all humankind - becomes the point of reference for distinguishing right from wrong:

"Blessed be He Who sent criterion (of right and wrong, i.e. this Qur'an) to His servant (Mohammad) that he may be a Warner to mankind. He to whom belongs the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and who has begotten no son and for Whom there is no partner in the dominion. He has created everything, and has measured it exactly according to its due measurement." Qur'an (25:1-2).

Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) has been described in the Qur'an as 'a fine example' and one who possess 'high moral excellence', and Allah has urged us to follow his manners,

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"In the Messenger of God (Muhammad) you have a good example to follow for him who hopes for (the Meeting with) God and the Last Day and remembers God much." Qur'an (33:21)

Also Allah says:

"...you (O Muhammad) are on an exalted standard of character." Qur'an (68:4)

The second source of knowledge in Islam is the Hadith (sayings of Prophet Mohammad 'PBUH', the written record or text of the Sunnah) are to be relied upon on the authority of God's saying in the Qur'an:

"By the star when it goes down. Your companion (Muhammad) is neither astray nor being misled. Nor does he speak from out of (his own) desire. It is no less than Inspiration sent down to him. Qur'an (53:1-4).

The human quality that encompasses the concept of ideal ethical value in the Qur'an is summed up in the term *taqwa* (fear and respect of Allah). It represents, on one hand, the moral grounding that underlies human action, while on the other and it signifies the ethical conscience that makes human beings aware of their duties both towards Allah and towards their society.

Allah says in the Qur'an:

"O humankind! We have created you out of male and female and constituted you into different groups and societies, so that you may come to know each other - the noblest of you, the sight of God, are the ones possessing *taqwa*.

God is the All-knowing, the All-Aware". Qur'an (9.13)

The Qur'an has highlighted the different dimensions of human individual and social life - the material as well as the spiritual - but these aspects are not seen in conflicted terms, nor is it assumed that spiritual goals should undermine or exclude material aspects of life.

Moreover Islam has given us certain guidelines to follow for establishing a stable and warm social system. For instance Islam has stated that if some of your family members are resting in their rooms and you wanted to enter, you should ask for permission so you wouldn't see them in an undesired position.

So you should knock three times giving them time before they let you in. Regardless whether this person was one of the unmarried or marriageable persons or others, such as your mother, father, daughters or sons.

In the Qur'an Jews and Christians are referred to as 'People of the Book.' While recognizing the particularity and its preeminent status, the Qur'an encourages a wider respect for difference and otherness in human society,

The Qur'an and the life of Prophet Mohammad's life is inseparably related through all of history as paradigms for manners and ethics. They formed the basis for Muslim personality, subsequently to develop legal tools for embodying moral imperatives. The development of legal sciences led to a codification of norms to the concept of law in Islam, generally referred to as the Shari'a (Allah's Commands).

Imam Al-Qarafi said in his book "Al-Fourouk": "Know that a little ethics is far better than lot of action." Consequently, Rouwan the pious scholar said to his son: "O son, let your work be as salt and your manners be as flour. It meant an increase in the acquisition of manners until the overall rate is equal to that of flour to salt in the dough. Lots of manners with little of righteous deeds is better than action with lack of ethics".

Along these great Qur'anic manners, there is an alternative to which some people resort when embarrassed by the visit of undesired visitors. Consequently, the host is compelled to inform that he is not present at home, while he is, and so he lies. Also, his children learn from him such an undesired character trait. This conduct may result in enmity and hatred.

The Noble Qur'anic guidance prevents us from falling into this. It allowed the visited person to kindly apologize to his brother and ask him to accept his apology: Allah says in the Qur'an:

"If you were asked to go back, go back. That makes for greater purity." (Surrah An Nur, verse 28)

Also Islam stated that when entering or leaving your home, you should not slam the door or let it close on its own forcefully. This is in contrary to the gentleness, which is the core of the Islamic behavior. Instead, you should close the door with your hand gently. Aysha (Prophet Mohammad's wife) said: "Whenever gentleness is applied to a matter, it increases its value. Should gentleness be removed away, it discredits it."

The aim of life of a Muslim

This reality is free from any query and ambiguity that the pleasure of ALLAH is the sine qua none of a Muslim's life. By setting Divine pleasure as the objective of man's life, Islam has set the highest possible standard of morality providing boundless possibilities for the moral evolution of humanity. By making Divine revelation the primary source of knowledge, it gives permanence and stability to moral standards, while at the same time allowing scope for reasonable flexibility and adjustment, though not for perversions or moral laxity. The love and fear of *Allah* become the real motives, which impel man to obey the moral law without external pressures. And through belief in *Allah* and the Day of Judgment, we are motivated to behave morally with earnestness and sincerity.

The concept of moral striving in Islam determines the real and ultimate goal which should be the object of all the endeavours of mankind and which may be termed briefly as "seeking the pleasure of God". This is the standard by which a particular mode of conduct is judged and classified as good or bad. This

standard of judgment provides the nucleus around which the whole moral conduct should revolve. Man is not left like a ship without moorings, being tossed about by the blows of wind and tides. This dispensation places a central object before mankind and lays down values and norms for all moral actions. It provides us with a stable and flawless set of values that remains unaltered under all circumstances. Moreover, with making the "pleasure of God" as the object of man's life, a highest and noblest objective is set before humanity, and thus, unlimited possibilities are opened for man's moral evolution, unstained at any stage by any shadow of narrow selfishness or bigoted race or nation worship.

Distinctions of Islamic Moral system

The moral code of Islam has many salient features and it is impossible to discuss all of them in a single discourse. For a broad and detailed study, the book *Seerat-un-Nabi* by Shabli Noumani and Syed Sulaiman Nadvi (volume 6) is suggested, which is on moral philosophy of Islam.

The moral code of Islam ranges from smallest details of domestic life to the field of national and international behavior. It guides us at every stage in life and makes us free from exclusive dependence on other sources of knowledge, although we may, of course, use these as an aid to this primary source.

This is above board that the Islamic moral order guarantees for man a system of life, which is free from all evil. It calls on the people not only to practice virtue, but also to eradicate vice. Those who respond to this call are gathered together into a community (Ummah) and given the name 'Muslims'. The main purpose underlying the formation of this community is that it should make an organized effort to establish and enforce goodness and suppress and eradicate evil. It would be a day of mourning for this community and a bad day for the entire world if its efforts were at any time directed towards establishing evil and suppressing good.

The Islamic moral order does not, through a mistaken love of originality and innovation, seek to lay down any new moral standards; nor does it seek to minimize the importance of the well-known moral standards, or give exaggerated importance to some and neglect others without cause. It takes all the recognized morals and assigns a suitable role to each within the total scheme of life. It widens the scope of their application to cover every aspect of man's private and social life his domestic associations, his civic conduct, and his activities in the political, economic, legal and educational fields. It covers his life at home and in society, literally from the cradle to the grave. No sphere of life is exempt from the universal and comprehensive application of the moral principles of Islam. These ensure that the affairs of life, instead of being dominated by selfish desires and petty interests, are regulated by the dictates of morality.

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Islam also furnishes us with the means to determine good and evil conduct. It does not base our knowledge of evil and virtue on mere intellect, desire, intuition or experience derived through the senses, which constantly undergo changes and modifications and thus fail to provide definite and unchanging standards of morality. Instead, it provides us with an objective source, the Divine revelation, as embodied in the Book of *Allah* and the Sunnah (way of life) of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him. This source prescribes a standard of moral conduct that is permanent and universal and holds good in every age and under all circumstances.

This tends to affect our Islamic character, which should be distinguished for its beauty, perfection and features. While our Prophet (PBUH) was with some of his noble companions, he said to them:

"You are coming unto your brothers, dress well, and fix up your caravans so you look like a beauty spot* amongst the people. For Allah abhors obscenity or indecency".

The beauty spot, al-khal, is a black dot in the face and originally found on the body. What is meant here is that they should be apparent in their charm, cleanness, nice smell and good appearance? The beauty spot appears in the beautiful face. It adds to its beauty and charm.

Thus a Muslim should be known to be a Muslim, from his nice clothes, his harmonious and simple appearance.

http://www.islamonline.com/cgi-bin/news_service/spot_full_story.asp?service_id=759

Lesson No. 15

Moral System of Islam

A moral sense is inborn in man and, through the ages, it has served as the common man's standard of moral behavior, approving certain qualities and condemning others. While this instinctive faculty may vary from person to person, human conscience has consistently declared certain moral qualities to be good and others to be bad.

Justice, courage and truthfulness have always found praise, and history does not record any period worth the name in which falsehood, injustice, dishonesty and breach of trust have been praised; sympathy, compassion, loyalty and generosity have always been valued, while selfishness, cruelty, meanness and bigotry have never been approved of by society; men have always appreciated perseverance, determination and courage, but never impatience, fickleness, cowardice and stupidity. Dignity, restraint, politeness and friendliness have throughout the ages been counted virtues, whereas snobbery and rudeness have always been looked down upon. People with a sense of responsibility and devotion to duty have always won the highest regard, those who are incompetent, lazy and lacking in a sense of duty have never been looked upon with approval.

Similarly, in assessing the standards of good and bad in the collective behavior of society as a whole, only those societies have been considered worthy of honor which have possessed the virtues of organization, discipline, mutual attention and compassion and which have established a social order based on justice, freedom and equality. Disorganization, indiscipline, anarchy, disunity, injustice and social privilege have always been considered manifestations of decay and disintegration in a society. Robbery, murder, larceny, adultery and corruption have always been condemned. Slander and blackmail have never been considered healthy social activities, while service and care of the aged, helping one's relatives, regard for neighbors, loyalty to friends, aiding the weak, the destitute and the orphans, and nursing the sick are qualities which have been highly valued since the dawn of civilization.

Individuals who are honest, sincere and dependable, whose deeds match their words, who are content with their own rightful possessions, who are prompt in the discharge of their obligations to others, who live in peace and let others live in peace, and from whom nothing but good can be expected, have always formed the basis of any healthy human society.

These examples show that human moral standards are universal and have been well-known to mankind throughout the ages. Good and evil are not myths, but realities well understood by all. A sense of good and evil is inherent in the very nature of man. Hence in the terminology of the Qur'an good is called *Ma'rif* (a well-known thing) and evil *munkar* (an unknown thing); that is to say, good is known to be desirable and evil is known not to commend itself in any way. As the Qur'an says: *Allah has revealed to human nature the consciousness and cognition of good and evil.* (al-Shams 91: 8)

This is a new and revised translation of a talk given by the author on Radio Pakistan, Lahore, on 6th January, 1948.

Why Differences?

The question that now arises is: if what constitutes good and evil is so clear and universally agreed, why do varying patterns of moral behavior exist in the world? Why are there so many conflicting moral philosophies? Why do certain moral standards contradict each

other? What lies at the root of other differences? What is the unique position of Islam in the context of other ethical systems? On what grounds can we claim that Islam has a perfect moral system? And what exactly is the distinctive contribution of Islam in the realm of ethics?

Although these are important questions and must be squarely faced, justice cannot be done to them in the brief span of this talk. So I shall restrict myself to a summary of some of the points crucial to any critical examination of contemporary ethical systems and conflicting patterns of moral behavior:

(a) Through their failure to prescribe specific limits and roles for the various moral virtues and values, present-day moral structures cannot provide a balanced and coherent plan of social conduct.

(b) The real cause of the differences in the moral systems seems to lie in their offering different standards for judging what constitutes good and bad actions and in their laying down different ways to distinguish well from evil. Differences also exist in respect of the sanction behind the moral law and in regard to the motives which impel a person to follow it.

(c) On deeper reflect we find that the grounds for these differences emerge from different peoples' conflicting views and concepts of the universe, the place of man in it, and of man's purpose on earth. The various systems of ethics, philosophy and religion are in fact a record of the vast divergence of views on such vital questions as: Is there an *Allah* of the universe and, if there is, is He the only one or are there many *illah*? What are the Divine attributes? What is the nature of the relationship between *Allah* and human beings? Has He made any arrangements for guiding humanity through the vicissitudes of life or not? Is man answerable to Him or not? And if so, in what spheres of his life? Is there an ultimate aim of man's creation which he should keep in view throughout his life? The ethical philosophy and the pattern of moral behavior of the individual and society.

It is difficult for me, in this brief talk, to take stock of the various ethical systems in the world and indicate what solutions each one of them has proposed to these questions and what has been the impact of these answers on the moral evolution of the society believing in these concepts. Here I have to confine myself to the Islamic concept only.

The Islamic Concept of Life and Morality

The viewpoint of Islam is that the universe is the creation of *Allah* who is One. He alone is its Master, Sovereign and Sustainer, and it is functioning under His command. He is All-powerful and Omniscient, he is *subbā h* and *Quddā s* (that is, free from all defects, mistakes, weaknesses and faults and is holy in every respect). His godhood is free from partiality and injustice.

Man is His creature, subject and servant and is born to serve and obey Him. These correct courses of life for man are to live in complete obedience to Him. And it is for *Allah*, not man, to determine the mode of that worship and obedience.

At certain times *Allah* has raised Prophets for the guidance of humanity and has revealed His books through them. It is the duty of man to live his life according to the dictates of *Allah* and to follow the Divine guidance.

Man is answerable to *Allah* for all his actions and will be called on to render an account of them in the Hereafter. Man's short life on earth is really an opportunity to prepare for that

great test. He will be impartially assessed on his conduct in life by a Being who keeps a complete record not merely of his movements and actions and their influence on all that is in the world $\frac{3}{4}$ from the tiniest speck of dust to the highest mountains $\frac{3}{4}$ but also of his innermost thoughts and feelings and intentions.

The Goal of Moral Effort

This concept of the universe and of man's place in it indicates the real and ultimate good which should be the object of all mankind's endeavors is seeking the pleasure of *Allah*. This is the standard by which Islam judges all conduct. It means that man is not left like a ship without moorings at the mercy of winds and tides; instead, we have a set of unchangeable norms for all moral actions. Moreover, by making the 'pleasure of *Allah*' the object of man's life, unlimited possibilities are opened for man's moral evolution, untainted by narrow selfishness or racism or chauvinism.

Islam also furnishes us with the means to determine good and evil conduct. It does not base our knowledge of evil and virtue on mere intellect, desire, intuition or experience derived through the senses, which constantly undergo changes and modifications and thus fail to provide definite and unchanging standards of morality. Instead, it provides us with an objective source, the Divine revelation, as embodied in the Book of *Allah* and the Sunnah (way of life) of the Prophet, blessings and peace be on him. This source prescribes a standard of moral conduct that is permanent and universal and holds good in every age and under all circumstances.

The moral code of Islam ranges from smallest details of domestic life to the field of national and international behavior. It guides us at every stage in life and makes us free from exclusive dependence on other sources of knowledge, although we may, of course, use these as an aid to this primary source.

Sanction Behind Morality

This concept of the universe and of man's place in it also provides the sanction that must lie at the back of every moral law, that is, the love and fear of *Allah*, the sense of accountability on the Day of Judgment and the promise of eternal bliss and reward in the Hereafter. Although Islam aims to cultivate a mass ethos which may induce individuals and groups to observe the principles of morality it lays down as well as helps the evolution of a political system which will enforce the moral law through its legislative and executive powers, Islam's moral law does not really depend on these external factors. It relies on the inherent desire for good in every man which is derived from belief in *Allah* and the Day of Judgment. Before laying down any moral injunctions, Islam seeks to implant firmly in man's heart the conviction that his dealings are with *Allah*, who sees him at all times and in all places; that he may hide himself from the whole world but not from *Allah*; that he may deceive everyone but *Allah*; that he can flee from the power of any person but not from *Allah*; that while the world can see only man's outward life, *Allah* knows his innermost intentions and desires; that while man may, in his short sojourn on earth, do whatever he likes, he has to die one day and present himself before the Divine court of justice where no special pleading or deception will be of any avail and where his future will be decided with complete impartiality. It is this belief in accountability to *Allah* which is the real force behind the moral law of Islam. If public opinion and the powers of the state give it support, so much the better; otherwise, this faith alone can keep a Muslim individual and a Muslim community on the straight path of virtue.

Motives and Incentives

The fact that a man voluntarily and willingly accepts *Allah* as his Creator and obedience to *Allah* as the aim of his life and strives to seek His pleasure in his every action provides sufficient incentive to obey the commandments which he believes to be from *Allah*. Belief that whoever obeys the Divine commands is sure to be rewarded in the Hereafter, whatever difficulties he may have to face in his life on earth, is another strong incentive for leading a virtuous life. And the belief that breaking the commandments of *Allah* will mean eternal punishment is an effective deterrent against violation of the moral law, however tempted a man may be by the superficial attractiveness of a certain course of action. If this hope and fear are firmly ingrained in one's heart, they will inspire virtuous deeds even on occasions when the immediate consequences may appear to be very damaging, and they will keep one away from evil even when it looks extremely attractive and profitable.

This clearly indicates that Islam possesses a distinctive criterion of good and evil, its own source of moral law, and its own sanctions and motivating force; through them it shapes the generally recognized moral virtues in all spheres of life into a balanced and comprehensive scheme and ensures that they are followed. It can therefore be justifiably claimed that Islam possesses a perfect moral system of its own. This system has many distinguishing features and I shall refer to three of the most significant ones which, in my opinion, form its special contribution to ethics.

Distinctive Features

1. By setting Divine pleasure as the objective of man's life, Islam has set the highest possible standard of morality providing boundless possibilities for the moral evolution of humanity. By making Divine revelation the primary source of knowledge, it gives permanence and stability to moral standards, while at the same time allowing scope for reasonable flexibility and adjustment, though not for perversions or moral laxity. The love and fear of *Allah* become the real motives, which impel man to obey the moral law without external pressures. And through belief in *Allah* and the Day of Judgment, we are motivated to behave morally with earnestness and sincerity.
2. The Islamic moral order does not, through a mistaken love of originality and innovation, seek to lay down any new moral standards; nor does it seek to minimize the importance of the well-known moral standards, or give exaggerated importance to some and neglect others without cause. It takes all the recognized morals and assigns a suitable role to each within the total scheme of life. It widens the scope of their application to cover every aspect of man's private and social life ³/₄ his domestic associations, his civic conduct, and his activities in the political, economic, legal and educational fields. It covers his life at home and in society, literally from the cradle to the grave. No sphere of life is exempt from the universal and comprehensive application of the moral principles of Islam. These ensure that the affairs of life, instead of being dominated by selfish desires and petty interests, are regulated by the dictates of morality.
3. The Islamic moral order guarantees for man a system of life which is free from all evil. It calls on the people not only to practice virtue, but also to eradicate vice. Those who respond to this call are gathered together into a community (Ummah) and given the name 'Muslims'. The main purpose underlying the formation of this community is that it should make an organized effort to establish and enforce goodness and suppress and eradicate evil. It would be a day of morning for this community and a bad day for the entire world if its efforts were at any time directed towards establishing evil and suppressing good.

ISLAM TOWARDS MINORITIES

The Right of Protection

In Islam, the primary right of the People of the Book is to be protected and safeguarded against any foreign aggression, and Muslims are compelled to protect them in the event such a transgression falls against them. Al-Qaradawi bases his standpoint about this on jurisprudential texts and the position of Imam Ibn Taymiyah (may Allah have mercy on him) while speaking to Qultoo Shah—a Tartar—regarding the freeing of prisoners of war (POWs). Qultoo Shah agreed to set Muslim POWs free upon Ibn Taymiyah's request; however, the latter insisted that Christian POWs be released with the Muslims, which was what happened in the end. This stand by Ibn Taymiyah reflects the perspective of jurisprudence on the subject of the right to external protection.

The Muslim state must also defend minorities against internal injustice or oppression, such that they cannot be subject to any form of wrongdoing by the state or its sponsors; and overlapping evidence from the Qur'an and the Sunnah clearly prohibits any sort of injustice against noncombatant non-Muslims living peacefully within a Muslim state. To this effect, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was reported to have said, "He who unfairly treats a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with Muslims, or undermines his rights, or burdens him beyond his capacity, or takes something from him without his consent; then I am his opponent on the Day of Judgment" (Abu Dawud and Al-Bayhaqi, these are the names of two books of Ahadiths, means sayings of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W). He (peace and blessings be upon him) is also reported to have said, "He who harms a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with Muslims has harmed me, and he who harms me has harmed Allah" (At-Tabarani in *Al-Awsat* with a good chain of transmission).

Not only was this the Sunnah of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) on the issue, but the Rightly Guided Caliphs (The first four caliphs after the demise of Prophet Muhammad S.A.W known as Khulfa-I-Rashdeen) also practiced this, with several authentic incidents to this effect reported by `Umar ibn Al-Khattab and `Ali ibn Abi Talib.

Types of Protection

Protection of body and blood

It is the consensus among scholars to protect the blood of non-Muslim minorities living within a Muslim state, and he explains that violating their blood is considered one of the gravest of sins. This is due to the hadith by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him): "He who kills a non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with the Muslims will not smell the scent of Heaven, though its scent can be traced to as far as a march of 40 years" (Imam Ahmad and Al-Bukhari in *Al-Jizyah*, among others).

Although scholars have differed over the issue of exchanging the life of a Muslim for that of a Dhimmi (a noncombatant non-Muslim who keeps a peace treaty with the Muslims and lives within a Muslim society), Imam Abu-Hanifa (may Allah be pleased with him) sides with the opinion that says a Muslim can be killed if he wrongfully murders a Dhimmi with no right. He founds his view on this matter on texts from the Qur'an and the Sunnah that underline the principle of retribution and reprisal (*qisaas*).

This was also the view endorsed and exercised by the Ottoman caliphate in all the regions and provinces falling under its jurisdiction for centuries, until the Muslim empire fell prey to its enemies and was knocked down.

Protection of Money and Property

This principle has been unanimously agreed upon among all Muslims of all sects throughout history.

Moreover, Islam regards whatever property or money considered by non-Muslims as valuables—according to their faiths—and pledges to protect them, even if they pose no real value to Muslims.

Liquor and swine are an example of this, where they cannot be considered as money to Muslims; and if a Muslim squanders or spoils such property of another Muslim, he could not be called upon for compensation; yet if a Muslim spoils such assets belonging to a non-Muslim, he would be responsible for compensation, according to Imam Abu Hanifah.

Protection of Honor

The honor of Dhimmi is sacred in Islam, similar to that of Muslims. Imam Al-Qarafi Al-Maliki once said on this note, “He who transgresses against them (Dhimmi)—even with a mere word of injustice or backtalk— has jeopardized the covenant with Allah and His Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and the covenant of the religion of Islam” (*Al-Furuq* Part 3, p. 14). Moreover, there exist abundant additional texts to the same effect.

Social Welfare against Disability, Old Age, and Poverty

Islam guarantees non-Muslims living under its societal umbrella their necessary welfare benefits, which enables them to live decently and support those they sponsor, since they are considered among the Muslim state’s subjects or citizens. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was reported to have said, “You are all sponsors and (thus) responsible for those you sponsor” (Ibn ‘Umar).

The Rightly Guided Caliphs and those who succeeded them continued to implement these policies towards non-Muslims living within the Muslim community. During the caliphate of Abu Bakr who was first Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him) , Khalid ibn Al-Waleed sent a letter to the non-Muslim population of Al-Hira in Iraq at the time, assuring them that none of their rights were to be undermined by the Muslim army’s procession in their direction. ‘Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the 2nd Caliph (may Allah be pleased with him) was also reported to have seen a senile Jewish man asking for alms, and hence took him to the treasury and authorized a monthly pension for him and the likes of him. By this, Abu Bakr and ‘Umar had jointly formulated a social welfare legislation for Muslims as well as non-Muslims, which was then unanimously picked up by all Islamic sects.

The Right to Freedom of Belief

Additionally, Islam does not force Dhimmi to embrace Islam and recognizes their freedom to choose their own faith. This freedom is stressed in the following Qur’anic verses: [Let there be no compulsion in religion: truth stands out clear from error] (Al-Baqarah 2:256) and [Wilt thou (Muhammad) then compel mankind, against their will, to believe!] (Yunus 10:99). History does not deny this fact about Islam, nor do Westerners.

Islam, throughout history, has safeguarded and protected houses of worship for non-Muslims and sanctified their religious rituals. When the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) wrote the peace treaty to the people of Najran, he asserted to them that they should receive the protection of Allah and His Prophet on their property, faith, and choices. Similarly, ‘Umar’s letter to the people of Iliya in Palestine, upon the Muslim conquest, promised them the liberty to choose the faith they deemed appropriate; in addition there are analogous accounts attributed to Khalid ibn Al-Waleed.

Permitting non-Muslims to build their own houses of worship in towns mainly populated by Muslims also falls under this scope, where early in Muslim history several churches were built in Egypt during the first Hijri century. An example of this is the construction of the Mar Marcus Church in Alexandria (between AH 39 and 56), and the construction of the first church in Fustat in the Roman Alley during the reign of Maslamah ibn Mikhled (between the years AH 47 and 68). Ruler Abdul ‘Aziz ibn Marwan also authorized constructing a church in Helwan while founding the city, besides allowing a number of bishops to erect hermitage cells.

Historian Al-Maqrizi once said, “All modern day Cairo churches were undoubtedly restored in Islam.”

As for the villages and areas that are not considered among the Muslim provinces, non-Muslims were not repressed against practicing and illustrating their religious rituals, including the renovation of old churches and cathedrals, and were free to expand building such houses of worship as their population grew. This form of religious tolerance is strictly a bread of Islam, and also admitted by non-Muslims like French scholar Gustavo Le Bon etc.

From the verses of the Qur’an we previously mentioned, we find that Muhammad’s forgiveness towards the Jews and the Christians was ultimately phenomenal; and such tolerance was

unprecedented by the founders of other religions, such as Judaism and Christianity in particular. We shall also see how his successors followed in his footsteps on this path.

Other Europeans also paralleled such discourse, such as Robertson and others.

The Right to Work and Earn Profits

Islam has guaranteed to non-Muslims living under its umbrella the right to engage in any form of commercial activities, including buying, selling, leasing, and otherwise, with the exception of exercising *riba* (taking interest on loans, etc.). This rule was derived from a letter from the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to the Magians of Hajar, where he said, “You may choose between neglecting *riba* or facing war with Allah and His Prophet.” The selling of liquor and swine in Muslim provinces is also to be added to the list of the impermissible; otherwise, non-Muslims may practice any form of commercial activities.

Islamic jurisprudence does not forbid Dhimmis from entering any field of labor they choose, and they were well established in trades which yield large profits; excelling as bankers, landlords, and doctors. Moreover, they managed to organize themselves, such that the most prominent bankers in the Levant (Syrian and Palestine) were Jews, whilst the best physicians and writers were Christians, and the chief of the Christian population in Baghdad was the caliph’s personal doctor, as the caliph also gathered in his court the chiefs and heads of the Jewish population.

The Right to Occupy State Ranks

Islam did not prohibit Dhimmis from occupying state positions, since it perceived them as an integral part of the state fabric. Islam also did not encourage their isolation, and the People of the Book were allowed to join all offices apart from those marked with a religious trait; for example, the imamate, leadership of the state and the army, judge of disputes between Muslims, administrator of the dispensing of charity and alms.

The imamate, or caliphate, is a senior leading position in both the mundane world and the religious; a succession of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him); and, obviously, such ranks could not be open to non-Muslims.

Similarly, the leadership of the army cannot be considered a purely civil duty, since it is strongly related with jihad, which tops the ladder of Islamic duties.

Moreover, the judiciary is operated through Islamic jurisprudence, and non-Muslims cannot be asked to carry out the rules of a doctrine they do not believe in.

The guardianship over alms and charity also falls under the scope of Islamic duties and logically could not be entrusted to the disposal of the non-Muslim minority within the Muslim state.

Other than the above, all state offices were always open to Dhimmis on condition that they fulfilled the necessary requirements and prerequisites for the positions applied for; that are, integrity, honesty, and loyalty to the state. This is to assure that these sensitive posts be entrusted to faithful individuals, other than those Muslims are warned against in the following verse: [O ye who believe! Take not into your intimacy those outside your ranks: they will not fail to corrupt you. They only desire your ruin: rank hatred has already appeared from their mouths: what their hearts conceal is far worse. We have made plain to you the Signs, if ye have wisdom] (Aal `Imran 3:118).

Imam Al-Mawardi even authorized Dhimmis to undertake executive ministries rather than delegate ministries. Executive ministers are those who implement and execute the imam’s orders.

Conversely, delegate ministries are those, which the imam entrusts to the minister to devise certain political, administrative, and economic matters according to his own personal judgment.

During the Abbasid era, Christians undertook the ministry more than once; for example, Nasr ibn Haroun in AH 369 and Eissa ibn Nastorus in AH 380. Mu`awiyah ibn Abi Sufyan (The sixth Caliph of Islam ruled from 61 AH to 60 AH/661 AC to 680 AC, Brother of Umm-i-Habiba, who was one of the wives of the Prophet Muhammad S.A.W) had also appointed a Christian clerk named Sarjoun.

Perhaps Muslim tolerance in this regard was sometimes taken too far, where at some instances, the rights of Muslims themselves were undermined and some skeptics complained about the undeserved prestigious authority of Jews and Christians above them.

Western historian Adam Mitz says in his book *Islamic Civilization in the Fourth Hijri Century*, “We find it very surprising the abundance of non-Muslim laborers and senior staff within the Muslim state; where Christians governed Muslims in Muslim provinces, and complaints against non-Muslims’ seniority in these provinces dates far back” (part 1, p. 105).

Prophetic Recommendations Particularly for Egyptian Copts

Al-Qaradawi finds that Egyptian Copts in particular have a distinguished position among other non-Muslim minorities, given the prophetic narrations to that effect. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was reported to have said on his deathbed, “By Allah, respect the Copts of Egypt, for you shall conquer them, and they shall be your supporters in the cause of Allah” (At-Tabarani).

In another hadith, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) said, “Treat them well, for they are an asset to you and a warning against your enemies by the Will of Allah.” Reference here is made to Egyptian Copts (Ibn Hibban).

Historical reality has lived up to the Prophet’s prophecies, where Egyptian Copts welcomed the Muslim conquerors, which saved them from the persecution they suffered under the Romans, who had taken up another sect of Christianity. The Copts started entering Islam in large numbers, to the extent that some rulers of the Umayyad dynasty mistakenly enforced the *jizyah* among some Copts who had already embraced Islam.

The *jizyah* is a defense tax levied from such non-Muslims citizens of Islamic state who are able to be combatants, so women, children, old ones, disables are exempted to pay this.

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) attributed certain rights to Egyptian Copts that he did not grant to other minorities, where Ka’b ibn Malik narrates from the Prophet, “If Egypt is conquered, treat the Copts with dignity, for they have a blood relation with us.” Connotation is made here to the mother of the Prophet Isma’il, Hajar, who was an Egyptian (Reported by At-Tabarani and Al-Hakim).

Loyalty Guarantees

Moreover, Islam adds to the rights of minorities by laying down a number of guarantees to live up to these rights. Among the most important of these is the right to believe. Such rights are clearly defined in the Qur’an and the Prophetic Sunnah, and their practice falls under the correct practice of Islam.

These rights are also protected by the Muslim society, which is founded on accurate implementation of Islamic jurisprudence, including the rights of the People of the Book according to Islamic principles. Any Dhimmi who feels that he has been treated unjustly has the right to appeal to the ruler to reverse the injustice against him, either by a Muslim or a non-Muslim.

Scholars and the “general Islamic conscience” are another defense line for non-Muslims to seek protection behind.

Islamic history is full of incidents that indicate the Muslim community’s commitment to protect Dhimmis against any depreciation of their rights.

Islamic history reports the case of the priest who complained against an army leader who wrongfully took his money to Ahmad ibn Tulun, who then had it returned to the priest. There is also the case of the Copt who complained against `Amr ibn Al-`Aas to `Umar, who summoned the latter into account.

The role of scholars in this regard can clearly be detected in the stance of Imam Al-Awza`i towards the Abbasid ruler during his time, when the ruler kicked out a non-Muslim tribe from Mount Lebanon after a group of them had refused to pay their yearly agricultural tax (Kharaj). Al-Awza`i wrote on this matter to the caliph, denouncing the act and reminding him that Dhimmis were free people and not slaves.

Furthermore, when Al-Waleed ibn `Abdul Malik confiscated Church John from the Christians and enjoined it to a mosque, they sought Caliph `Umar ibn `Abdul Aziz's assistance to revoke the wrongdoing against them, which he did.

The history of the Islamic judiciary bears witness to this, as was the case with `Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) and others; which evidently proves that Islam renders the People of the Book as an integral part of society, not to be discriminated against by the Muslim population in any way.

This Lesson is translation of an article written by Sheikh Yusuf Al-Qaradawi titled *Ghayr al-Muslmein fi el-Mujtama` al-Islami*; (The non-Muslims in Muslim societies) Published Cairo, 1997, with few additions.