# Moral Philosophy : Western

## SEMESTER I
## (AS PER CBCS AND NEP 2020)

# PHILOSOPHY/SOCIOLOGY


**SURYA KUMAR BHUYAN SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**KRISHNA KANTA HANDIQUI STATE OPEN UNIVERSITY**

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## COURSE INTRODUCTION

The fourth course of First Semester of M A in Philosophy of KKHSOU is "Moral Philosophy: Western". It is designed to help the learners to have a deep understanding of the theoretical knowledge of western moral philosophy. As a learner of Master Degree in Philosophy one must have proper and thorough understanding about different moral theories. Moral philosophy deals with the science with science of customs or habits of men. It is also called the science of rightness and wrongness, because human will is expressed in right or wrong conduct. Rightness or wrongness refers to the highest ideal of human life. Hence, ethics is the science of the highest Good of man that includes Truth, Good and Beauty.

This course consists of fifteen units in total.
First unit of this course is 'Introduction to ethics'. After going through this unit one will be able to have proper understanding of the different types of ethical thinking. Ethics is an important branch of philosophy which mainly studies about value or morality. Ethics is not a science like psychology, which is concerned with the origin and growth of conduct. Ethics is something, which is concerned with the evaluation of conduct with reference to an ideal. So far as ethics is concerned, it can also be regarded to be a science as it aims at systematic explanation of rightness and wrongness or our voluntary actions in the light of the Highest Good of man. This unit will also focus on different ethical philosophies like absolutist ethics, moral absolutism, ethical relativism, existential ethics, situational ethics, evolutionary ethics, descriptive ethics, applied ethics, bio-ethics, environmental ethics, and business ethics.

Second unit of this course is 'The Nature of Moral Judgement'. This course particularly deals with moral judgment, which is the main cognitive factor of moral consciousness. Moral consciousness is the consciousness of right and wrong. It is the consciousness of moral distinctions. Actually, it is the awareness of moral worth of acts and agents. This unit further deals with the issues like the concept of morality and its different senses of use- descriptive and normative, the concept of morality and its' nature as a social institution of life etc.

'Aristotelian Ethics of Eudaimonia' is the third unit of this course. This unit introduces to you the concept of eudaimonia as laid down in Aristotle's philosophy. Eudaimonia is one of the central concepts in Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle was a rare ingenious. Metaphysics, logic, ethics and politics, natural philosophy, philosophy of mind, rhetoric-every branch of philosophy was handled by Aristotle with his extra-ordinarily minute intelligence. In fact, Aristotle was the first western thinker to divide philosophy into the said branches. Aristotle's writings that have come down to us are academic treatises. The treatises are cast in a questioning, argumentative and non-dogmatic style.

The fourth unit of course four is After going through this unit, one will able to know what Aristotle's Concept of Happiness is, what is the highest end of life and the differences between voluntary and non-voluntary action and will also Know the relationship between happiness and the freedom of will. Again one will further know that happiness is the concept, which can be regarded to be the concerned of all ethics. Almost all the ancient thinkers or ethicists tried to claim that the ideals they portrayed the ingredients of a happy life.

The fifth unit of this course is 'Virtues of Aristotelian Ethics'. This unit introduces to you about the concept of virtues in Aristotelian ethics. This topic has a significant place in his ethics. A question of high importance in any investigation of ethics is how we can teach people to be good. In this regard Aristotle clearly stated that he does not think virtue can be thought in a classroom or by means of argument. Then his ethics is not designated to make people good, but rather to explain what is good, why it is good and how we might set about building societies and institutions might introduce this goodness.

The sixth unit of this course is 'Phronesis of Aristotle'. This Unit introduces to you the concept of phronesis as expounded by Aristotle in Book VI of Nicomachean Ethics. Virtue comes about by choosing a mean between vicious extremes according to the right principle. This unit also consists of theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom, kinds of Intellectual virtue, three kinds of knowledge, Meaning of Phronesis in Aristotle's Ethics, Practical Wisdom involves four chief factors, Practical Wisdom is a virtue, and not art.

The seventh unit is 'The Theories of Moral Standard: Hedonism' This unit will make you know that ethical theory which propounds that we always desire pleasure. Pleasure is the only object of desire, good or bad. You should remember that in Moral Philosophy or in Ethics actions are judged as good or bad by reference to the supreme end of life. Do you know how actions are judged as good or bad? Any action which is conducive to consistent with the supreme end of life is judged as good. Again, any action which is not conducive to or inconsistent with the supreme end of life is judged as bad. There are many ethical thinkers like Bentham. Mill etc., who have propounded that 'Pleasure is the supreme end of life or Summum Bonum of man'

'Utilitarianism and its Kinds' is the eighth unit of course four. This unit introduces to you Utilitarianism as a moral standard. The trend of modern ethics is generally altruistic or universalistic. In recent times none maintains the egoistic system as sufficient theory of morality and also feels unhappy about the deontological theories. Therefore, the natural alternative is the teleological theory called utilitarianism. It is the theory which holds that the sole ultimate standard of right, wrong and obligation is the principle of utility.

The ninth unit is 'Utilitarianism: Bentham and Mill'. This unit introduces to you Bentham's theory of morality. Ethics is primarily concerned with moral judgements. But it is evident that moral judgement presupposes a standard or norm or ideal with reference to which an action is judged to be right or wrong. The actions which are conductive to proposed moral ideal are good or right, and those that do not conform to the moral ideal are wrong or bad. This unit will deal with utilitarianism and explain Jeremy Bentham's idea of Utilitarianism and will explain Mill's idea of Utilitarianism and will describe the basic points of Mill's moral philosophy.

The tenth unit of the course four is, 'The Ethical Theory of Kant'. This unit introduces to you Kant's Ethical Theory. Kantian Ethical Theory refers to a deontological ethical theory ascribed to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. According to Kant, actions become good or bad by rule following, not by virtue of their consequences. Kant advocates that reason alone can judge all our actions as right or wrong. His moral theory called "Rationalism" which gives all importance to reason.

The eleventh unit is, 'Kant and Autonomy of The Will'. This unit introduces to you Kant's autonomy of the will in his moral theory. All men have a direct and distinct consciousness of freedom. They feel that they are able to choose between alternative forces of actions. Man has autonomy to choose what is right and wrong. After an act they also feel that they could have chosen otherwise. This is a fact of experience and so must be recognized.

The twelfth unit of this course is 'Liberalism and Its Principles'. After reading this unit one will be able to know that Liberalism is a worldview related to political philosophy consists of the ideas of liberty and equality. It advocates a wide array of views depending on their understanding of these principles, but generally they support ideas such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, free markets, civil rights, democratic societies, secular governments, gender equality etc. It is the culmination of developments in western society that produced a sense of the importance of human individuality

The thirteenth unit of the course four is, 'Individualism'. This unit will let you know that Individualism is the moral stance, political philosophy, ideology, or social outlook that emphasizes the moral worth of the individual. Individualists promote the exercise of one's goals and desires and so value independence and self-reliance and advocate that interests of the individual should achieve precedence over the state or a social group, while opposing external interference upon one's own interests by society or institutions such as the government. Individualism is often defined in contrast to totalitarianism, collectivism and more corporate social forms.

The fourteenth unit is 'Liberalism vs. Communitarianism'. This unit will take you to the liberal-communitarian debate, which took its present form, can be traced back to the beginning of the modern age, when

liberalism emerged as a political and philosophical movement. John Locke in 17th-century England and Immanuel Kant in 18th-century Prussia developed theoretical views of society and human nature that stressed equality, personal autonomy, individual rights, and universalizable moral principles.

The fifteenth unit of this course is 'Liberal Justice and Justice as Desert'. After going through this unit, one will be able to know that nothing other than justice finds its relevance in human life in a greater way. Justice reflects the moral status of the society, community and state. Everybody is pleading for justice. What then is justice? Justice means what is just in the real sense of the term. The term justice may be evaluated from various perspectives. People are talking of social justice, economic justice, political justice, moral justice, liberal justice. The relevance of justice was prevailing from the antiquity. The Greek philosophers were vocal about the concept of justice.

While going through this course you will come across some boxes which are put on the left side or right side of the text. These boxes will give us the meanings of some words and concepts within the text. Apart from this, there will be some broad and short questions included under Activity and Check Your Progress in every unit. Activities will increase our thinking capacity because questions put in Activity are not directly derived from the text. But answers to the short questions are put in the section Answers to Check Your Progress. Besides, there are some text-related questions which are put in Model Questions. These questions will help you in selecting and mastering probable topics for the examination so that you can prepare for the examination with confidence.

# UNIT-1: INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


1.1. Learning Objectives

1.2. Introduction

1.3. Ethical thinking

1.4. Different ethical philosophies

1.5. Absolutist Ethics

1.5.1 Moral Absolutism

1.6. Ethical relativism

1.7. Existential Ethics

1.8. Situational Ethics

1.9. Evolutionary Ethics

1.10. Descriptive Ethics

1.11. Applied Ethics

1.11.1 Bio-ethics

1.11.2 Environmental Ethics

1.11.3 Business Ethics

1.12. Conclusion

1.13. Let us sum up

1.14. Further Reading

1.15. Answer to check your progress

1.16. Model questions


## 1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Define what is ethics
- Explain what is ethical thinking
- Define what is absolutist ethics
- Discuss what relativism is
- Describe the existentialist ethics
- Define the situational ethics
- Define the evolutionary ethics

- Explain what is descriptive ethics
- Discuss the applied ethics

## 1.2 INTRODUCTION

Ethics is an important branch of philosophy which mainly studies about value or morality. If we see the etymological meaning of the term ethics, it will be seen that the word 'ethics' is mainly derived from one group adjective, i. e. 'ethical', which is actually derived from the term 'ethos'. It means customs, usages or habits. Ethics is also called 'moral philosophy'. The term 'moral' derives from a Latin word 'mores'. Which too mean 'customs' or 'habits'? It is not the case that customs are something which is associated with habits. They are approved by the group of a society also. Ethics can be regarded to be the science of rightness and wrongness of conduct. Conduct is called the purposive action that involves choice and will. It is the science of morality.

Ethics is not a science like psychology, which is concerned with the origin and growth of conduct. Ethics is something, which is concerned with the evaluation of conduct with reference to an ideal. So far as ethics is concerned, it can also be regarded to be a science as it aims at systematic explanation of rightness and wrongness or our voluntary actions in the light of the Highest Good of man. Ethics is a normative science. Normative science is something, which deals with values and the norms which regulated human life. Normative science deals with systematic valuing of or voluntary actions.

## 1.3: ETHICAL THINKING:

From the above discussion, it becomes clear to us what actually ethics is. Now question is what is ethical thinking? While we are talking about ethical thinking, the main thing here is the nature of our thinking. We can do a work from different angles. In this regard we can present some arguments which are accepted by both Socrates and his Crito as valid...1) that we ought never to harm anyone, 2) That we ought to keep our promises, and 3) that we ought to obey or respect our parents and teachers. When

our actions will be done by considering these ideas to be in mind then it can be said that these actions are guided by ethics or morality. So it can finally be said that the thinking, which guides our action in ethical or moral way or manner is called ethical thinking.

## 1.4: DIFFERENT ETHICAL PHILOSOPHIES:

There are different ethical theories, which have played very important role in ethics. Some of the contemporary and important theories of ethics are as follows....absolutist ethics, ethical relativism, existentialist ethics, Situation ethics, the concept of applied ethics, evolutionary ethics and descriptive ethics.

## 1.5: ABSOLUTISM:

The word 'absolutism' can be understood both from moral and political perspective. From the moral point of view, 'absolutism' refers to at least two distinct doctrines. First, absolutism may be understood as the claim that there exists a universally valid moral system, which applies to everyone whether they realize it or not. In this sense, absolutism is just opposite to moral relativism. According to moral relativism the existence of universally applicable moral principles is not possible. Secondly, absolutism accepts that moral rules or principles do not admit any exceptions. In this regard we can take the name of Immanuel Kant as an absolutist with respect to lying, because he held that it is never permissible to lie. This variety of absolutist need not maintain that all moral principles are absolute.

### 1.5.1: Moral Absolutism:

'Moral Absolutism is an ethical theory, according to which some actions (action-types) are absolutely forbidden. Absolutism, for example, will regard that killing is wrong, or always wrong to lie, or always wrong to torture other. The important point here is that absolutism is not a theory, which uses to prohibit actions absolutely. Absolutism upholds only the formal requirement that some moral principles admit of no exceptions. Moral

absolutism is always found to be the opposite of consequentialism. Consequentialism is a theory according to which actions are right just in case they promote overall value in comparison with other alternatives. It means that no action is absolutely wrong For example, torturing a small child may produce more value (or less disvalue) than the killing of an entire nation. Therefore, for a consequentialist, torturing a small child in order to save a country is permissible. On the contrary, moral absolutism regards that some actions are absolutely wrong and those actions can never be right, whatever may be consequences it uses to produces. So, an absolutist will regard that it is morally wrong to torture a child in order to save an entire nation.

One question may occur in this case, i.e., which actions or types of action are traditionally regarded as absolutely wrong? Historically, philosophers have been absolutists with regarded to many types of actions such as lying, adultery, and sodomy. But in a contemporary setting, torture and executing the innocent are two of the actions most commonly considered to be absolutely wrong. Immanuel Kant, Charles Fried are some of the deontologists who had supported absolutists.

## 1.6: ETHICAL RELATIVISM:

Ethical relativism is an ethical theory according to which there are no universally accepted ethical standards. According to ethical relativism, there is no objective standard of right and wrong, not even in principle. There can be only different views of what is right and what is wrong. According to Ethical relativism, actually there cannot be any objective relativism.

The concept of ethical relativism can be more properly understood by comparing the views of the status of ethics and ethical matters with the ordinary beliefs about science. It is commonly believed that the natural sciences like physics, chemistry, biology etc. tells us things about the natural world. Throughout the centuries, and modern times in particular, science

seems to have made great progress in uncovering the nature and structure of the world. So far as scientific theories or laws are concerned, they are same and true under all circumstances or situations. In fact throughout the centuries, including the modern period, science has made great progress in uncovering the nature and structure of this world. Scientific knowledge is considered to be valid knowledge and it is not varying from person to person or to situation to situation.

But on the other hand, morality is different form positive science. There is always a chance of disagreement of opinion in morality. Actually it is stated that morality is nothing but a matter of subjective opinion. Morality is simply a function of the moral beliefs that people have and this is the conclusion of ethical relativism. It is found that there is no realm of objective moral truth or reality exists that is comparable to that which is found in the world of nature investigated by science. There are two forms of ethical relativism. The first type of ethical relativism is called personal or individual ethical relativism and the other is called social or cultural ethical relativism. According to personal or individual ethical relativism, ethical judgments and beliefs are the expressions of the moral outlook and attitudes of individual persons. Different individuals may have different moral views regarding an issue. These different views can neither be regarded as wrong or right. Moral statements are neither correct nor incorrect. To judge the correctness or incorrectness, first one objective standard have to exist. But according to ethical relativism, a proper standard actually does not exist.

On the other hand, social or cultural ethical relativism regards that ethical relativism varies from society to society and the basis for moral judgments lies in these social or cultural views. If an individual is to decide, what is right, then he must have to see it in terms of social norms. According to a cultural relativist, one society's view cannot be regarded to be better than the other society's view. Some view may be different from other and some society's view may not be accepted by wider group of the society. According to ethical relativism it does not make that view worse or more backward or incorrect in any objective sense.

## 1.7: EXISTENTIALIST ETHICS:

Rarely some philosophers other than Jean-Paul Sartre have emphasized as much that we are entirely responsible for not only what we are but also what we will be. If we are to look at ourselves and we will find that we are unhappy or we are in circumstances which limit us, then according to Sartre we have to blame ourselves only. a) We do not have the right to blame anybody for their influence. According to Sartre, if somebody has influenced us, it is our fault as we have allowed them to do so. b) Secondly if we allow others to influence what we really want, we are inauthentic human beings living in bad faith. We usually become this way through "trying to get along." We do not have the moral courage to "lead our own lives" and set up our own projects. Instead, we drift from thing to thing, being "controlled," so we think, by external circumstances.

Sartre has maintained one important statement, i.e. "existence precedes essence". Existence means the fact of being, the presence of something, which can also be called the "thisness," or "that it is." On the other hand, essence means the kind of thing it is, the blueprint, plan, or description, the nature of the thing, or "what it is. Sartre here tries to maintain that man intrinsically has no nature. It means that a man is thrown into this world, not of his own making, and is condemned to determine what he will be. In other words, our "existence precedes our essence." We exist first and determine our essence by means of choice. Contrast this view with mainstream Christianity. Man's nature comes first--man is a sinner. Consequently, here, essence precedes existence, since man is entirely subject to God's plan.

It is believed by existentialists that "in choosing myself, I choose man." With the help of choices, one man uses to determine or create what is going to be. These choices are mainly the choices a man things to be right or what to be. Consequently, a man uses to create ourselves according to what we think a person ought to be. This image is, then, what we think man ought to be. According to Sartre one is responsible for what he is. A

person is also responsible for other human being of the earth as his actions are responsible for the mankind. In one sense it can be said that, in deciding something, one is putting a universal value to his act by deciding in accordance with the belief that all persons in this situation should act in this manner. One person's choices are a model for the way everyone should choose. If one denies this fact, people are in self-deception. Sartre's first work of ethics can be regarded to be Being and Nothingness. Sartre tried to find out a theory of ethics based on the concepts of human need and the ideal of "integral man" in contrast with its counter-concept, the "sub-human". Existentialist ethics is something that adds to the existing ethics is a more specific content and a keener sense of the social conditions for living a properly human life.

## 1.8: SITUATIONAL ETHICS:

Situational ethics, or situation ethics, is a teleological and consequentialist theory of ethics that concerns with the outcome of an action. Situational ethics is opposed to the theory, where an action is regarded to be intrinsically wrong as we find in the case of deontological theories. This theory is originally developed in the 1960s by the Christian Episcopal priest Joseph Fletcher in two books written by him entitled, The Classic Treatment and Situation Ethics. According to Fletcher, sometimes moral principles can be cast aside in certain situations if love (agape) is best served for in Christianity. According to him 'Love is the ultimate law'. Fletcher strongly believes that in order to establish an ethical system, one must have to based on the principle of love, that is the best way to express the Christian principle of 'love thy neighbour' found in Bible. He believes that there are no absolute laws other than the law of Agape love and all the other laws were secondary and subsumed by agape in order to achieve the greatest amount of this love. This means that all the other laws are only contingent on agape, and thus they may be broken if other courses of action would result in more love. Thus, in the case of situational ethics, the ends can justify the means. According to situation ethics, right and wrong depend upon the situation.

There are no universal moral rules or rights in situation ethics. Here all the cases are considered to be unique and deserve to have a unique solution.

## 1.9: EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS:

Evolutionary ethics is a form of ethics, which tries to bridge the gap between philosophy and the natural sciences with the help of argument that the natural selection has instilled human beings with a moral sense, a disposition to be good. If this is considered to be true, then morality can be understood as a phenomenon that arises automatically during the evolution of sociable, intelligent beings. It does not arise, as the result of divine revelation or the application of our rational faculties. But theologians or philosophers argue that the morality actually arises as the result of divine revelation or the application of human's rational thinking. Morality would be interpreted as a useful adaptation that increases the fitness of its holders by providing a selective advantage. The challenge for evolutionary biologists such as Wilson is to define goodness with reference to evolutionary theory and then explain why human beings ought to be good. Evolutionary ethics has been more successful in providing interesting answers in Meta ethics.

Evolutionary ethics can be regarded to be of three types. They are descriptive evolutionary ethics, meta-ethical evolutionary ethics and normative evolutionary ethics.

Descriptive evolutionary ethics is that which consists of biological approaches to morality. This is based on the alleged role of evolution in shaping human psychology and behaviour.

Normative evolutionary ethics on the other hand is that, which seeks not to explain moral behaviour, but to justify normative ethical theories or claims.

Evolutionary Meta-ethics is something which asks about the fact that how evolutionary theory deals with the theories of ethical discourse. It also deals with the question of whether objective moral values exist and

what is the possibility of objective moral knowledge.

## 1.10: DESCRIPTIVE ETHICS:

Descriptive ethics is a kind of empirical research which deals with the attitudes of individuals or groups of people. On the other words, it can be said that this is the division of philosophical or general ethics that involves the observation of the moral decision-making process with the goal of describing the phenomenon. The supporters of descriptive ethics tries make the people believe about things like values, which actions are right and wrong, and which characteristics of moral agents are virtuous. If a deep research into descriptive ethics has done, then it may also investigate people's ethical ideals or what actions societies reward or punish in law or politics. In descriptive ethics, what ought to be noted is that the culture is generational and not static. That is why, a new generation expect to come with its own set of morals and that qualifies to be new sets of ethics. Descriptive ethics therefore always tries to oversee whether ethics still holds its place.

As we have found that descriptive ethics involves in empirical investigation, this field is usually investigated by those people, who are working in the fields of evolutionary biology, psychology, sociology or anthropology. Informations those use to come from descriptive ethics are, however, also used in philosophical arguments. Value theory can be either normative or descriptive but is usually descriptive.

Descriptive ethics does not explicitly perceive the relationship between good and bad ethical theories. It can be explained in the following two ways.

- Descriptive ethics claims, implicitly or explicitly, that amorality (not to be confused with immorality) is moral. Descriptive ethics thus embraces moral relativism. or,
- Descriptive ethics makes no claim that amorality is moral. Its innate

amorality is solely due to a practical division of labour between descriptive ethics and normative ethics.

The first position holds descriptive ethics to be in competition with normative ethics, whereas the second holds it as complementary to normative ethics.

## 1.11: APPLIED ETHICS:

Applied ethics is an important branch of philosophy or more specifically is of ethics. Applied ethics generally use to assume an affirmative answer to the existence question that is related to addressing the moral permissibility of specific actions and practices. Applied ethics deals with real life issues like abortion, euthanasia, environmental issues, business ethics etc. It starts with certain moral questions like "under what conditions, is an abortion morally permissible?" it can be said that applied ethics is that branch of ethics, which is concerned with the analysis of particular moral issues in private and public life. There are certain branches of applied ethics. They are as follows:

### 1.11.1: Bioethics:

bioethics is the philosophical study of the ethical issues emerging form advances in biology and medicine. It is also a branch of applied ethics which directly deals with medical policies and practice. The supporters and thinkers of bio-ethics are more concerned with the ethical questions that arise in the relationships among life sciences, biotechnology etc. It includes with its scope the study of values and its relationship with the field of medicine. Bio-ethics deals with various issues related to the euthanasia, abortion, embryo killing or use of embryo in research (stem-cell research) etc.

### 1.11.2: Environmental Ethics:

Environmental ethics is also comes under bioethics, which deals with ethical issues related with the environment. It mainly concerned with

ecological issues such as the responsibility of government and corporations to clean up pollution etc. The academic field of environmental ethics grew up in response to the work of scientists such as Rachel Carson and events such as the first Earth day in 1070.

### 1.11.3: Business Ethics:

Business ethics can also be called corporate ethics. It examines ethical principles or morals or ethical problems that arise in a business environment. It is a form of applied ethics, which is applied to all aspects business conduct and is also relevant to the conduct of individual and entire organisations. Business ethics is something which referrers to contemporary organisational standards, principles, set of values and norms that govern the actions and behaviour of an individual in the business organisation.

These are some main branches of applied ethics. With those branches, we also find some other form of applied ethics, namely, engineering ethics, social ethics, media ethics etc. All these issues have been studied from ethical point of view and analysed with the help of important ethical theories like Kantian de-ontology, utilitarianism, virtue ethics etc.

## 1.12: Conclusion:

So from the above discussion it can be said that ethics is an important part of any study. There are some important contemporary ethical theories which have been discussed above. All these theories are playing a significant role so far as ethical thinking of human beings are concerned. Any of our actions can only be fruitful and will be actually helpful for the society, when actions will be guided by value or moral thinking. So to know about the ethical theories and to apply them in our actins is very necessary.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** What ethics mainly studies?

.....

**Q2:** How the word 'absolutism' can be understood?

.....

**Q3:** What is consequentialism?

.....

**Q4:** According to ethical relativism, relativism is objective or subjective?

.....

**Q5:** How many ethical relativisms are there?

.....

**Q6:** Name one philosopher, who has supported existentialist ethics?

.....

**Q7:** Who has written the book, "Being and Nothingness"?

.....

**Q8:** Where from the concept 'love thy neighbour' derived from?

.....

**Q9:** What is descriptive evolutionary ethics?

.....

**Q9:** What is the other name of "business ethics"?

.....



## 1.13: LET US SUM UP

- Ethics is an important branch of philosophy which mainly studies about value or morality.
- Ethics is not a science like psychology, which is concerned with the origin and growth of conduct.

- Scientific knowledge is considered to be valid knowledge and it is not varying from person to person or to situation to situation.
- According to personal or individual ethical relativism, ethical judgments and beliefs are the expressions of the moral outlook and attitudes of individual persons.
- The concept of ethical relativism can be more properly understood by comparing the views of the status of ethics and ethical matters with the ordinary beliefs about science.
- Rarely some philosophers other than Jean-Paul Sartre have emphasized as much that we are entirely responsible for not only what we are but also what we will be.
- Sartre has maintained one important statement, i.e. "existence precedes essence".
- It is believed by existentialists that "in choosing myself, I choose man." With the help of choices, one man uses to determine or create what is going to be.
- Situational ethics, or situation ethics, is a teleological and consequentialist theory of ethics that concerns with the outcome of an action.
- Situational ethics is opposed to the theory, where an action is regarded to be intrinsically wrong as we find in the case of deontological theories.
- According to situation ethics, right and wrong depend upon the situation.
- There are no universal moral rules or rights in situation ethics.
- Here all the cases are considered to be unique and deserve to have a unique solution.
- Evolutionary ethics has been more successful in providing interesting answers in Meta ethics.

- Descriptive ethics is a kind of empirical research which deals with the attitudes of individuals or groups of people.
- On the other words, it can be said that this is the division of philosophical or general ethics that involves the observation of the moral decision-making process with the goal of describing the phenomenon.
- Descriptive ethics does not explicitly perceive the relationship between good and bad ethical theories.
- Applied ethics is an important branch of philosophy or more specifically is of ethics.
- Applied ethics generally use to assume an affirmative answer to the existence question that is related to addressing the moral permissibility of specific actions and practices.
- Applied ethics deals with real life issues like abortion, euthanasia, environmental issues, business ethics etc.



## 1.14: FURTHER READING:

1) Frankena, W. K. (1999). Ethics. Prentice Hall of India.
2) Guha, D. (2007). Practical and Professional Ethicsssional Ethics. Concept Publishing Company.
3) Mohapatra, P. K. (2008). Ethics and Society: An Essay in Applied Ethics. Concept Publishing Company.
4) Sharma, R. N. (2006). Introduction to Ethics. Surjeet Publications.
5) Singer, P. (2003). Practical Ethics. Cambridge University Press.
6) Sinha, J. (2001). A Manual of Ethics. New Central Book (P) Ltd



## 1.15: ANSWERS OF CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:Value or morality**

**Ans to Q 2:** The word 'absolutism' can be understood both from moral and political perspective.

**Ans to Q 3:** Consequentialism is a theory according which actions are right just in case they promote overall value in comparison with other alternatives.

**Ans to Q 4:** Objective.

**Ans to Q 5:** There are two kinds of ethical relativism, namely a) personal or individual ethical relativism, b) social or cultural ethical relativism

**Ans to Q 6:** Jean-Paul Sartre.

**Ans to Q 7:** Jean-Paul Sartre.

**Ans to Q 8:** Bible

**Ans to Q 9:** Descriptive evolutionary ethics is that which consists of biological approaches to morality.

**Ans to Q 10:** Corporate Ethics.



## 1.16: MODEL QUESTIONS:

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** Write the etymological meaning of the term 'ethics'.

**Q2:** Write the name of two contemporary forms of ethics.

**Q3:** Define ethical relativism.

**Q4:** What are the two types of ethical relativism?

**Q5:** Who has written the book, "The Classic Treatment and Situation Ethics"?

**Q6:** Define normative evolutionary ethics.

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** What is descriptive ethics?

**Q2:** Define bio-ethics?

**Q3:** What is business ethics?

**Q4:** What is evolutionary ethics?

**Q5:** Write a short note on ethical thinking.

**Q6:** Why ethics is considered to be a normative science?

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300 words)**

**Q1:** Describe what is 'ethics' and what is 'ethical thinking'?

**Q2:** Explain 'absolutism'.

**Q3:** Discuss ethical relativism.

**Q4:** What is existentialist ethics? Explain.

**Q5:** What is applied ethics? Discuss.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 2: THE NATURE OF MORAL JUDGMENT

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

2.1. Learning Objectives
2.2. Introduction
2.3. The Concept and Nature of Moral Judgment
2.4. The Subject of Moral Judgment
2.5. The Object of Moral Judgment
2.6. Difference between Moral Judgment and other
2.7. Let us Sum Up
2.8. Further Readings
2.9. Answer to Your Progress
2.10. Model Questions

## 2.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit you will be able to

- The concept of moral judgment
- The nature of moral judgment
- The distinction between moral judgment and other judgment
- The subject and object of moral judgment

## 2.2. INTRODUCTION:

Moral judgment is the main cognitive factor in moral consciousness. Moral consciousness is the consciousness of right and wrong. It is the consciousness of moral distinctions. Actually, it is the awareness of moral worth of acts and agents. Moreover, it is the awareness of the character of an action as right or wrong. It involves intuition of moral standard by reason and comparison of a voluntary action with it. It also involves evaluation of voluntary action of it as right and wrong. Moral consciousness involves three factors- (i) cognitive or intellectual factor, (ii) affective or emotional factor and (iii) conative or volitional factor.

The main cognitive factor of moral consciousness is moral judgments.

It consists in the apprehension of the moral quality of an action with reference to the moral standard. The consciousness of rights and duties, virtues and vice, merit and demerit, responsibility or accountability is also involved in moral consciousness. These are the cognitive factors in moral consciousness. Secondly, affective or emotional factor include the moral sentiments. They are the feelings of approval and disapproval which accompany moral judgments. When we apprehend that an action is right, it excites a feeling of approbation in our minds. When we apprehend that an action is wrong, it excites a feeling of disapprobation in our minds. When we have done a right action, we feel self- complacence. When we have committed a wrong action, we feel remorse. We have a feeling of reverence for the moral idea. These moral sentiments accompany moral judgments. Moral judgments are followed by moral sentiments. Their existence is no criteria of the validity of moral judgments. Moral sentiments are followed y moral judgment. They are the emotional factors in moral consciousness.

Moral consciousness involves the regulation of the impulses by reason according to its conception of the highest good. Thus it involves choice at an action by the self. And it also involves the moral impulse to do the right action. Moral judgment involves moral obligation or the sense of duty or oughtness. And we feel that we are under moral obligation to do what is right and not to do what is wrong, and we feel an active impulse to do what is right and avoid what is wrong. All these are the cognitive factors in moral consciousness.

So, we have seen that moral judgment, moral sentiment and moral obligation are the main cognitive, emotional, and cognitive factors in moral consciousness respectively.

## 2.3. THE CONCEPT AND NATURE OF MORAL JUDGMENT:

Moral judgment is a judgment of value that deals with what ought to be. It is distinguished from the judgment of fact. The judgment of fact deals

with what is to be. It is a descriptive judgment. On the other hand, the judgment of value is an appreciative or critical judgment. Actually, moral judgment is the mental act of discerning and pronouncing a particular action to be right or wrong. According to Mackenzie, the moral judgment is a judgment upon an action with reference to the moral ideal. It compares an action with the moral standard and pronounces it to be right or wrong. He stated that moral judgment is not like a logical judgment, but a judgment about an action. Actually, it is a judgment of value as distinguished from a judgment of fact. It does not consider the nature of an action, but its moral value, rightness or wrongness. It judges what our actions ought to be. Philosopher Moorhead says that moral judgment is not a judgment in the logical sense of a proposition, but it is a judgment in the judicial sense of a sentence.

It is to be noteworthy that the moral quality of an action is recognized when we perceive a voluntary action and compare it with the moral standard by judging whether the action is in conformity with it or not. On the other hand, we can say that moral judgment involves the application of a standard to a particular action. So, it is must clear that moral judgment is inferential in nature. It involves the application of a standard to a particular action. But, it does not mean that our ordinary moral judgments always involve explicit reasoning or inference. The element or reasoning is implicit in most cases of moral judgments. It is explicit only in complex and doubtful cases or in reflective examination. In such cases the moral standard is explicitly held before the mind and applied to the cases under consideration. But, ordinarily moral judgments are not reflective; rather they are intuitive and immediate. According to Bradley, moral judgments are intuitive subsumptions. For him, we intuitively bring and action under a moral rule recognized by the community and judges it to be right or wrong. But, only in doubtful cases we reflect on the concrete situation and consciously compare an action with the moral ideal and judge it to be right and wrong. Thus, the inferential character of moral judgments is brought to clear consciousness in complicated circumstances.

The most important point is that moral judgment has objective validity. It is not determined by the subjective inclinations and prejudices of the person who makes the judgment. An action is right in a particular situation from the standpoint of the universe. Actually, a moral judgment presupposes certain things, namely, (i) a subject who judges (ii) an object that is judged (iii) standard according to which an action is judged and (iv) a faculty of judging or moral faculty.

## 2.4. THE SUBJECT OF MORAL JUDGMENT:

There must be someone who passes the moral judgment. It demands the subject who judges and passes the judgment. It may be the rational self or ideal self that passes moral judgments on its motives, intentions and actions as well as actions of others also. By the subject of moral judgment, Mackenzie means through which an action is judged to be good or bad. According to him, a person judges an action to be right or wrong from the standpoint of an ideal standard. On the other hand, Shaftesbury, an advocator of moral theory, holds that a work of art is judged to be good or bad by the connoisseur. According to him, just as the artist appeals to the judgment of the connoisseur or appreciation of beauty, similarly when we deal with conduct then we appeal to the judgment of the moral connoisseur. It is well-known that art aims at the production of a certain result. Here, the result whether it is beautiful or ugly is always judged by the connoisseur. But, it is totally opposite in morality. In morality, action is judged rather than the result. The action is judged by the action who acts. He/she has chosen the action and judges whether it is right or wrong. Here, the subject of moral judgment is the person himself who does the action. So, the ideal or rational self is the subject of moral judgment.

Another philosopher Adam Smith has put forwarded a similar view to that of Shaftesbury and holds that a person passes moral judgments on his own actions as well as those of others from the standpoint of an impartial spectator. Actually, we pass moral judgments upon the conduct and character of other people. Similarly, they also pass moral judgments upon our conduct

and character. Therefore, we come to reflect upon our own motives, intentions, actions and become anxious to know our capability to deserve their applause. That's why we become spectators of our own behavior. In this regard, Adam Smith has put forwarded the idea of 'impartial spectator' where an individual judges himself/herself from the point of view of the examiner and judge and also from the point of view of that person whose conduct is examined into and judged of. According to Smith, in passing moral judgments we must appeal from the opinions of mankind to the higher tribunal of our own conscience to that of the 'impartial spectator'.

This view of Adam Smith contains a core of truth. Actually, the point of view of moral judgment is that of unbiased reason. We ought to view our own actions as impartial spectators as we view others' actions. Here, the spectator or the judge in a person is the ideal self and the person judged o is the actual self. From this point of view it can be stated that moral consciousness is evolved through intercourse with society. But it is not necessarily true that we judge other's actions first and after that judge our own actions. Actually, first we always become clear and conscious about our own actions, motives and intentions and judge them whether it is to be right or wrong. After that we can infer the motives and intentions of other persons from their actions in the light of our own experience. The main point of Adam Smith is that moral judgments involve a reference to a point o view higher than that of the individual. The point of view to which an appeal is made is that of the Ideal Self. From that point of view it can be stated that Adam Smith is an advocator of Sympathetic Intuitionism.

## 2.5. THE OBJECT OF MORAL JUDGMENT:

We have seen that the individual deliberately has chosen their motives, intentions and act accordingly. Here, the individual is the subject who judges and his/her actions are the object that is judged. But the question is- what type of actions they choose, or what type of actions are the objects of moral judgments. It is to be noteworthy that voluntary and habitual actions are the objects of moral judgments. Habitual actions are objects of moral

judgments because only voluntary actions are judged to be right or wrong. Voluntary actions mean act according to the freedom of will. There three main factors in voluntary action, namely, first the mental stage of spring of action, motive, intention, desire, deliberation, choice and resolution, secondly, the organic stage of bodily action and thirdly, the eternal stage of consequences. So, we have seen that choosing the act, doing the act and consequence of the act are the main factors in voluntary actions. But the question is- do we judge an act by its motives or consequences? In this regard, there is a controversy between Hedonists and Intuitionists. According to the Hedonists, the rightness or wrongness of an action depends upon the consequences. On the other hand, the Intuitionists hold that the rightness or wrongness depends upon the motive. Philosophers like Bentham and J. S. Mill stated that whether the motives are good or bad is depend upon their effects. But, philosophers like Immanuel Kant claims that the effect of our actions cannot give them moral worth. According to Kant, the moral quality of an action is determined by the good will that motivates it and not upon its consequences.

Although different philosophers have put forwarded their different views, it is clear that both motives and consequences are the objects of moral judgments. They are not opposed to each others. Actually, the motive is the inner idea of the outer consequence as well as the consequence is the outer manifestation of the inner motive. The motive or the idea of the end aimed at is undoubtedly the object of moral judgment. The consequence also is the object of moral judgment in so far as it realizes the inner motive. But sometimes it is found that the motive is good, but the consequence turns out to be bad. Similarly sometimes motive is bad, but consequence turns out to be good. The important thing is that the morality of an action depends upon the motive from which we act. Actually, when there is any conflict arises between inner motive and outer consequence, then the moral quality of an action is determined by the inner motive and not by the consequence.

There is a controversy among philosophers regarding the motive and intention as the objects of moral judgments. Philosopher Bentham states that a motive is substantially nothing more than pleasure or pain operating in a certain manner. He takes intention in the sense of the end or aim of action which persuades the agent to act or dissuades him from acting. Therefore he regards intention as the object of moral judgment. Similarly J.S Mill also regards intention as the object o moral judgment. But we cannot say that only intention is the object of moral judgments. The motive is the idea of the end chosen by the self. It is a part of intention. Intention includes the ideas of the end and the mean chosen by the self. Actually, intention is not an isolated mental phenomenon. It is the expression of character. It is always influenced by the permanent disposition of the mind or character acquired by repeated voluntary actions. Therefore, character is also the object of moral judgments.

## 2.6. DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MORAL JUDGMENT AND OTHER JUDGMENT:

Moral judgments are different from other types of judgments, such as logical judgments and aesthetic judgments. We have known that ethics, logic, aesthetics are normative sciences. They determine the nature of three supreme norms or ideals o life. Ethics is concerned with the ideal o the Highest Good. Logic is concerned with the ideal of truth. Aesthetics is concerned with the ideal of Beauty. Accordingly, thus logical judgments refer to the ideal of Truth. Aesthetic judgments refer to the ideal of Beauty. But, moral judgments refer to the ideal of supreme Good. All other judgments are critical or appreciative judgments. Only moral judgments are always accompanied by moral obligation and moral sentiments which do not accompany logical and aesthetic judgments. So, when we judge an action to be right, then we feel under moral obligation to perform it and have a feeling of approval. On the other hand, when we feel an action to be wrong, then we feel under moral obligation not to perform it and have a feeling of disapproval. Actually, the feelings of approval, disapproval, remorse etc are

known as moral sentiments. Moral obligation is the sense of duty or oughtness. Moral judgments are obligatory in character and accompanied by moral sentiments. Therefore, they cannot be reduced to logical or aesthetic judgments. They are lacking in moral obligation and moral sentiments..



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** What is moral judgment?

.....

**Q2:** What are the main factors of moral consciousness?

.....

**Q3:** What are the main constituents of moral judgments?

.....

**Q4:** What type of actions are the objects of moral judgments?

.....

**Q5:** What are the main factors of voluntary action?

.....



## 2.7. LET US SUM UP

- Moral judgment is the main cognitive factor in moral consciousness. It is the awareness of the character of an action as right or wrong. It involves intuition of moral standard by reason and comparison of a voluntary action with it. It also involves evaluation of voluntary action of it as right and wrong. Moral consciousness involves three factors- (i) cognitive or intellectual factor, (ii) affective or emotional factor and (iii) conative or volitional factor.

- Moral judgment is a judgment of value that deals with what ought to be. Moral judgment is the mental act of discerning and pronouncing a particular action to be right or wrong. The moral quality of an action is

recognized when we perceive a voluntary action and compare it with the moral standard by judging whether the action is in conformity with it or not. So, from this point of view it can be stated that moral judgment is inferential in nature.

- Moral judgments involve three main components, namely, a subject who judges, an object that is judged, standard according to which an action is judged and, a faculty of judging or moral faculty. It demands the subject who judges and passes the judgment. It may be the rational self or ideal self that passes moral judgments on its motives, intentions and actions as well as actions of others also. Voluntary and habitual actions are the objects of moral judgments. Voluntary actions imply freedom of will.

- Moral judgments are different from logical and aesthetic judgments. Moral judgments involve the obligatory character as well as also accompanied by moral sentiments. But either logical or aesthetic judgments do not have moral obligation and moral sentiments because of which they are different from moral judgments.

## 2.8. FURTHER READING:

1) Lillie, William, (2007), An Introduction to Ethics, Delhi: Surjeet publications.
2) Sinha, Jadunath, (2003), A Manuel of Ethics, Calcutta: New Central Book Agency Pvt. Ltd.
3) Frankena, William, (1973), Ethics, New Delhi: Prentice Hall.
4) Sidgwick, Henry, (1901), The Methods of Ethics, London: Macmillan And Co. Ltd.

## 2.9. ANSWER TO YOUR PROGRESS:

**Ans to Q1:**Moral judgment is a judgment of value distinguished from fact which deals with the question of what ought to be. Actually, moral judgment is the mental act of distinguishing an action to be right or wrong.

**Answer to Q. No. 2:** There are three main factors in moral consciousness. They are- cognitive or intellectual factor, affective or emotional factor and conative or volitional factor.

**Answer to Q. No. 3:** The main constituents of moral judgments are- the subject who judges, the object that is judged, standard according to which an action is judged and, a faculty of judging or moral faculty.

**Answer to Q. No. 4:** The voluntary and habitual actions are the objects of moral judgments. Non- voluntary actions are excluded from the scope of moral judgment. Habitual actions are objects of moral judgments as they are the result of repeated voluntary actions. So, ultimately only voluntary actions are judged to be right or wrong.

**Answer to Q. No. 5:** There are three main factors in voluntary actions. Firstly, the mental stage of spring of action, motive, intention, desire, deliberation, choice and resolution. Secondly, the organic stage of bodily action. Thirdly, the external stage of consequences.

## 2.10. MODEL QUESTIONS:

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** What is the main cognitive factor in moral consciousness?

**Q2:** What are the three main factors of moral consciousness?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** What do you mean by moral judgment?

**Q2:** Explicate the nature of moral judgments.

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Do you think moral judgments are inferential in character? Discuss.

**Q2:** Discuss the distinction among the moral judgments, logical and aesthetic judgments.

**Q3:** What is the object of moral judgment? Discuss critically.

**Q4:** Who passes the moral judgment? Discuss.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 3: ARISTOTELIAN ETHICS OF EUDAIMONIA

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


3.1 Learning objectives

3.2 Introduction

3.3 Meaning of Eudaimonia

3.4 The Human Good

3.5 Final End

3.6 Eudaimonia and Function

3.7 Function Argument

3.8 Virtues and Traits of character

3.9 The Doctrine of the Mean

3.10 Eudaimonia and Philosophy

3.11 Let us sum up

3.12 Further readings

3.13 Answers to check your progress

3.14 Model Questions


## 3.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- explain the importance of Aristotle's ethics of eudaimonia as set in Nicomachean Ethics.
- explain the meaning of the term eudaimonia.
- know the meaning of human good in Aristotlian eudaimonia.
- explore the basic argument of eudaimonia, i.e., Function Argument.
- discuss the basic concept of virtue and the traits of virtue
- discuss the doctrine of the mean.
- explore the relation between eudaimonia and philosophy.

## 3.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you the concept of eudaimonia as laid down in Aristotle's philosophy. Eudaimonia is one of the central concepts in

Aristotle's philosophy. Aristotle was a rare ingenious. Metaphysics, logic, ethics and politics, natural philosophy, philosophy of mind, rhetoric-every branch of philosophy was handled by Aristotle with his extra-ordinarily minute intelligence. In fact, Aristotle was the first western thinker to divide philosophy into the said branches. Aristotle's writings that have come down to us are academic treatises. The treatises are cast in a questioning, argumentative and non-dogmatic style. Three works on ethics have come down under Aristotle's name: Nicomachean Ethics (NE) in ten 'books', Eudemian Ethics (EE) in eight 'books', and so-called Magna Moralia or 'great ethics'. The last is perhaps not by Aristotle but may be a recorded lecture course by his pupil. Aristotle's ethics, most completely formulated in Nichomachean Ethics comes to have followed from the teleological view of reality. The teleological view is associated with the concept that the nature of a thing aims at its formal cause. Aristotle applied this notion of formal cause to ethics. Nichomachean Ethics chiefly deals with the guiding question: what is the best thing for a human being? Aristotle says that it is man by virtue of his nature that he/she seeks: eudaimonia (happiness).

## 3.3 MEANING OF EUDAIMONIA

Eudaimonia, also known as eudaemonia or eudemonia is a Greek word commonly translated as happiness or welfare. Sometimes eudaimonia is more accurately translated as "human flourishing". Etymologically, eudaimonia consists of two words, namely, "eu" ("good") and "daimon" ("spirit"). To be eudaimon is therefore to be living in a way that is well favoured by god. Aristotle never used eudaimon merely in the etymological sense of the term. He regards 'eudaimon' as a substitute for eu zen (living well).

Eudaimonia is not to be understood in the ordinary sense of the term happiness. The following points are to be kept in mind in order to know about Aristotle's eudaimonia.

1. We can talk of people being happy as a psychological state. But eudaimonia is not a state of mind, but relates to an activity - the activity of living. A good life is one that realizes the full potential that a human

life has.

2. Eudaimonia is not something subjective, but objective. To say someone is or was eudaimon is to make an objective judgement about their life as a good human life

3. Eudaimonia is not something easily changed. It does not come and go as happiness (in the usual sense) can. For it is an evaluation of a life (a life lived well) or a person (a good person) as a whole. Judgments related to eudaimonia are stable judgments.

## 3.4 THE HUMAN GOOD

Aristotle's ethical writings belong to his practical philosophy. In Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle says that his ethical enquiries are not undertaken for the sake of theoretical understanding as the others (such as metaphysics or natural philosophy) are, since the aim of the investigation is not to know what goodness is, but to become good.

Aristotle begins the Nicomachean Ethics with the question 'What is the good for human beings?' This means that for Aristotle, ethics is the inquiry into the human good. He says: "Every art and every inquiry, and similarly every action and choice is thought to aim at some good; and for this reason the good has rightly been declared to be that at which all things aim." But what is the highest of all goods attainable by action? What is it that we are aiming at, that would provide a successful, fulfilling, good life? Our different activities aim at various 'goods'. For example, the end of the medical art is health, that of shipbuilding a vessel, that of strategy victory, that of economics wealth. For any action or activity, there is a purpose for which we undertake it and the purpose is nothing but an 'end'. What is this 'end'? Aristotle confirms it to be happiness. Everyone seems to be agreed that eudaimonia (i.e. happiness, ?ourishing, or well-being) is the highest end, but people di?er on what living well consists in. It is thought that there are three 'lives' in contention: (a) some people think it consists in getting as much enjoyment as possible, (b) others that it is a life of political achievement,

and (c) others that is the life of the intellect. Aristotle does not consider either of these three to be the contender for happiness. Even he dismissed a fourth contender for the best life: the pursuit of wealth. The reason behind this dismissal is that wealth is sought for something else. Aristotle says that eudaimonia satis?es two conditions which the supreme good must satisfy, ?rst that it is sought for its own sake and secondly that it is by itself su?cient to make life "choice worthy and lacking nothing". Both conditions have been held to point towards an "inclusive" conception of eudaimonia, i.e. a conception of the supreme good as a life in which the best possible combination of speci?c goods is achieved. It can be observed here that Aristotle's aim is to move towards a substantive account of the best life for humans from consideration, in terms of his philosophy of nature, of what kind of life human life is.

## 3.5 FINAL END

Aristotle says that eudaimonia is the final end of human life. There are some final ends which are sought both for their own sake and for the sake of something else. Everything that we pursue for its own sake - such as pleasure, knowledge, honour, and so on - we also pursue for the sake of eudaimonia. How can we pursue something both for its own sake and for the sake of eudaimonia? The solution was to distinguish between external means and constitutive means. Final ends are constitutive parts of eudaimonia. For example, we can pursue knowledge for its own sake and pursue it for the sake of living well if we understand acquiring knowledge as part of the good life. In contrast to this, Aristotle says that we never want to live well in order to achieve some other end. If there is a final end which we never seek for the sake of anything else, but only ever for its own sake, this will be a final end 'without qualification'. This is eudaimonia.

A further reason for thinking eudaimonia is our only good is that the good should be self-sufficient, i.e. it makes life desirable on its own. Eudaimonia is the most desirable thing, and we can't make it more desirable by adding something else to it. In fact, given what we've just said, to add

some other goal, e.g. knowledge, to eudaimonia is just to make that other thing part of your eudaimonia. Eudaimonia is the only self-sufficient good.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics contains ten books. (True/ False)

b) The word 'eudaimonia' consists of two words, namely 'eu' and 'daimon'.(True/ False)

c) For Aristotle, eudaimonia is a state of mind. (True/False)

d) For Aristotle, eudaimonia is objective. (True/False)

**Q2:** What is the highest end according to Aristotle?

……

**Q3:** What are the two conditions that are to be satisfied by the highest good According to Aristotle?

……

**Q4:** Why eudaimonia is said to be the final end of human life?

……



**Activity 3.1**

- How is Aristotle's account of ethics related to his concept of formal cause? How do you view the relation?

Ans: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## 3.6 EUDAIMONIA AND FUNCTION

Aristotle says that human beings can rationalize and rationality is therefore said to be the function of human beings. Function translates ergon that literally means task or work. Aristotle says that the ergon of an eye is to see-but a more general account would be the 'characteristic form of activity' of something. To say that there is a characteristic activity of something is to insight into what type of thing something is. A thing in order to fulfill its ergon, will need certain qualities. An arête, for Aristotle, is required for the fulfillment of a thing's ergon. Arête can be generally translated as an excellence, or more specifically a virtue. Just as sharpness can be said to be a virtue in a knife designed to cut something, similarly arête is said to be a virtue designed to fulfill ergon.

## 3.7 FUNCTION ARGUMENT

Aristotle applies the thesis of function to human beings. He says that man must have a function, because every living species has its own work or function. Human beings have many capacities-Aristotle calls them capacities of the soul, but by soul he means that in virtue of which a thing is alive. Being alive is not the distinctive characteristic of human being since 'life' is a characteristic activity of all animal. Aristotle was concerned with delineating the 'characteristic activity' only of human being. He says that reason is the only capacity of human being, because it sets man apart from other animals. He further says that the function of human being is special, because it is unique only to man. Therefore Aristotle concludes that happiness is an excellent rational activity, and he says that a good human life is one in which rational activity is well employed. In other words happiness consists in the rational activity in accordance with virtue, and if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and the most perfect. Thus for Aristotle, the ideal function of human being is the fullest or the most perfect exercise of reason. This means that eudaimonia for a human being is the attainment of excellence (arête) in reason.

The notion of employing rationality well is not a simple one, because one must ?nd room for the good employment of the intellect on the one hand, and of the rationally responsive appetites on the other. Aristotle formulates the function (ergon) argument in the following way:

1. The good for humans is performing their functions well, if they have functions.

2. Humans have functions, and it is an activity of their soul in accordance with reason.

3. So: The good for humans is performing well this activity of their soul in accordance with reason, i.e., performing this activity of their soul in accordance with reason in conformity to the best and most complete excellence.

Aristotle says that only virtuous persons can achieve eudaimonia. To fulfill our ergon and live well, human beings must be guided by 'right' reasons-good or right reasons and not bad reason. That is, eudaimonia consists in the activity of the soul which exhibits the virtues by being in accordance with ('good' or 'right') reason (orthos logos). In other words, eudaimonia involves activity, exhibiting virtue in accordance with reason. He insists that eudaimonia is not only good character but it is a rational activity.

Aristotle's bases eudaimonia on virtue, and therefore his ethical theory is said to be eudaimonistic. However, he says that virtue is necessary but not sufficient for eudaimonia, because while emphasizing the rational aspect of the psyche, he gave importance on the importance of external good such as friends, wealth and power etc.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q5:** State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) The literal meaning of the word 'ergon' is task or work. (True/ False)

b) The meaning of the word arête is excellence.(True/ False)

c) For Aristotle, eudaimonia for a human being is the attainment of excellence (arête) in reason. (True/False)

d) Aristotle did not base his ethics on eudaimonia. (True/False)

**Q6:** Why according to Aristotle reason is said to be the characteristic activity only of human being?

……

**Q7:** What is the core point of Aristotle's function argument ?

……

**Q8:** What does happiness (eudaimonia) consist in according to Aristotle?

……



**Activity 3.2**

- Do you think that man can live only by way of rationalizing? If so, why and how?

Ans: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## 3.8 VIRTUES AND THE TRAITS OF CHARACTER

According to Aristotle, a virtue (arête) is a trait of mind or character that helps us achieve a good life, which Aristotle argues is a life in accordance with reason. There are two types of virtue - intellectual virtues and moral virtues. In Nicomachean Ethics, Book 2, Aristotle concentrates on moral virtues, traits of character.

According to Aristotle, anything that is part of the soul (the mind) is either passion, a faculty or a state (trait) of character. Since virtues are part of the soul, they must be one of these.

1. Passions: By the term 'passions' Aristotle means our bodily appetites (for food, drink, sex, etc.), our emotions, and any feelings accompanied by pleasure or pain. But these can't be virtues for three reasons.

a. Just having a particular passion - feeling hungry or angry - doesn't make you a good or bad person.

b. We generally do not choose passions, but virtues are associated with our choices. We cannot generally, just by an act of will, choose what we feel or want.

c. Virtues concern how we are disposed to feel and act; they are not desires that actually motivate us.

2. Faculties: faculties are things like sight or the ability to feel fear. Virtues can't be these, since we have these naturally but we have to acquire virtue.

3. So Aristotle comes to the conclusion that virtues must be states of character.

Aristotle defines states of character as 'the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions'. Character involves a person's dispositions that relate to what, in different circumstances, they feel, how they think, how they react, the sorts of choices they make, and the

actions they perform. What we find pleasant also reveals our character. Character has a certain stability and longevity. Character traits last much longer and change less easily than many 'states of mind', such as moods and desires. But character can change, and so it is less stable and long-lived than personal identity. Yet it is central to being the person one is.

## 3.9 THE DOCTRINE OF THE MEAN

At this point one question arises-- what kind of state of character is called a virtue? Some traits of character, such as being short-tempered may stop us from leading a good life - this is a vice. On the other hand, there are some traits of character, such as being kind or courageous, help us to lead a good life - and these are the virtues. Virtue is a disposition, not a feeling or a faculty. Feelings are not the subject of praise or blame, but virtues and vices are. Again, while feelings move us to act in a certain way, virtues dispose us to act in a certain way. Virtue is a disposition to behave in the right way.

We are now in a position to define human virtue. Human virtue is defined as a disposition to behave in the right manner and as a mean between extremes of deficiency and excess, which are vices. What does this involve? Aristotle compares living well with other activities, such as eating well or physical training. In these cases, the good nutritionist needs to avoid prescribing too much food or exercise or too little. We achieve health and physical fitness by following an 'intermediate' course of action. This intermediacy is to be understood in the sense of the characterization of the intermediate as what is best, and as doing and feeling 'at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right way'. This is Aristotle's 'doctrine of the mean'. Doctrine of mean therefore is a mean between two extremes, e.g., we may have passions either for 'too much' or 'too little'. Virtue involves being disposed to feeling in an 'intermediate' way, neither too much nor too little. It is important to note that Aristotle's doctrine of the mean does not claim that when we get angry, we should only ever be 'moderately' angry. We

should be as angry as the situation demands, which can be very angry or only slightly irritated. Given the very close connection between what we feel and how we choose to act, virtues are dispositions of choice as well, and there is a 'mean' for actions as well as for feelings.

Aristotle proposes practical wisdom as a helping virtue us to know how to choose a mean. For Aristotle, practical wisdom is a virtue of reason, the main intellectual virtue concerned with living. Our passions are to be tested by reason, because there can be right and wrong ways to feel passions, and the right way to feel passions is determined by reason. If we feel our passions 'irrationally' - at the wrong times, towards the wrong objects, etc. - then we don't live well. So, Aristotle concludes, a virtue is 'a state of character concerned with choice, lying in the mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the person of practical wisdom would determine it'.

Aristotle proposes three criteria to distinguish virtuous people from people who behave in the right way by accident: first, virtuous people know that they are behaving in the right way; second, they choose to behave in the right way for the sake of being virtuous; and third, their behavior manifests itself as part of a fixed, virtuous disposition.

In Book II of Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle argues that learning virtue is a matter of habit and proper training. We do not become courageous by learning why courage is preferable to cowardice or rashness, but rather by being trained to be courageous. Only when we have learned to be instinctively courageous can we rightly arrive at any reasoned approval of courage.

## 3.10 EUDAIMONIA AND PHILOSOPHY

In the second half of Book ten of Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle returns to the question of what eudaimonia is.

Aristotle in book six of Nicomachean Ethics divides reason into two

types: practical reason and theoretical reason. Virtue, which is necessary for eudaimonia, is impossible without practical reason, so practical reason is necessary for eudaimonia. Besides practical reason, Aristotle talks about another reason, that is, theoretical reason.

Aristotle argues that theoretical reason - the contemplation of truth - is what is 'highest' about human beings. Animals have a form of practical wisdom, in that they consider and act on what is best for themselves. But they do not contemplate general truths. Eudaimonia includes excellent activity of theoretical reason, which is philosophy. Aristotle says that the act of contemplation is a must for human beings for the following reasons:

1. This activity of contemplation is the best activity, because theoretical reason is the best thing in us and with it, we contemplate what is best (the greatest, most wonderful and most divine things in the universe), not merely what is best for us (as in practical wisdom).

2. We are able to undertake this activity more continuously than any other activity, so it leads to the most continuously happy life.

3. It is the most pleasant activity - at least, its pleasures are most pure and enduring, unlike pleasures of the body.

4. It is the most self-sufficient activity. Nothing further arises from it (it is knowledge for its own sake), while in other virtuous activities, we normally gain something (honour, gratitude, friendship, power, etc.) beyond doing the action.

5. We are active in order to have leisure. 'Leisure' is undertaking those activities we wish to undertake. The virtues of politics aim at creating space for leisure, just as we only undertake war in order to achieve peace. They serve the activity of reason.

6. Finally, theoretical reason is what we most are, it is our characteristic activity.

7. Therefore, the best and most pleasant life for us, given our nature, will be a life of reason. The life of the philosopher (or more generally, a life dedicated to knowledge) will be the best life.

Aristotle concludes Nicomachean Ethics saying that we should strive to live such a life of theoretical reasoning as far as possible, to live in accordance with the best thing in us. But we are human, and require more than this. Hence the life of virtue more broadly is also part of eudaimonia, as he has argued all along. Having passions, having a body, living with others - these are all characteristically human too. Furthermore, the life of virtue doesn't require a great deal of external goods, and so while these are necessary, they are not central.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q9:** State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) According to Aristotle, virtue is passion. (True/ False)

b) There are two types of reason according to Aristotle. (True/ False)

c) For Aristotle, virtue is a disposition to behave in the right way. (True/False)

d) Aristotle threaded a golden mean between two excesses. (True/ False)

**Q10:** What is the difference between character and states of character according to Aristotle?

.....

**Q11:** What are the three criteria proposed by Aristotle to distinguish virtuous people from peple who behave in the right way by accident?

.....

**Q12:** Why according to Aristotle act of contemplation is the best human activity?

.....



## 3.11 LET US SUM UP

- Aristotle's Nichomachean Ethics chiefly deals with the guiding question: what is the best thing for a human being? Aristotle says that it is man by virtue of his nature that he/she seeks: eudaimonia (happiness).
- Etymologically, eudaimonia consists of two words, namely, "eu" ("good") and "daimon" ("spirit").
- Eudaimonia cannot be understood in the ordinary sense of happiness, because

1. Eudaimonia is not a psychological state.
2. Eudaimonia is not subjective, it is objective.
3. Eudaimonia is stable.

- Aristotle says that eudaimonia satis?es two conditions which the supreme good must satisfy, ?rst that it is sought for its own sake and secondly that it is by itself su?cient to make life "choice worthy and lacking nothing".
- A further reason for thinking according to Aristotle is that eudaimonia is our only good which is self-sufficient, i.e. it makes life desirable on its own. Eudaimonia is the most desirable thing, and we can't make it more desirable by adding something else to it.
- Aristotle while propagating eudaimonia applied an argument called function argument to show that rationalizing is the distinctive function of human beings. Aristotle concludes that happiness is an excellent rational activity, and he says that a good human life is one in which rational activity is well employed. In other words happiness consists in the rational activity in accordance with virtue, and if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and the most perfect. Thus for Aristotle, the ideal function of human being is the fullest or the most perfect exercise of reason. This means that eudaimonia for a human being is the attainment of excellence (arête) in reason.

- Aristotle's bases eudaimonia on virtue, and therefore his ethical theory is said to be eudaimonistic. However, he says that virtue is necessary but not sufficient for eudaimonia, because while emphasizing the rational aspect of the psyche, he gave importance on the importance of external good such as friends, wealth and power etc.

- According to Aristotle, a virtue (arête) is a trait of mind or character that helps us achieve a good life, which Aristotle argues is a life in accordance with reason. There are two types of virtue - intellectual virtues and moral virtues.

- For Aristotle, virtue is a state of character. Drawing a difference between character and state of character Aristotle states states of character as 'the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions'.

- Aristotle while dealing with the question what kind of state of character is called a virtue says that virtue is a disposition, not a feeling or a faculty. In contrast to feelings, virtues dispose us to act in a certain way. Hence, Virtue is a disposition to behave in the right way.

- Aristotle considers virtue a golden mean between two excesses.

- Aristotle distinguishes between two kinds of reason- practical reason and theoretical reason. He argues that theoretical reason - the contemplation of truth - is what is 'highest' about human beings. Animals have a form of practical wisdom, in that they consider and act on what is best for themselves. But they do not contemplate general truths. Eudaimonia includes excellent activity of theoretical reason, which is philosophy.



## 3.12 FURTHER READING

1) Aristotle (2009), Nicomachean Ethics, trans. David Ross, Oxford University Press, New York.

2) Hughes, J. G. (2001), Aristotle on Ethics, Routledge, New York.
3) Hursthouse, Rosalind (2001), On Virtue Ethics, Oxford University Press, New York.
4) Guthrie, W. K. C. (1990), A History of Greek Philosophy, volume VI, Cambridge University Press.
5) McEvilley, Thomas (2002), The Shape of Ancient Thought, Motilal Banarasidas.
6) Taylor, Richard (2002), An Introduction to Virtue Ethics, Amherst: Prometheus Books

## 3.13 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** a) True, b)True, c) False, d) True.

**Answer to Q No 2 :** Eudaimonia is the highest end according to Aristotle.

**Answer to Q No 3:** Aristotle says that eudaimonia satis?es two conditions which the supreme good must satisfy, ?rst that it is sought for its own sake and secondly that it is by itself su?cient to make life "choice worthy and lacking nothing".

**Answer to Q No. 4.** Aristotle says that we never want to live well in order to achieve some other end. Eudaimonia is the final end which we never seek for the sake of anything else, but only ever for its own sake. Therefore eudaimonia is said to be the final end.

**Answer to Q No 5:** a) True, b) True, c) True, d)False.

**Answer to Q No 6:** Aristotle was concerned with delineating the 'characteristic activity' only of human being. He says that reason is the only capacity of human being, because it sets man apart from other animals. He further says that the function of human being is special, because it is unique only to man.

**Answer to Q No 7:** The following is the core point of Aristotle's function argument:

1. The good for humans is performing their functions well, if they have functions.
2. Humans have functions, and it is an activity of their soul in accordance with reason.

3. So: The good for humans is performing well this activity of their soul in accordance with reason, i.e., performing this activity of their soul in accordance with reason in conformity to the best and most complete excellence.

**Answer to Q No 8:** For Aristotle, happiness consists in the rational activity in accordance with virtue, and if there are several virtues, in accordance with the best and the most perfect. Thus for Aristotle, the ideal function of human being is the fullest or the most perfect exercise of reason. This means that eudaimonia for a human being is the attainment of excellence (arête) in reason.

**Answer to Q No 9:** a) False, b) True, c) True, d)True

**Answer to Q No 10:** The difference between character and states of character is that character has a certain stability and longevity. Character traits last much longer and change less easily than many 'states of mind', such as moods and desires. But character can change, and so it is less stable and long-lived than personal identity. Yet it is central to being the person one is.

**Answer to Q No 11:** Aristotle proposes three criteria to distinguish virtuous people from people who behave in the right way by accident: first, virtuous people know that they are behaving in the right way; second, they choose to behave in the right way for the sake of being virtuous; and third, their behavior manifests itself as part of a fixed, virtuous disposition.

**Answer to Q No 12:** Activity of contemplation is the best activity, because theoretical reason is the best thing in us and with it, we contemplate what is best.

## 3.14 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** What is eudaimonia according to Aristotle?

**Q2:** What is the guiding question that Aristotle deals with in Nicomachean Ethics?

**Q3:** What is the literal meaning of the term 'eudaimonia'?

**Q4:** Is virtue a habit according to Aristotle?

**Q5:** What are the four contenders that Aristotle dismisses in his ethics of eudaimonia?

**Q6:** What is the meaning of the word 'arete'?

**Q7:** What is the meaning of the word 'ergon'?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** How is eudaimonia distinguished from general happiness?

**Q2:** How does Aristotle differentiate between external means and constitutive means?

**Q3:** Why does Aristotle think that virtue is neither passion nor faculty?

**Q4:** Why is virtue considered as a choice by Aristotle?

**Q5:** Why does Aristotle say that eudaimonia includes excellent activity of theoretical reason?

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** How is human good related to Aristotle's eudaimonia? Explain.

**Q2:** Explain Aristotle's Function Argument associated with eudaimonia.

**Q3:** How is virtue connected with traits of character?

**Q4:** Explian Doctrine of the Mean as put forward by Aristotle.

**Q5:** What is the relation between eudaimonia and philosophy? Explain.

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# UNIT-4: ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF HAPPINESS

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

4.1: Learning Objectives

4.2: Introduction

4.3: Aristotle's Concept of Happiness

4.4: Happiness is the highest end of life

4.5: happiness and Freedom of will

4.6: Aristotle's Concept of Eudaimonia

4.7: Conclusion

4.8: Let us sum up

4.9: Further Reading

4.10: Answer to check your Progress

4.11: Model Questions

## 4.1: LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Know what is Aristotle's Concept of Happiness
- Know what is the highest end of life
- Know the differences between voluntary and non-voluntary action.
- Know the relationship between happiness and the freedom of will
- Define Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia

## 4.2: INTRODUCTION

Happiness is the concept, which can be regarded to be the concerned of all ethics. Almost all the ancient thinkers or ethicists tried to claim that the ideals they portrayed the ingredients of a happy life. It is found that in some kinds of ethics like utilitarianism, it is mentioned that an action is regarded to be moral or immoral on the basis of observing the fact that the degrees of happiness created by that act. In the contemporary ethics also, the importance of happiness cannot be ignored. Aristotle has an important viewpoint regarding the concept of happiness. For him, happiness is the

highest virtue of life. In this unit we will particularly discuss about the Aristotle's concept of happiness.

## 4.3: ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF HAPPINESS

According to Aristotle, like all other things of the world, man is a combination of form and matter. Now here one question can be asked, "What is the matter of man?" It is said by Aristotle that a matter of a man includes actually, what is the corporeal religion, living things and specially animals. That is why; the form of a man moulds and transforms in man his physio-chemical activities, vegetative, sex and the senses in man. According to Socrates, this form is nothing but 'reason'. Reason is a distinctive feature of a man. Therefore the highest end of man is to become his highest being or the attainment of goodness or a life of virtue, that is context of goodness. Aristotle vaguely tells it that the highest thing that a man contemplates is 'goodness of God'. In fact this can be regarded to be the highest end of man. Now another question arises here, i.e. what the highest end is, which a man can attain, and then the answer will be nothing but happiness.

## 4.4: HAPPINESS IS THE HIGHEST END OF LIFE

Now one question is found to be aroused here. It is seen that the pleasure is the satisfaction of passion and appetites. Then is it the case that pleasure is the highest end of life? But its answer is nothing but 'no'.

For Aristotle appetites and passion are the matter of ethical life and they have to be regulated by the form, which is for man is 'reason'. That is why pleasure cannot be the end of man. On the other hand, form is the activity which uses to actualize matter towards its highest becoming or end. But appetites and passion are said to be passive potentiality or feeling. So feeling cannot be the highest end of rational man. Hence, pleasure can never be the ultimate end of man's moral life. From the above explanation, it can be said that hedonism is something, which is totally rejected by Aristotle. According to Aristotle man is a living body and a man has to live with his appetites for food, mate, and fear etc. As these particular things are

indispensable activity, so a man should include them in his day to day rational activity. According to Aristotle feeling cannot be the guide of life, but it can be followed as a necessary consequence or accompaniment of man's rational life. In this way pleasure has become a moral pursuit of the entire rational human's life.

According to Aristotle, the pursuit of the highest rational end of man means nothing but to control of one's passion and appetites by reason. This particular act is known as diagnostic. Again it is also seen that Aristotle does not deny the place of personal good as riches, friends, good fortune, health etc. Actually they are auxiliary means for a moral life. Therefore, Aristotle denies cynicism. Cynicism is a mode of thinking which believes that people are generally selfish and dishonest. However, external good fortune is not constitutive, but merely a help for moral life.

The essential of a moral life is the control of appetites and passion by reason and this has to be constantly exercised. This habitual control of appetites and passion by reason is known as virtue. In due course, virtue creates a good disposition and character. This character is an inward organization of settled habit of will which pertains to a good moral life. Hence, neither appetite has to be extirpated, as asceticism wrongly does not maintain, nor, appetites have to be satisfied, as hedonism holds. But appetite should be regulated by reason. This regulation of appetites by reason has to be carried out by moderation and tact. In other words, moderation means an insight into the reasonable desires. It means neither the excess nor the denial of appetites has to be allowed. This is known as the principle of golden mean. Ofcourse this arithmetical term 'mean' that in each case there is some quantitative 'mean'. In each case one has to decide for oneself the mean of rational choice. For example, courage is a mean between bashfulness and shamelessness and so on. This regulation by rule of adopting a mean is greatly assisted by the cultivation of virtue, i.e., by the settled habit of will in the choice of the mean by a rule which a wise man in his practical life would adopt.

## 4.5: HAPPINESS AND FREEDOM OF WILL

Aristotle in this context has also given emphasis on justice. For Aristotle justice does not come under individual ethics, but it comes under state. According to Aristotle justice is something, which can be attained with the help of two processes, they are distributive and corrective. The distributive justice means reward or right activity and the corrective justice can be attained with the help of punishing wrong actions. According to Aristotle that is why only voluntary and not in-voluntary actions can be regarded to be moral. In-voluntary actions are actually spontaneous action. As for example if a mosquito bites us, we automatically use to slap it, or when itching will be started, our hand will automatically go to that place. These actions are called in-voluntary actions. We do not have any control over this kind of actions. So morality does not have anything to do with this kind of action. But so far as voluntary actions are concerned it derives from the agents' own mind. It means what we do; it is totally controlled by my mind or desire. That means voluntary actions always associate with reason of a human brain. In this context Aristotle brings the concept of freedom of will. For Aristotle freedom of will means freedom of choice. There are two uses of choice. That is, either choice can be used as a mean or it can be used as an end. It means choice is the thing, for which action can be done. Here Ross says that Aristotle has actually meant the choice as a mean and not as an end. To attain the end only, 'choice' is used as a mean. According to Aristotle the main end of any human being is the attainment of the ultimate end in life. That ultimate end in life is nothing but the 'goodness' or the 'goodness of God'. Aristotle has said that choice is the mean to attain this end. But another question can arise here? What kind of choice will be the main mean to attain the end? In this regard, Aristotle has maintained that human beings have one peculiar quality, which is not possessed by other rational animal of the world, i.e., the quality called 'rationality'. All of us have the power to use reason. So in order to determine our choice, we should use this rational capacity of us as a tool to determine the right of choice. Hence according to Aristotle, 'choice' is nothing but the choice of 'means'

for the attainment of the highest end in man. So far as Aristotle is concerned, it is found that, he is a great supporter of freedom of will. Aristotle claims that those actions, which can be regarded to be virtuous, are not only voluntary, but also in accordance with rational choice of a human being. That is why, so far as the question of virtue and vice are concerned, according to Aristotle, they are within the power of man. It can be said that moral action or virtuous action of necessity is something, which cannot be regarded to be a performance of man. Because of this reason, Aristotle harshly criticised Socrates for saying that nobody does wrong voluntarily. For Aristotle both virtue and vice are the outcome of free choice. Again Aristotle further criticises for stating that man is only rational. Because, according to Aristotle with rationality man has some animal instincts too. So in this regard Aristotle says that naturally at times, knowing the right course of action a man is overpowered by his passion by means of rational choice.

## 4.6: ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPT OF EUDAIMONIA

According to Aristotle, eudaimonia is the chief good for every man. The term 'eudaimonia' is basically a Greek, word, which consists of two terms, 'eu', which means 'good' and 'dainon', which means 'spirit'. Eudaimonia is generally translated as happiness. This is considered by Aristotle to be the 'self sufficient', 'final' and the greatest end of life. It is also said by Aristotle that this stage of eudaimonia is not a psychological state. It is actually a condition of well being or faring well. But it is also said by him that there is a connection between being happy and having one's life go well. It is already said that man is not only a biological entity, as animatic qualities are possessed by all the lower animals of the world too. Aristotle said that the rational element of every human being is the unique quality. In the book, 'Nicomachean Ethics', Aristotle maintains that the activity of soul exhibiting excellence, and if there be more than one excellence, and if there be more than one excellence, in accordance with the best and the most complete.

## 4.7: CONCLUSION

It is said by Aristotle that goodness of God is the end of a human being and so far as one's moral life is concerned, it can be said that 'happiness' and only 'happiness' is the end of moral life. It is also said by Aristotle that perfect happiness lies in the best activity of a human being, which is also regarded to be contemplative. In fact the idea of best activity comes from the fact that virtuous activities aim at the goodness of God. So in those activities, where we will attain the goodness of God, the element of happiness will also be there. And this happiness, according to Aristotle is the pure and perfect happiness. According to Aristotle, the action or the act, from where pure happiness will come out can also be regarded to be the most virtuous act, as only virtuous act can produce pure happiness and that is the goodwill o God too.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** Man is the combination of what?

……

**Q2:** What is the distinctive feature of man?

……

**Q3:** What are regarded to be the passive potentiality or feeling?

……

**Q4:** According to Aristotle, what cannot be the guide of life?

……

**Q5:** For Aristotle, what cannot be the guide of life?

……

**Q6:** What kind of ethics is regarded to be moral?

……

**Q7:** What is freedom of will means for Aristotle?

……

**Q8:** What is the chief good for every man?

……

**Q9:** In what aspect Aristotle criticises Socrates for saying that nobody does wrong voluntarily

……

**Q10:** When from the voluntary action derives?

……

**Q11:** What does Aristotle mean by the pursuit of the highest rational end of man?

……

**Q12:** What is distributive justice?

……

**Q13:** How can corrective justice be attained?

……



## 4.8: LET US SUM UP

- According to Aristotle, like all other things of the world, man is a combination of form and matter.
- It is said by Aristotle that a matter of a man includes actually, what is the corporeal religion, living things and specially animals.
- The form of a man moulds and transforms in man his physio-chemical activities, vegetative, sex and the senses in man.
- Reason is a distinctive feature of a man.
- Aristotle vaguely tells it that the highest thing that a man contemplate goodness of God.
- Aristotle vaguely tells it that the highest thing that a man contemplates is 'goodness of God'.
- For Aristotle appetites and passion are the matter of ethical life and they have to be regulated by the form, which is for man is 'reason'.

- Pleasure can never be the ultimate end of man's moral life.
- According to Aristotle feeling cannot be the guide of life, but it can be followed as a necessary consequence or accompaniment of man's rational life.
- Ross says that Aristotle have actually meant the choice as a mean and not as an end.
- For Aristotle justice does not come under individual ethics, but it comes under state.
- According to Aristotle, the pursuit of the highest rational end of man means nothing but to control of one's passion and appetites by reason.
- This habitual control of appetites and passion by reason is known as virtue. In due course, virtue creates a good disposition and character.
- According to Aristotle justice is something, which can be attained with the help of two processes, they are distributive and corrective.
- According to Aristotle, only voluntary and not in-voluntary actions can be regarded to be moral.
- Aristotle has maintained that human beings have one peculiar quality, which is not possessed by other rational animal of the world, i.e., the quality called 'rationality'.
- According to Aristotle, 'choice' is nothing but the choice of 'means' for the attainment of the highest end in man.
- Aristotle has said that choice is the mean to attain the end called 'Goodness of God'.
- According to Aristotle, eudaimonia is the chief good for every man, which generally means 'happiness'.

- Eudaimonia is considered by Aristotle to be the 'self sufficient', 'final' and the greatest end of life.

- According to Aristotle, perfect happiness lies in the best activity of a human being, which is also regarded to be contemplative.



## 4.9: FURTHER READING

1) Benn, P. (2006). Ethics. Routledge: Taylor& Francis Group.
2) Frankena, W. K. (1999). Ethics. Prentice Hall of India Pvt Ltd.
3) Masih, Y. (1993). A Critical History of Western Philosophy. Motilal Banarsidass.
4) Sinha, J. (2001). A Manual of Ethics. New Central Book Agency (P)Ltd.
5) Taylor, R. (2002). An Introduction: Virtue Ethics. Prometheus Books.



## 4.10: ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** Man is the combination of Form and matter.

**Ans to Q 2:** The distinctive feature of man is 'reason'.

**Ans to Q 3:** Appetites and Passion are regarded to be the passive potentiality or feeling.

**Ans to Q 4:** According to Aristotle 'feeling' cannot be guide of life.

**Ans to Q 5:** For Aristotle, justice does not come under individual ethics, but it comes under state.

**Ans to Q 6:** Voluntary or not in-voluntary actions can be regarded to be moral.

**Ans to Q 7:** Freedom of will means 'freedom of choice' for Aristotle.

**Ans to Q 8:** Eudaimonia is the chief good for every man.

**Ans to Q 9:** Aristotle has harshly criticized Socrates for saying that nobody does wrong voluntarily.

**Ans to Q 10:** Voluntary action derived from the agent's own mind.

**Ans to Q 11:** According to Aristotle, the pursuit of the highest rational end of man means nothing but to control of one's passion and appetites by reason.

**Ans to Q 12:** Distributive justice means reward or right activity.

**Ans to Q 13:** The corrective justice can be attained with the help of punishing wrong actions.

## 4.11: MODEL QUESTIONS:

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** What is the highest end that a man can attain?

**Q2:** What is the role played by feeling in men rational life?

**Q3:** What is the literal meaning of the term 'eudaimonia'?

**Q4:** What is called Diagnostic?

**Q5:** Define cynicism?

**Q6:** What is the essential of moral life?

**Q7:** Name the two processes with the help of which justice can be attained.

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** Write briefly about Aristotle's concept of form and matter.

**Q2:** Write a short note on the essential of moral life.

**Q3:** Briefly explain Aristotle's concept of 'Eudaimonia'.

**Q4:** What is meant by the principle of golden mean?

**Q5:** Write briefly about the voluntary and the non-voluntary action.

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Explain the concept of Freedom of will.

**Q2:** What does Aristotle mean by the concept of happiness?

**Q3:** Explain broadly the concept that happiness is the highest end of life?

**Q4:** Is happiness is same as pleasure. Explain

*** ***** ***

# UNIT: 5 VIRTUES OF ARISTOTELIAN ETHICS

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


5.1 Learning objectives

5.2 Introduction

5.3 Nature of Virtue

5.3.1 Virtue, knowledge and Habit

5.3.2 Virtue and Happiness

5.4 Virtue - Socrates, Plato and Aristotle

5.4.1 Virtue: The key to Good Life

5.4.2 Similarities and Difference between Plato and Aristotle

5.5 Plato: Cardinal Virtues

5.5.1 Aristotle's Classification of Virtues

5.6 Indian View of Virtues

5.7 Let us sum up

5.8 Further Reading

5.9 Answers to check your progress

5.10 Model Questions


## 5.1: LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Explain the nature of virtue.
- Understand the concept of virtues of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.
- Know about the cardinal virtues of Plato.
- Discuss the similarities and difference between Plato and Aristotle.
- Describe Indian concept of virtues.

## 5.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you about the concept of virtues in Aristotelian ethics. This topic has a significant place in his ethics. A question of high importance in any investigation of ethics is how we can teach people to be good. In this regard Aristotle clearly stated that he does not think virtue can be thought in a classroom or by means of argument. Then his ethics is not

designated to make people good, but rather to explain what is good, why it is good and how we might set about building societies and institutions might introduce this goodness.

For Aristotle, virtue is something that can be learned through constant practice which begins at a young age. We might understand his outlook better, if we recognize the meaning of the word "arete" which is rendered as 'virtue' in most English translations. This term more generally means "excellence." That is why a horseman can exhibit arete in horsemanship without necessarily implying any sort of moral worth in the horseman. It should be obvious to anyone that excellence in horsemanship cannot be learned by reading simply about horsemanship and hearing reasoned argument for how best to handle a horse. Becoming a good horseman requires steady practice.

According to Aristotle, there is no essential distinction between the kind of excellence that marks a good horseman and the kind of excellence that marks a good person generally. Both kinds of excellence require practice first and secondly theoretical study. Thus, the teaching of virtue can be only secondly importance after the actual practice of it.

## 5.3 NATURE OF VIRTUE

Aristotle is on the opinion that ethics in not merely a theoretical study. Unlike any intellectual capacity virtues of character are dispositions to act in certain ways in response to similar situations, the habits of behaving in a certain way. According to him each of the virtue is a state of being that naturally seeks its mean relative to us. Aristotle states that the virtuous habit of action is always an intermediate state between the opposed vices of excess and deficiency. Too much and too little are always wrong. The right kind of action hence always lies in the mean.

Virtue is expressed in the performance of duties. And duties are turned into virtues by habit. The habitant performance of duties leads to virtuous disposition. Thus, virtues refer to acquired dispositions of mind. A

man can be called a virtuous man in one who has acquired a fixed habit of performing duties. Virtue denotes a good character; duty denotes a particular action that we ought to perform. Virtue is the excellence of character, which is the result of the habitual performance of duties. Duties are overt acts in conformity with the normal law or moral ideal. A person does his duty, but he is virtuous. Character is the inner counterpart of conduct, which is its expression. That is why virtue is expressed in duty. And hence duties habitually performed lead to the formation of virtue.

Virtue is the habit of deliberate choice of right actions. Also it is the habit of controlling instincts and impulses and realizing the good of self as a whole. It is an excellence of character too. Aristotle described the nature of virtue is that it is a permanent state of mind, found with the concurrence of the will. It is based upon on ideal of what is best in actual life an ideal fixed by reason. For him, virtue is a permanent acquired disposition in harmony with the morel law. It is a settled habit of willing in conformity with the moral law. Virtue consists in living habitually in the universe of right actions. Moreover, it is a quality of character, determined by the idea of the highest good of the self as a whole. Virtue lives in the performance of duties. Thus, virtue and duty are like the two parts of the same coin. Virtue is the excellence of the inner character and duty in the external expression of a good character and duty denotes a particular kind of action that we ought to perform.



**LET US KNOW**

The central thesis of the Socratic ethic is contained in the formula: "Knowledge is virtue". Right thinking is essential to right action.

## 5.3.1: Knowledge, Virtue and Habit

For Aristotle, a habit is a kind of "second nature" itself, and a determinate power to act in a specific way. Habits can foster the good life by cultivating virtue and by molding the passions to feel pleasure and pain

in the right ways. Aristotle comments that, the man who does not rejoice in noble actions is ever not good, since no one would call a man just who did not enjoy acting justly. Therefore, his account of habit is well- grounded in a synthesis of the rational and emotional elements of moral judgment. For him, the casual connection between good habits and virtue is made in two distinct ways. Firstly, virtues are the states of character, rather than passions or faculties and states of character are created only through a process of habituation. Secondly, virtue requires consistently good choices and a choosing of the action for its own sake. Because good habits give rise to consistent patterns of action and mold the passions to feel pleasure and pain rightly.

Virtue is the habit of good will and also the habit of performing duties. The habitual performance of duties depends upon the knowledge of duties on particular occasions. It also depends upon the knowledge of the ultimate good of the self that determines the duties. Thus we see that virtue implies knowledge or we can say wisdom as well as habit. Hence "Virtue is knowledge"- as said by Socrates and Plato is true. In the same way it is also true as Aristotle says that virtue is habit. Because mere knowledge of the good and duty is a concrete situation does not make for virtue. Knowledge must lead to actions. And knowledge of duties must lead to habitual performance or duties. Virtue without action is a bare potentiality - it is as good as non - existent. For that reason virtue implies both knowledge and habit. In this context we may refer Mackenzie's saying - "virtue is a kind of knowledge as well as a kind of habit."

The virtuous man is one who has knowledge of duties in concrete situations. He also cultivates the habit of performing the duties. Thus it is true that mere knowledge or moral insight does not constitute virtue. It must be accompanied by habit.

## 5.3.2: VIRTUE AND HAPPINESS

Aristotle recognizes happiness as a central purpose of human life

and a goal in itself. As a result of it, he devotes more space to the topic of happiness than any thinker prior to the modern era. He also says that happiness depends on the cultivation of virtue. He convinced that a genuinely happy life required the fulfillment of a broad range of conditions which include physical as well as mental well-being. In this way he introduced the idea of a science of happiness in the classical sense, in terms of a few field of knowledge. Formal definition of happiness is that it is a complete and sufficient good. Happiness satisfies all desires and has no evil mixed in with it and that it is stable.

We have defined happiness formally as the complete and sufficient good for a human being. There are several ways in which Aristotle approaches the question of what happiness consists in. Firstly, he noted that flourishing for plants and animals consists in their functioning well according to their nature. So, one question we should asked here - what is the proper or peculiar function of a human being? Aristotle thinks it obvious that our proper function consists in reasoning and in acting in accord with reason. This is the heart of the doctrine of virtue, both moral and intellectual. Therefore, on this line of reasoning we are led to the conclusion that the possession and exercise of moral and intellectual virtue is the essential elements in our living well.

Aristotle stated that happiness is the principle of action and the cause of all good things. Happiness consists in a complete life lived according to virtue. It is difficult to say whether the happiness of a person after death should depend on the fortunes of his descendants. Another difficulty is that a noble person may suffer external misfortunes which lessen his happiness.

All human activities aim at some end that we consider good. Most activities are a means to a higher end. Then the highest human good is that activity that is an end in itself. That good is happiness. When we aim at happiness, we do so far its own sake, not because happiness helps us realize some other end. The goal of the Ethics is to determine how best to achieve happiness. Aristotle says that a virtuous man must be happy. For

him, happiness is found in fulfilling the functions of a man properly. The characteristic function of man that differentiates him from other animals is his reason. Thus, happiness is to be found in the right exercise of reason. A life of reason implies a settled virtuous character. That virtue is always accompanied by happiness. Virtue is not happiness in itself rather happiness is the index of virtue. It depends upon virtue and external goods too.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** What is the relation between virtue and happiness?

.....

**Q2:** Is habit and virtue related?

.....

## 5.4: VIRTUE: SOCRATES, PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

Although the concept of virtue appears in several philosophical traditions, the roots of the tradition mainly lie in the works of Plato and Aristotle in the west. Even today, the key concepts of the tradition derive from ancient Greek philosophy. These concepts include 'arete' or excellence or virtue, phronesis, practical and moral wisdom and eudemonia.

**Socrates View:**

The central thesis of the Socratic ethics is contained in the formula: "Knowledge is virtue". For him knowledge is the highest good. Right thinking is essential to right action. In order to steer a sheep or rule a state, a man must have knowledge of the construction and function of ship or of the nature and purpose of the state. In the same way, if a man knows what virtue is, unless he knows the meaning of self-control and courage and justice and piety and their opposites, he cannot be virtuous. But on the other hand knowing what virtue is, he will be virtuous. For him knowledge is both the necessary and the sufficient condition of virtue. Without knowledge

virtue is impossible and its possession insures virtuous action. Plato also stated that knowledge of right and wrong was not a mere theoretical opinion, but a firm practical conviction. It is not only a matter of the intellect but of the will also.

Socrates believed that right knowledge is the key to right conduct. "Then if virtue is one of the things in the soul, and if it must necessarily be helpful, it must be wisdom. Since quite by themselves all the things about the soul are neither helpful nor harmful, but they became helpful or harmful by the addition of wisdom or senselessness. Socrates made great effort to define virtue but his real interest was not to define virtue but to make men virtuous.

**Virtue Can Be Taught:**

Virtue is related with 'will' and 'will' becomes virtuous by habit and practice. We believe that it is not by reason but by repeated performance of good deed we gain virtue. But Socrates told that virtue was knowledge and since knowledge was a system and a science it could be thought. Sometimes we give up many bad practices on learning their true nature but this is also a common fact that we know better but do worse.

**Virtue is One:**

The traditional Greek moral theory held that there are four virtues: Wisdom, Courage, Temperance and Justice. But Socrates believed in a single virtue anyhow, and that of knowledge. According to him "Knowledge is virtue of virtues and all virtues were descendants of knowledge.

**Virtue is Great Happiness:**

Socrates said that there can be no happiness without virtue and no happiness is equal to that of virtue. Thus, virtue is the greatest happiness.



**LET US KNOW**

Socrates and Aristotle refer the same view that "virtue is happiness".

**Plato's View on Virtue:**

Plato's views on virtue can be traced from his celebrated work Republic. Because the discussion of the four cardinal virtues i.e. prudence, justice, wisdom and temperance can be found in his Republic. He also claimed that the rational part of the soul or mind must govern the spiritual, emotional and appetitive parts in order to lead all desires and actions to eudemonia. The principal constituent of which is virtue and eudemonia is the classical formulation of virtue ethics. It holds that the proper good of human life is eudemonia, that can be variously translated as "happiness," well-being" or the "good life". This goal can be achieved by a lifetime of practicing the virtues in one's everyday activities. Indeed, such a virtuous life would constitute eudemonia in itself. It should be seen as an objective, not a subjective state, characterized by the well lived life, irrespective of the emotional state of the person experiencing it.

Besides Republic, Plato's concept of virtue can be traced from his work Meno. It is a Socratic dialogue in which the two main speakers, Socrates and Meno, discuss human virtue, whether or not it can be taught, whether it is shared by all human being and whether it is one quality or many? The dialogue beings when Meno was asking Socrates to tell him if virtue can be taught or not. Socrates says that he is clueless about what virtue is and so is everyone else he knows. Meno responds that virtue is different for different people. But, Socrates finds this odd and he suspects that there must be some common virtue to all human being and it is one.

Socrates rejects the view that human virtue depends on a person's gender or age. He leads Meno towards the idea that virtues are common to all people, that temperance and justice are virtues even in children and old

man. However Platonic Ethics is based on the concept that "virtue is a sort of knowledge. That means the knowledge of good and evil that is required to reach the ultimate good and that is what all human desires and actions aim to achieve. It holds that there are three parts to the soul, Reason, Spirit and Appetite, which must be ruled by the three virtues. They are wisdom, courage and moderation. In turn, all these are ruled by a fourth i.e. Justice by which each part of the soul is confined to the performance of its proper function.

In the discussion of Plato's theory of virtue, we found that he considered virtue to be an excellence of the soul.



**LET US KNOW**

Plato has discussed his theory of virtue in his two works. They are Republic and Meno.



**Activity 5.1**

1. How many virtues are there as stated by Plato in his work "Republic"?

Ans: .....
.....
.....
.....
.....

**ARISTOTLE'S VIEW ON VIRTUE:**

Ethics is considered by Aristotle to be practical rather than theoretical study i.e. one aimed at doing well rather than knowing for its own sake.

Aristotle's metaphysics and psychology is from the basis of his theory of ethics, which is the first comprehensive scientific theory of morality. It is an attempt to give a definite answer to the Socratic question of the highest good. For him, the highest good for man is the complete and habitual exercise of the functions which make him a human being. And this is what Aristotle means by the term 'eudemonia' that is translated by the common word 'happiness'. According to Aristotle there is no objection that this word is not interpreted to mean pleasure. Because pleasure accompanies virtuous activity as a secondly effect and thus it is included in the highest good, but not identical with it.

Aristotle defines virtue as "Virtue is a disposition, or habit, involving deliberate purpose or choice, consisting in a mean that is relative to us, the mean being determined by reason, or as a prudent mean would determine it". He again says that a virtue is a trail of mind or character that helps us achieve a good life, and argues that it is a life in accordance with reason. He defines it as "the things in virtue of which we stand well or badly with reference to the passions is the states (trail) of character. Character involves a person's dispositions that relate to what, in different circumstances, they feel and the actions they perform. Moreover what we find pleasant also reveals our character.

Aristotle rejects the Socratic maxim that knowledge is virtue, in the sense that knowledge of the nature of virtue is sufficient to insure virtuous action. He has stated that in addition to knowledge of virtue, we must endeavor to possess and exercise it. Virtue ethics is largely identified with Aristotle and he characterized the virtues as moral and intellectual virtues. Moral virtue includes justice, prudence, fortitude and temperance and theoretical and practical wisdom are included by intellectual virtue. He further stated that each of the moral virtue was a golden mean between two undesirable extremes. Aristotle also taught that virtue has to do with the proper function of a thing. An eye is only a good eye in so much as it can see. Because the propose function of an eye is sight. He reasoned that

human must have a function specific to humans and that this function must be an activity to the 'soul' in accordance with reason. For him moral action is fostered by a normal society and it is difficult for one to receive from his early days a right inclination to virtue unless he is brought up under virtuous laws. Again, these laws are also required to teach us the duties of life when we have come to man's estate. Because, most people are moved by necessity and fear of punishment rather than by reason and the love of nobleness. The state should seek to provide a social environment conducting to the morality of its citizens and when necessary it should empty punishment and other legal devices to enforce morality.

**Virtues and the Doctrine of Mean:**

Aristotle stated that in us a virtue of character is a disposition to feel, desire and choice 'well', which is necessary if we are to live well and so achieve eudemonia. We can feel our passion either "two much" or "too little" but, virtue involves being disposed to filling in an 'intermediate' way, neither too much nor too little. Some people feel angry too often, over too many things or may be whenever they get angry they get very angry, evenat minor things. Other people feel angry not often enough perhaps they do not understand how people take advantage of them. To be virtuous is to feel at the right times, with reference to the right objects, towards the right people with the right motive and in the right way. And this is the Aristotle's doctrine of the mean.

It is important to note that Aristotle's doctrine of the mean does not claim that when we get angry. We should only ever be 'moderately' angry. We should be as angry as the situation demands, which can be feeling angry or only slightly irritated. The very close connection between what we feel and how we choose to act virtues are dispositions of choice as well, and there is a 'mean' for actions as well as for feelings. Practical wisdom helps us to know what the right time, object person and so on is. It is a virtue of reason. The main intellectual virtue concerned with living. Our passions are susceptible to reason. These can be right and wrong ways to

feel passions and the right way to feel passions is determined by reason. If we feel our passions irrationally - at the wrong times, towards the wrong objects etc., then we do not live well. Thus, Aristotle concludes, a virtue is a state of character concern withchoice, lying in the mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a national principle, and by that principle by which the person of practical wisdom would determine it.

**ACQUIRING VIRTUES AND BEING VIRTUOUS:**

After know about what virtues are now Aristotle explains the process of acquiring it. He argues that we acquire virtues of character through 'habit', in particular, the habit from during our upbringing. Aristotle argues to defend his claim, that virtues are not acquired just through teaching. If virtues could be taught directly like a skill, it should be possible for there to be an adolescent 'moral genius' as there can be with other skills like mathematics or gymnastics.

Secondly, he argues that we are not virtuous by nature. Aristotle points out that for what we can do naturally, we first have the potentiality and then exhibit the activity. We are not naturally virtuous, but we are naturally capable of becoming virtuous, just as we are not born musical but can become so. At first, the virtues we get by exercising them, as also happen in the case of the arts as well. For the things we have to learn before we can do them, we learn by doing them.

Aristotle concludes that whether or not we can lead a good life depends a great deal on the habits we form when we are young - in our childhood and early adulthood. Furthermore, because our character is revealed by what we take pleasure in, we need to learn to take pleasure in the things that we should take pleasure in, and be pained by what should pain us. For him, a fully virtuous action is one in which the agent knows what they are doing, chooses the act for its own sake, and makes their choice from a firm and unchangeable character. As we develop in virtue, we understand more about what is good and develop a moral character, so we are more able to meet the conditions for fully virtuous action we will also

need to develop practical wisdom.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q3:** What is a virtuous action according to Aristotle? Is there any similarity between Aristotle and modern concept of virtue?

.....



**Activity 5.2**

2. Describe the process of acquiring virtue according to Aristotle?

Ans: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

After know about what virtues are now Aristotle explains the process of acquiring it. He argues that we acquire virtues of character through 'habit', in particulaVirtue: Past and Present

There are so many similarities between Aristotle's concept of an arete of character and our modern concept of virtue. Both of them are the grounds for calling someone good or bad, for praising or blaming them for what they feel and do. Both are clearly dispositions of feeling and closely related to the sorts of choices people make.

However, there is at least one very important difference between the two. Aristotle's concept of eudemonia is different from acting 'morally' as would understand the term. And so that the virtues he thinks are necessary

for a good life do not match, and ever sometimes conflict with the moral virtues that we might accept. Aristotle has a sense of the best life involving 'cutting a figure' in society, achieving a certain recognition and 'honour'. Morality has since become more closely associated with self sacrifice, and the traits we recognize as virtues more focused on securing welfare for others than recognition for ourselves. Whether this is a good or bad development in the history of ethics can be debated.

### 5.4.1: Virtue: The Key to Good Life

According to Plato and Aristotle our goal in life is to achieve personal well-being and happiness. Aristotle says that we achieve this through functioning well as human beings. In order to function well something needs to possess all the necessary qualities or virtues that will enable it to do so. For example: for a plant to function well it needs those qualities that enable it to successfully grow, flower reproduce etc. According to both Plato and Aristotle, a human being functions well through developing and refining the virtues that enable us to flourish as human beings. This focus on virtues has led to Plato and Aristotle's moral theories being labeled as 'virtue ethics'.

Both of them identify reason as the primary character of the human soul. Therefore, reason takes a central place in their theories of what human should be properly doing with their lives. However, their concepts of soul differ slightly. Plato's theory of the soul is divided into three clear parts with reason the key to living a good life. On the other hand, Aristotle sees human psychology in more complex terms. There is a rational and non-rational side to our soul. These sides are subdivided into many parts, each of which has a corresponding excellence of virtue and each of which is important and necessary for our proper functioning.

Plato explains how virtue or excellence, in a human depends upon all the elements being in balance and each part of performing its purpose functioning. For Plato, this could happen if and only if reason was in control of all aspects of the soul. Thus, spirit guided by reason carefully drives us to

action, and desire when tempered by reason, motivates us and enable us to live a healthy and satisfied life. So, for Plato when reason is in control these are three virtues corresponding to each of the three parts of the soul. They are -

Reason - wisdom

Spirit - courage

Desire - temperance (or self-control)

When all of these three virtues are in place, then a fourth virtue emerges i.e. justice. As such, for Plato behaving morally or justly follows from developing our virtues by ensuring reason moderates our desires and our spirit. Justice is the most important virtue, because it readies us for action.

Aristotle agrees with Plato that in order to function well we need to be virtuous in all aspects of the soul. Moreover, Aristotle believes that there are many virtues corresponding to the different parts, not just three as Plato maintained. As for Plato, the crucial thing for Aristotle is that the rational parts of the soul are in control, and this is the key to becoming virtuous. Aristotle analyses in great detail the many aspects of ourselves that need to be performing at the peak of their capacity if we are to function well as human beings. Aristotle also goes further than Plato in describing in detail what moral virtue or excellence of character is and how we might acquire it. It is a type of characteristic, a personality trait, which we develop through practice, like learning to play the guitar. We are not born virtuous or excellent but we became virtuous through developing good habits.

Moreover, Aristotle argues that someone who is virtuous is someone who tends to avoid the extremes of overreacting or failing to react in a particular situation. It means that when confronted with a situation we do not bottle up our emotions or suppress our drive for action, but nor do we let our feeling come flooding out and completely over-react. Instead, we have to judge how far we should let a particular emotion affect in this particular situation, and consider what would be the most appropriate response to

this situation.

This description of the virtuous person is famously known as Aristotle's doctrine of the Mean. Here 'Mean' refers to 'middle'. But he does not said that we should take the 'middle way' in every situation or act moderately in every situation. Aristotle believed that if you look at the behavior of a virtuous person over their whole life, they will tend to avoid over-reacting or under-reacting.

Thus, for Aristotle, we became virtuous by becoming relative, rational creatures and considering in each situation, what is the appropriate thing to do here? This means drawing on both moral and intellectual virtues. Aristotle believes that through moral education we are able to develop the wisdom that we need to make the judgment of what is the right thing to do. Through hard experience, practice and by looking towards people we admire the role models, we can develop and fine-tune our decision making capacities. Admittedly it is difficult to develop all these virtues, but Aristotle argues that it is only by doing so that we are able to live a properly good life and flourish.



**LET US KNOW**

- Both Plato and Aristotle identify reason as the primary character of the human soul.

## 5.4.2: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PLATO AND ARISTOTLE

Both Plato and Aristotle, in their philosophies developed a significant account of human virtue. Plato provides his doctrine of virtue in his two different works- the Protagoras and the Republic. Through Socrates, in the Protagoras, Plato argues that virtue is knowledge. The argument begins with the premise that everyone wants what he or she believes to be good. It follows that when a person does something wrong or bad it cannot be

because they want to do it, knowing it is bad, it must be that they want to do it, believing to be good. What separates the virtuous person from the un-virtuous is not a desire for what is good, everyone desires what they think to be good, but rather the knowledge of what the good really is. In this view, Plato's conception of human virtue basils down to knowing the good, and being able to correctly choose the action that bring about the most good.

Plato's another account of virtue, found in the Republic, looks upon first glance, to have nothing in common with the view offered in the Protagoras. But after further consideration it can be seen to be in accord with the concept of virtue as knowledge. Plato begins with an argument concerning the human soul. He contends that these are at least three distinct components of the soul and calls them reason, appetite and spirit. Appetite is the part of the soul that is animal like lusting for bodily pleasures and itches, reason that which is concerned with calculations and rational thought and spirit the part associated with emotions. After having established the various parts of the soul, then Plato makes the claim that virtue lies in keeping the components of the soul in the correct relations. Reason should guide the soul, making decisions and determining what is wrong and right, spirit should follow reason and provide motivation and appetite should obey. On this account virtue seems to be nothing but a magic proportion or some soul of balance of the soul, having nothing to do with knowledge or decision making. Taking this point of view, Plato argues that only through a state of the soul in which reason is ruling and which appetite and spirit are in their complying roles can knowledge of the good and hence, virtue is acquired. Then we again find that virtue is knowledge, according to Plato.

Aristotle spells out his account of virtue in the Nicomachean Ethics. Beginning with a discussion about what people mean when they use the notion of virtue in their everyday language and then expending these ideas to the general case. Aristotle contends, the virtue of something is whatever makes the thing do its essential action or function, well. The essential function or action of a particular object is simply that which makes the object what it

is. Aristotle explains that the characteristic action of humans, the action that is unique and essential to being human is living a human life in accordance with reason. He goes on to show that what enables a human to perform his action well, that is, what enables humans to live in accordance with reason well, is a certain state of being or of character. According to Aristotle, this state of character has to do with a person's responses to pleasures and pains under various situations. The virtuous person knows the best course of action takes this course of action and feels pleasure or at least no pain, as a result of taking this action. For Aristotle, human virtue is then this state of the human soul that is the state of the human soul such that the person in this state chooses the correct actions, at the correct lines, for the correct means.

After the discussion of these thinkers view about virtue it is marked that both of them are same in some points. First of all we can see that for Plato and Aristotle virtue is thought of as a stable or unchanging fact of the individual. For Plato, virtue consists in his knowledge of the good. Someone possessing knowledge of the good is able to determine the good in all decisions at all times and thus will be virtuous unconditionally. Thus, according to Aristotle virtue is also seen as an overall properly prescribed to the individual who is virtuous. Plato believes that in order to gain virtue your soul must be in some sort of balance, reason guiding thought and action, with appetite suppressed. And he says that for the achievement of correct balance one must have the correct upbringing. Therefore, for Plato acquiring virtue requires practice and control which lead to the correct proportions of the soul. And Aristotle believes that in order to truly become virtuous one must do the virtuous actions and also take pleasure in the virtuous action that they choose. He explains in the Ethics that exhibiting moderation in nearly every aspect of life and action as though one were already virtuous. It is the ultimate read to the virtuous state. In this way we have seen that along with Plato, Aristotle believes that virtue must be gained through practice and a form of self control.

Besides these similarities, these two views are different in some points. Firstly, the source of virtue for the two philosophers is completely different. For Plato, virtue comes from the form of the good. Virtue is only thought of as a characteristic of the person in so much as they are close to, or come to know the good. Plato leads us to the picture that virtue is an altogether separate existence from the virtuous person. On the other hand, Aristotle stated that virtue is intrinsically intertwined with the virtuous person. Actually virtue is a state of being which aids the person living according to reason.

Another point of difference is in the limiting case. Plato's deep connection of virtue with the form of the good actually makes it impossible for a human being to become virtuous. The human soul can only comes to know the forms truly, including the form of good, after death. Moreover for Aristotle, we find that the virtuous person is indeed possible. If a person is in the state in which they are better to live in accordance with reason, they are virtuous by definition. The fact that human virtue can be actualized is a living human being. Aristotle's conception of virtue is sharp contrast to the Platonic concept.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q4:** State two similarities between Plato and Aristotle regarding virtue?

……

## 5.5: CARDINAL VIRTUES: PLATO

Cardinal virtues are the fundamental virtues and the other virtues are based on them. According to Plato, there are four types of cardinal virtues. They are- prudence, justice, temperance and courage. These virtues are also often translated as, wisdom, fairness, restraint (also called moderation) and fortitude. Plato explains all the four virtues in his work

'Republic' and 'Protagoras'. Prudence is a person's ability to judge his own actions as appropriate or inappropriate. For Plato it is the special virtue of the ruling class. It is deliberative and directive and indispensable for wise government. Justice is the ability to act with fairness and without bias towards others. Temperance is the ability to act with moderation and self control. It is the special virtue of the trends. Courage or fortitude is the power of resisting the fear of pain and the temptation of pleasure. It is the special virtue of the fighting class. And justice includes them all. These virtues were later adopted by St. Augustine as the four cardinal virtues of Christianity.

He is realized when the rulers govern wisely, the soldiers fight bravely and the craftsmen and traders work with energy and thrift. They are also the common cardinal virtues of an individual. Such as wisdom is the virtue of the rational part of the soul. Courage or fortitude is the virtue of the emotional part. Temperance is the obedience of the desires to reason. Justice is the harmonious functioning of intellect, emotion and desire under the guidance of reason.

Prudence is the most important of the four cardinal virtues. The most important part of prudence is knowledge. It is not theoretical knowledge, such as philosophical wisdom, but practical knowledge. It is not only concerned with universal and unchanging truths, but with the singular, unique and variable things of daily life also. Aperson who possesses prudence cannot early impart to other his art of making good decisions. Even he cannot always explain his own processes of thought, but after a long practice he has a feeling or what he should do. Justice is the social virtue. It concerns right relations with others in society. Justice is the virtue whereby we give to each person what is due to him, and we do this consistently promptly and pleasurably. Fortitude is synonymous with courage and bravery. It must be based on justice. The purpose of fortitude is to remove obstacles to justice. Courage and temperance are self-regarding virtues, which bear directly on the life of the individual. Coverage is the power of the will to resist the fear of pain. The virtue of temperance governs our appetites for pleasure. By

nature we desire the pleasure that is suitable to us. A lack of temperance undermines prudence, and if prudence is destroyed all the virtues are undermined.

According to Mackenzie, Plato's cardinal virtues can be accepted as the basis and adapted to the requirements of the modern society. The virtue of wisdom includes care, foresight, prudence and decisiveness of choice. Courage should include both velour and fortitude in which velour is active courage and fortitude is the passive courage. Faith and hope are closely connected with velour and fortitude. Justice is the performance of social duties which includes honesty, love,benevolence, cheerfulness and good humour. All the virtues are the forms of practical wisdom. In this way Mackenzie has established his view about Plato's cardinal virtue.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q5:** Fill in the blanks:-

a) Plato discussed _____ types of cardinal virtue.

b) The most important part of prudence is _____.

c) Fortitude is synonymous with _____ and _____.

d) _____ is a social virtue.

## 5.5.1: Aristotle's Classification of Virtues

According to Aristotle, virtues are of two kinds. They are moral virtue and intellectual virtue. Aristotle says that moral virtues are not innate, but they are acquired by developing the habit of exercising them. Intellectual virtue belongs to the rational soul and includes theoretical knowledge and practical knowledge. And moral virtue belongs to the irrational but conscious part of the soul, and consists in subordinating emotions and desires to reason. Aristotle stated that a morally virtuous action requires an individual to be able to choose how to respond to his or her own thoughts and feelings.

Hence the concept of moral responsibility implies that an individual has some freedom to choose his or her own actions. For him, an individual becomes truthful by acting truthfully or becomes unselfish by acting unselfishly. Aristotle notes that it may be difficult for an individual to become virtuous if he or she has not acquired the habit of acting virtuously.

For Aristotle, the moral virtues include courage, temperance, self-discipline, moderation modesty, humility, friendliness, truthfulness honesty and justice. Temperance is a moral virtue and consists in control of the emotion of fear by reason. Moral virtues are habits of deliberated choice for the realization of the good. They are the mean between two extremes. Justice as a moral virtue includes lawfulness and fairness. Fairness requires that the privileges and responsibilities of persons in a given situation be distributed proportionally and equally. Virtue is also a principal of temperance and moderation. It achieves a mean between the vice of excess and the vice of deficiency of a moral quality. Thus, bravery as a moral virtue achieves a mean between recklessness and cowardice. Generosity as a moral virtue achieves a mean between wastefulness and greed.

According to Aristotle, the intellectual virtues include scientific knowledge, artistic or technical knowledge, intuitive reason, practical wisdom and philosophic wisdom. Scientific knowledge is knowledge of what is necessary and universal. Artistic or technical knowledge is knowledge of how to make things, or of how to develop a craft. Intuitive reason is the process that establishes the first principle of knowledge. Practical wisdom is the capacity to act in accordance with the good of humanity. Philosophic wisdom is the combination of intuitive reason and scientific knowledge. Moral virtues may be combined with intellectual virtues. For example: an individual or society may be combine practical wisdom and justice, or may combine artistic knowledge and moral truthfulness. Aristotle takes the four cardinal virtues of Plato in a narrower sense. Socrates indentified virtue with knowledge. Plato preferred contemplative live to active life and regarded wisdom as the highest virtue. On the other side Aristotle regards virtue as

knowledge and habit both, and virtues and practical insight as inseparable. He regards moral virtue as due to the control of emotions and desires by reason. For Aristotle, that highest good consist in a perfect activity of reason.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q6:** What are the virtues according to Aristotle?

.....

## 5.6. INDIAN VIEW OF VIRTUE

In Indian ethics, the concept of virtue occupies an important place. In a general sense, virtue means perfection of an operative faculty. These faculties are the intellect (theoretical and practical), the will the faculty of the irascible tendency. The Latin term 'virtue' comes from the Greek 'Arete' that means excellence, capacity, and worth. It also comes from 'Vir' (man) and refers originally to virility. And both of them refer to the excellence of man as such. According to the virtuous ethical life is life. The human virtues can be intellectual or moral. The intellectual virtues inhere and perfect the speculative or practical reason. The moral virtues perfect the will and the sensitive tendencies.

Indian theory of virtue means 'Purusartha'. The Purusarthas integrate and subordinate the worldly life to the moral and spiritual life. They enable a man to make his all round development and satisfy all the elements of human nature on the principles of righteousness and morality. There are four types of Purusarthas. They are Dharma, Artha,Kama and Moksa. As a moral value Dharma contains all the principles required to sustain and uphold human existence in its fullness. It implies man's biological, social and psychological sustenance and nourishment. To achieve the higher levels of human existence, 'restrain in order to rise', is the first lesson of Dharma. Dharma means righteousness, goodness, truthfulness and purity in thought,

speech and action. It is the foundation of life. Simple living and high thinking is the basis of Dharma. It acts for the welfare of all creation and holds the entire, universe together. Aristotle is the objective and virtuous pursuit of wealth for livelihood, obligations and economic prosperity. Kama indicates sexual pleasure, but it is not to be exclusively identified with sex only. It is a value provided it is pursued in accordance with moral and social norms. Moksa is the fourth and the highest Purusarthas in Indian virtue ethics. It stands for spiritual principle. It means perfect liberation or eternal happiness. Moksa means freedom from bondage, sufferings, attachment to the objects of desires etc. it is the attainment of perfection through right knowledge and right conduct. It is also the self-realization and god realization which liberates the man from the fear of pains.



## 5.7: LET US SUM UP

- Aristotle states that virtue is something that can be learned through constant practice of it.
- Naturally virtue and duty are related to each other. Because virtue is the excellence of the inner character and duty is the external expression of a good character. Hence virtue is the excellence of character which is the result of the habitual performance of duties.
- More knowledge or moral insight does not constitute virtue. It must be accompanied by habit.
- Happiness consists in a complete life according to virtue. Thus, Aristotle said that happiness is the principle of actions and the cause of all good things.
- The chief point of Socrates theory of virtue is that "Knowledge is virtue". For him virtue can be taught as it is related with 'will' and 'will' become virtuous byhabit and practice.
- Plato considered virtue to be an excellence of the soul.

- Aristotle defines virtue as - virtue is a disposition, or habit, involving deliberate purpose or choice consisting in a mean that is relative to us, the mean being determined by reason, or as a prudent mean would determine it.
- Aristotle said that we can acquire virtue of character through 'habit' in particular, the habits from during our upbringing.
- Past and present views of virtue are similar
- Aristotle and Plato recognize virtue as the key to good life.
- Aristotle classifies virtue as - moral and intellectual.
- The Indian notion of virtue is consists in the concept of "Purusartha".



## 5.8: FURTHER READING

1) Chatterji, Phanibhushan, 1952. Principles of Ethics. Beadon Streit, Calcutta.
2) Sinha, Jadunath, 1973. A Manual of Ethics. New Central Book Agency. Calcutta 9.
3) Thilly, Frank, 1956, A History of Philosophy, Central Publishing House, Allahabad.
4) Lilly, William, 1964. Introduction to Ethics, Methuen.



## 5.9: ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. 1:** Virtue and happiness are related to each other. According to Aristotle, a virtuous man must be happy. For him happiness is found in fulfilling the function of a man properly. Man is different from other animals because of the characteristic function of reason. And happiness is to be found in the right exercise of reason. A life of reason implies a settled virtuous character. That virtue is always accompanied by happiness. Hence both are related to each other. Virtue is not happiness itself; rather happiness is the index of virtue.

**Ans.2:** Yes, virtue and habit are related to each other. According to Aristotle virtue is habit. Because,mere knowledge of good and duty in a concrete situation does not make for virtue. Knowledge must lead to actions.

**Ans.3:** According to Aristotle a virtuous action is one in which the agent knows what they are doing, choose the act for its own sake and makes their choice firm and unchangeable character. Yes, there is a similarity between Aristotle's concept of virtue and modern concept of virtue. As both of them are the grounds for calling someone good or bad, for praising or blaming them for what they feel and do. Again both the views are clearly dispositions of feeling and closely related to the sorts of choices made people.

**Ans.4:** Regarding virtue, Plato and Aristotle are same in some points. They are -

a) For them, virtue is thought of as a stable or unchanging fact of the individual.

b) Both Plato and Aristotle believe that virtue must be gained through practice and a form of self control.

**Ans.5:** a) 4 (four)
b) Knowledge
c) Courage, bravery.
d) Justice.

**Ans.6:** Aristotle classified virtue as two types. They are moral virtue and intellectual virtue.



## 5.10: MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** What is virtue?

**Q2:** What is the nature of virtue according to Aristotle?

**Q3:** In which book, Plato discussed the theory of virtue?

**Q4:** What do you mean by cardinal virtue?

**Q5:** How many virtues are there according to Aristotle?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** Is there any relation between virtue, habit and knowledge? Explain.

**Q2:** Write short note on:

a) Virtue and happiness.

b) Cardinal virtues.

**Q3:** Briefly point out some difference between Aristotle and Plato's concept of virtue.

**Q4:** What do you mean by Aristotle's doctrine of MEAN?

**Q5:** 'Past and present view of virtue is similar'- Discuss.

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** According to Plato and Aristotle, Virtue is the key to good life, how? Explain.

**Q2:** In what way Aristotle represents his concept of virtue? Discuss.

**Q3:** What are the similarities and difference between Plato and Aristotle regarding virtue?

**Q4:** Explain the nature of four kinds of cardinal virtues of Plato?

**Q5:** Discuss Indian views of virtue

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# UNIT 6 PHRONESIS OF ARISTOTLE

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


6.1 Learning objectives

6.2 Introduction

6.3 Theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom

6.4 Kinds of Intellectual virtue

6.5 Three kinds of knowledge

7.5.1 Episteme (Scientific knowledge)

7.5.2 Techne (Skill and craft knowledge)

7.5.3 Phronesis (Practical wisdom)

6.6 Meaning of Phronesis in Aristotle's Ethics

6.7 Practical Wisdom involves four chief factors

6.8 Practical Wisdom is a virtue, not art

6.9 Practical Wisdom is not scientific knowledge

6.10 Relation between Practical Wisdom and Political Wisdom

6.11 Relation of Practical Wisdom to Other Virtues

6.12 Let us sum up

6.13 Further readings

6.14 Answers to check your progress

6.15 Model questions


## 6.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Distinguish between theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom (phronesis)
- Understand various kinds of virtues according to Aristotle.
- Distinguish between theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom (phronesis)
- Explain the meaning of phronesis as explicated in Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics.
- Discuss various important factors coming under the concept of phronesis.

- Know that practical wisdom is a virtue, not art.
- Analyze that practical wisdom is not scientific knowledge.
- Explore the relation of phronesis to other virtues.

## 6.2 INTRODUCTION

This Unit introduces to you the concept of phronesis as expounded by Aristotle in Book VI of Nicomachean Ethics. Virtue comes about by choosing a mean between vicious extremes according to the right principle. This is only as helpful as telling a sick person that health comes about by choosing medicine according to what a doctor might prescribe. That is, we have no helpful understanding of virtue until we learn what this right principle is. But what is this right reason, and by what standard (horos) is it to be determined? Aristotle says that unless we answer that question, we will be none the wiser-just as a student of medicine will have failed to master his subject if he can only say that the right medicines to administer are the ones that are prescribed by medical expertise, but has no standard other than this. Hence Aristotle makes an enquiry into various kinds of intellectual virtues. To learn about the right principle mentioned above, we must examine the intellectual virtues. Phronesis is said to an intellectual virtue.

## 6.3 THEORETICAL WISDOM AND PRACTICAL WISDOM

Aristotle distinguishes between two types of wisdom, namely, theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom. Theoretical knowledge, for Aristotle, is "scientific knowledge, combined with intuitive reason, of the things that are highest by nature" (1141b, Nicomachean Ethics, VI). Theoretical wisdom involves knowledge of necessary, scientific, first principles and propositions that can be logically deduced from them. But Aristotle could see the limitations of theoretical wisdom as mere possession of theoretical knowledge does not necessarily make a person practically wise. Phronesis or practical wisdom, for Aristotle, is the discovery of the link which was missing in theoretical wisdom. In book VI of Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle claims, "This is why we say Anaxagoras, Thales, and men like

them have philosophic but not practical wisdom, when we see them ignorant of what is to their own advantage, and why we say that they know things that are remarkable, admirable, difficult, and divine, but useless; namely, because it is not human goods they seek" (1141a, Nicomachean Ethics, VI). Thus for Aristotle, practical wisdom requires knowing in general, how to live.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) According to Aristotle, phronesis is an intellectual virtue. (True/ False)

b) Phronesis is scientific knowledge. (True/ False)

c) Phronesis is theoretical wisdom. (True/ False)

**Q2:** In which book of Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle deals with the concept of phronesis?

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**Activity 6.1**

- What is the relevance of being practically wise in our day to day life?

Ans: .....

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.....

## 6.4 KINDS OF INTELLECTUAL VIRTUE

According to Aristotle, the soul is divided into a rational part and an

irrational part. The rational part can be further divided into a contemplative part, which studies the invariable truths of science and mathematics; and a calculative part, which deals with the practical matters of human life or it can be said that the calculative part grasps variable things. Right reasoning with respect to the contemplative intellect corresponds to truth. With the practical intellect, right reasoning corresponds to proper deliberation that leads to making the right choice.

Aristotle classified virtues into two kinds: moral and intellectual virtues. Moral virtues, we learn through habit and practice, but intellectual virtues, we learn through instruction. Aristotle divides intellectual virtues into five. Through these virtues one can arrive at the ultimate truth. In the Posterior Analytics and Nicomachean Ethics he identified five intellectual virtues. These five virtues are separated into three classes:

**a) Theoretical**

- Sophia: wisdom (rational intuition and scientific knowledge directed toward the highest and most valuable objects)
- Episteme: scientific knowledge of objects that are necessary and unchanging
- Nous: rational intuition of first principles or self-evident truths

**b) Practical**

- Phronesis: practical wisdom/prudence

**c) Productive**

- Techne: craft knowledge, art, skill

## 6.5 THREE KINDS OF KNOWLEDGE

For a clear understanding of the concept of phronesis we need to have detailed grasping of the following three kinds of knowledge propounded by Aristotle:

### 6.5.1 Episteme (Scientific knowledge)

Aristotle uses the word 'episteme' to mean scientific knowledge. Object of scientific knowledge is of necessity. This means that scientific knowledge, episteme, is of what cannot be otherwise, i.e., necessary and eternal truths.

### 6.5.2 Techne (Skill and craft knowledge)

The Greek work Techne is translated to craftsmanship, craft, or art. People are not often aware of the knowledge they possess or how it can be valuable to others. This kind of knowledge is not easy to share; you have to learn it yourself by practice. A common example is the ability to ride a bicycle if you have an easy written instruction set on how to ride a bicycle please send me a email so can I forward it to my four year old son. This type of knowledge is of very common in software development and comes with experience.

### 6.5.3 Phronesis (Practical wisdom)

Phronesis means practical wisdom in Greek. Aristotle distinguishes between sophia and phronesis. Sophia (translated to wisdom) is the ability to think well about the nature of the world, discovering systems why the world is the way it is. Sophia is the ability to find universal truths and theories.

## 6.6 MEANING OF PHRONESIS IN ARISTOTLE'S ETHICS

Phronesis is a Greek word for a type of wisdom or intelligence. It is more specifically a type of wisdom associated with practical things. It requires an ability to discern how or why to act virtuously and encourage practical virtue, excellence of character, in others. In ancient Greek philosophy phronesis was a common topic for discussion. Due to the practical character of phronesis, it is not generally translated as wisdom or intelligence. Phronesis is therefore often translated as "practical wisdom."

Practical wisdom (phronesis) is an intellectual virtue, a virtue of

practical reasoning. Aristotle draws a distinction between theoretical reason and practical reason. Roughly, theoretical reason investigates what we cannot change and aims at the truth. Practical reason investigates what we can change and aims at making good choices. To make good choices, not only must our reasoning be correct, but we must also have the right desires. The person with practical wisdom deliberates well about how to live a good life. So practical wisdom is 'a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human good'. (1140b, Nicomachean Ethics)



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q3:** State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Contemplative part of the rational soul studies the invariable truths of science and mathematics. (True/False)

b) With the practical intellect, right reasoning corresponds to proper deliberation that leads to making the right choice. (true/false)

c) There are five kinds of intellectual virtues according to Aristotle. (True/ False)

d) Episteme is knowledge of skill and craft. (True/ False)

e) Techne is scientific knowledge. (True/False)

**Q4:** How many parts of soul are there according to Aristotle? What are they?

……

**Q5:** 5. Define phronesis according to Aristotle.

……



**Activity 6.2**

- How is practical wisdom different from other intellectual virtues?

Ans: .....

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## 6.7 PRACTICAL WISDOM INVOLVES FOUR CHIEF FACTORS

Aristotle claims that practical wisdom differs from other sorts of knowledge both because of its complexity and its practical nature. Practical wisdom is said to involve the following factors

1. **Knowing the telos of a role or objective:** While every person has the general telos of eudaimonia , each individual also has a telos that is unique to his/her roles in life. The telos of a teacher is to help students learn and enrich their minds. The teacher must ensure that he is exerting his best possible endeavour to the students. We can see here the application of the concept of final cause propounded by Aristotle. Phronesis therefore is said to be knowledge of how to secure the ends of human life.

2. **Perception:** Practical wisdom, for Aristotle is related to particular situations. To know how to act in a particular situation, we need to minutely perceive and understand the circumstances before us. Therefore doing is always doing some particular action. Aristotle cites an example to show the relevance of knowledge of particular. If a man knows that light meat is digestible and wholesome but does not know

which sorts of meal is light; he is very less likely to end up with something healthy. It is to be remembered here that the perception that practical wisdom involves is to be distinguished from (i) the perception exercised by the five senses and (ii) the perception that a given figure is a triangle. Perception of practical wisdom resembles (ii) more than (i).

3. **Experience:** In the Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle states that "practical wisdom is also of particulars, which come to be known as a result of experience, but a young person is inexperienced: a long period of time creates experience." Aristotle firmly believed that practical wisdom could be gained only through experience. For Aristotle practical wisdom is a skill like carpentry or masonry. You can't just read a book about carpentry and expect to become a master carpenter. You have to go to a shop and start working with tools and wood to be a carpenter. So carpentry is associated with practical wisdom. The more decision one makes, the greater will be the capacity to be practically wise. Thus learning from one's experiences is directly associated with practical wisdom.

4. **Deliberative skills:** According to Aristotle, "the person skilled in deliberating would in general also be practically wise." The heart of practical wisdom is deliberation. Practical wisdom requires that we deliberate with ourselves the best course of action to take in a given situation. It's a skill that we become more adept at through experience.

Deliberation is the application of appropriate reason, through choice, to current situations. Deliberation and choice, taken together, constitute the application and exercise of practical wisdom. Deliberation and choice are thus the bridge between episteme and action. Aristotle remarks that the "origin of action is choice," and that choice is "desire and reasoning with a view to an end"(1139a Nicomachean Ethics). Through choice, reason enters into action in the context of character, desire and situation. Choice involves the following cognitive components - intuition, understanding and judgment. Intuition is our ability to grasp rational principles, understanding is our ability to possible applications to experience, and judgment our ability to

characterize a given set of particulars with the appropriate set of principles. Intuition, understanding, and judgment together form the building blocks for Aristotle's account of phronesis, or practical wisdom. Phronesis is thus our capacity for rational deliberation that results in effective action. It is our complex capacity to exercise these abilities in a coordinated fashion; our ability to make good choices, with good judgment, according to good principles, that result in good action.

Practical wisdom thus involves general knowledge, particular knowledge, ability to reason towards a choice, and an ability to act on that choice. Aristotle thus lays out the skills and attributes a person needs to develop in order to become practically wise.

## 6.8 PRACTICAL WISDOM IS A VIRTUE, NOT ART

There is a distinction between phronesis (practical wisdom) and art. Aristotle says that there is such a thing as excellence in art, but there is no such thing as excellence in practical wisdom. In art intentional error is preferable, but in case of practical wisdom an unintentional mistake to a deliberate one is preferred. Aristotle states that reasoned state of capacity to act is different from the reasoned state of capacity to make. Art is the knowledge of how to make things, e.g., architecture is an art, since it is a state concerned with making something whose origin is in the maker and not in the thing made. One similarity between art and practical wisdom is that both are concerned with variable, which means that they are not concerned with something necessary, but are concerned with the things that can be otherwise.

Aristotle carefully distinguished doing from making because, while doing can involve any action from deliberation to random reactions, art (techne) is well developed science-like bodies of knowledge, such as architecture and cooking, that guide the use of reason in poeisis, or making things. Techne, or "reasoned states of capacity to make," (1140a, Nicomachean Ethics) have several episteme-like characteristics: they follow

accepted practices, develop reproducible strategies, and offer the promise of predictable results. Cooking is a good example of a techne. If a cook follows a particular recipe, according to the appropriate specifications, then something like the anticipated cake should result. Techne is not episteme because the links between recipes and cakes are not as necessary as the links between theorems and triangles. Still, the goal of a techne is to make the "knowledge of things made" as epistemic as possible.

## 6.9 PRACTICAL WISDOM IS NOT SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE

Scientific knowledge is said to be a state of capacity to demonstrate. Demonstration is the activity of marshalling epistemic knowledge into proper argument forms to draw invariable conclusions. Much of Aristotle's logical writing, e. g., Prior Analytics is dedicated to developing the rules and forms for valid argument. However, the knowledge that guides action involves deliberation rather than demonstration because it refers to things whose causes are variable rather than invariable. Here Aristotle relies implicitly upon validity of argument form to describe practical reasoning. Demonstration, which guides scientific knowledge, proceeds from invariable first principles (causes) though premises to conclusions. Since practical reasoning proceeds from variable (or uncertain) first principles, then the conclusions derived from uncertain premises will also be uncertain - "all such things might be actually otherwise" ( 1140a, Nicomachean Ethics). If demonstration is not a practical option, then deliberation, the comparison, sharing and testing of hypotheses about possible action, must characterize the activity of practical reasoning. The role of deliberation is already mentioned previously in the present chapter.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q6:** State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Phronesis does not involve knowledge of telos of role. (True/ False)

b) Phronesis can only be gained through experience according to Aristotle. (True/ False)

c) Phronesis is associated with particular situations. (True/False)

d) Practical wisdom requires that we deliberate with ourselves the best course of action to take in a given situation. (True/False)

**Q7:** Why is Phronesis said to be knowledge of how to secure the ends of human life?

……

**Q8:** What are the four chief factors coming under the concept of practical wisdom?

……

**Q9:** What is the difference between demonstration and deliberation according to Aristotle?

……

**Q10:** How is art different from Phronesis according to Aristotle?

……



## Activity 6.3

- How is deliberation associated with practical wisdom?

Ans: .....

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## 6.10 RELATION BETWEEN PRACTICAL WISDOM AND POLITICAL WISDOM

According to Aristotle, practical wisdom and political wisdom have two aspects, an overarching or controlling one (legislative wisdom, and concern for the general good respectively), and a narrower one. For political wisdom, the narrower one is politics in the everyday sense, i.e., doing things. For practical wisdom, the narrower aspect is concerned with the agent's own good. Practical wisdom is identified with that form of it which is concerned with a man himself-with the individual; and this is known by the general name 'practical wisdom'.

Aristotle contends that practical and political wisdom are closely related, but not identical. "Political wisdom and practical wisdom are the same state of mind, but their essence is not the same" (1141a, Nicomachean Ethics). By this Aristotle means that practical and political wisdom share the same deliberative process, but differ in their domains of exercise. Practical wisdom is concerned with the good of the individual and political wisdom with the good of the state. Aristotle notes the different dimensions of political wisdom: "one is called household management, another legislation, the third politics, and of the latter on part is called deliberative and the other judicial" (1141b, Nicomachean Ethics). The ability to successfully conduct legislation and politics is the work of the statesman, or the leader, and requires the exercise of political wisdom. Under the heading of practical wisdom, Aristotle thus distinguishes between personal practical wisdom and political practical wisdom.

## 6.11 RELATION OF PRACTICAL WISDOM TO OTHER VIRTUES

Practical wisdom is related to virtue. Here a question can be posed: living a good life is a matter of being good, and this involves the virtues. So what is the necessity of practical wisdom? The answer can be formulated in this way: the virtues (justice, courage, generosity, etc.) set our ends. Because

we are virtuous, we aim at the good life, and we have a reliable conception of what this is (it involves justice, courage, generosity, etc.). But that isn't enough to live a good life, because it doesn't tell us what is good (courageous, etc.) in this particular situation. For that, we need practical wisdom to identify the (constitutive) means to our virtuous ends.

Aristotle draws a distinction between acting in accordance with a virtue and doing a fully virtuous action. A fully virtuous action is one in which the agent knows what they are doing and chooses the act for its own sake. Both this knowledge and this kind of choice depend on having practical wisdom. The knowledge involves understanding what is good in this situation, and choice depends upon deliberation, and good deliberation involves practical wisdom. So acting virtuously requires practical wisdom.

Aristotle draws a distinction between 'natural' virtue and 'full' virtue. He allows that we can have good dispositions from birth, e.g. someone might be naturally kind. But this doesn't amount to 'full virtue'. A naturally kind child may not fully comprehend the nature of his/her action, and may become kind for some wrong reason. Without practical wisdom, we cannot possess full virtue. Practical wisdom involves having general knowledge about what is good. This depends upon being virtuous, because what appears good to someone depends on their character traits. So on Aristotle's theory, we become both good and practically wise together.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q11:** How is practical wisdom different from political wisdom?

.....

**Q12:** How does Aristotle draw a distinction between acting in accordance with a virtue and doing a fully virtuous action?

.....



## 6.12 LET US SUM UP

- Aristotle defines a virtue as 'a state of character concerned with choice, lying in the mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that principle by which the person of practical wisdom would determine it'. So what is practical wisdom (phronesis)? Phronesis is one of the five intellectual virtues according to Aristotle.

- Practical wisdom is not theoretical wisdom. There is a difference between theoretical wisdom and practical wisdom. Whereas theoretical wisdom is often abstracted from action, practical wisdom is the kind of knowledge and capacity that guides action.

- There are five intellectual virtues according to Aristotle. They are: 1. Sophia: wisdom (rational intuition and scientific knowledge directed toward the highest and most valuable objects), 2. Episteme: scientific knowledge of objects that are necessary and unchanging, 3.Nous: rational intuition of first principles or self-evident truths, 4. Phronesis: Practical knowledge, 5. Techne: Craft and skill.

- There are three kinds of knowledge according to Aristotle: Episteme (scientific knowledge), Techne(craft and skill knowledge), phronesis (practical wisdom).

- Phronesis, or practical wisdom, refers to an individual's capacity to discern what is worth doing together with the ability to get it done, a "reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human good" (1140b, Nicomachean Ethics).Practical reason investigates what we can change and aims at making good choices. Phronesis is the ability to realize how a specific goals or value is reached. Phronesis includes aspects of a situation, critical analytical reflection and for scrutinizing knowledge systems, practices and impacts of goals which easily are take for granted.

- Phronesis is said to incorporate four chief factors within it. They are:

a. Phronesis is said to be knowledge of how to secure the ends of human life.

b. Phronesis is associated with the knowledge of particulars.

c. Phronesis is gained only through experience.

d. The person skilled in deliberating would in general be regarded to be practically wise.

- Aristotle says that phronesis is a virtue and not art. For Aristotle, there is such a thing as excellence in art, but there is no such thing as excellence in practical wisdom. In art intentional error is preferable, but in case of practical wisdom an unintentional mistake to a deliberate one is preferred. Aristotle states that reasoned state of capacity to act is different from the reasoned state of capacity to make.

- Practical wisdom is not scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is demonstrative, while practical wisdom is deliberative. The knowledge that guides action involves deliberation rather than demonstration; and practical wisdom is related to action.

- According to Aristotle, practical wisdom and political wisdom, though they are connected, are not identical. By this Aristotle means that practical and political wisdom share the same deliberative process, but differ in their domains of exercise. Practical wisdom is concerned with the good of the individual, while political wisdom is with the good of the state.

- Practical wisdom involves having general knowledge about what is good. This depends upon being virtuous, because what appears good to someone depends on their character traits. So on Aristotle's theory, we become both good and practically wise together.



## 6.13 FURTHER READING

1) Aristotle (2009), Nicomachean Ethics, trans. David Ross, Oxford University Press, New York.

2) Hughes, J. G. (2001), Aristotle on Ethics, Routledge, New York.
3) Hursthouse, Rosalind (2001), On Virtue Ethics, Oxford University Press, New York.
4) Guthrie, W. K. C. (1990), A History of Greek Philosophy, volume VI, Cambridge University Press.
5) McEvilley, Thomas (2002), The Shape of Ancient Thought, Motilal Banrasidas.
6) Taylor, Richard (2002), An Introduction to Virtue Ethics, Amherst: Prometheus Books

## 6.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** a) True, b) False, c) False

**Ans. to Q. No. 2.** In book VI of Nicomachean Ethics Aristotle deals with the concept of phronesis.

**Ans. to Q. No.3.** a) True, b) True, c) True, d) False, e) False

**Ans. to Q. No 4.** According to Aristotle, soul is divided into two parts: rational and irrational.

**Ans. to Q. No 5.** Aristotle defines practical wisdom as 'a reasoned and true state of capacity to act with regard to human good'. (1140b, Nicomachean Ethics)

**Ans. to Q. No 6.** a) False, b) True, c) True, d) True

**Ans. to Q. No 7.** While every person has the general telos of eudaimonia, each individual also has a telos that is unique to his/her roles in life. The telos of a teacher is to help students learn and enrich their minds. The teacher must ensure that he is exerting his best possible endeavour to the students. We can see here the application of the concept of final cause propounded by Aristotle. Phronesis therefore is said to be knowledge of how to secure the ends of human life.

**Ans. to Q. No 8.** Phronesis involves the following chief factors

a. Phronesis is said to be knowledge of how to secure the ends of human life.
b. Phronesis is associated with the knowledge of particulars.

c. Phronesis is gained only through experience.

d. The person skilled in deliberating would in general be regarded to be practically wise.

**Ans. to Q. No 9.** Practical wisdom is not scientific knowledge. Scientific knowledge is demonstrative, while practical wisdom is deliberative. The knowledge that guides action involves deliberation rather than demonstration; and practical wisdom is related to action.

**Ans. to Q. No 10.** Aristotle says that phronesis is a virtue and not art. For Aristotle, there is such a thing as excellence in art, but there is no such thing as excellence in practical wisdom. In art intentional error is preferable, but in case of practical wisdom an unintentional mistake to a deliberate one is preferred. Aristotle states that reasoned state of capacity to act is different from the reasoned state of capacity to make.

**Ans. to Q. No 11.** Practical wisdom is concerned with the good of the individual, and political wisdom with the good of the state.

**Ans. to Q. No 12.** Aristotle draws a distinction between acting in accordance with a virtue and doing a fully virtuous action. A fully virtuous action is one in which the agent knows what they are doing and chooses the act for its own sake. Both this knowledge and this kind of choice depend on having practical wisdom. The knowledge involves understanding what is good in this situation, and choice depends upon deliberation, and good deliberation involves practical wisdom. So acting virtuously requires practical wisdom.

## 6.15 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** What is the literal meaning of the term 'phronesis'?

**Q2:** Why is it said that phronesis is practical wisdom and not theoretical wisdom?

**Q3:** Why is Phronesis said to be an intellectual virtue?

**Q4:** Define episteme.

**Q5:** Define Techne.

**Q6:** Why is phronesis not said to be an art?

**Q7:** Why is phronesis is not scientific knowledge?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** Write short note on Phronesis

**Q2:** Write a short note on three kinds of knowledge according to Aristotle.

**Q3:** Distinguish between phronesis and art

**Q4:** Distinguish between Phronesis and political wisdom.

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** What are the different dimensions of the Aristotle's concept of Phronesis?

**Q2:** Describe various factors coming under the concept of Phronesis.

*** ***** ***

# UNIT 7: THE THEORIES OF MORAL STANDARDS: HEDONISM

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


7.1 Learning Objectives

7.2 Introduction

7.3 Hedonism in Moral Philosophy

7.4 Classification of Hedonistic Theories

7.5 Psychological Hedonism

7.5.1 Critical Comments on Psychological Hedonism

7.6 Ethical Hedonism

7.6.1 Critical Comments on Ethical Hedonism

7.7 Egoistic Ethical Hedonism

7.7.1 Gross Egoistic Ethical Hedonism

7.7.2 Refined Egoistic Ethical Hedonism

7.7.3 Criticism

7.8 Altruistic or Universalistic Gross Hedonism: Bentham

7.8.1 Criticism

7.9 Altruistic or Universalistic Refined Hedonism : J. S. Mill

7.9.1 Criticism

7.10 Let Us Sum Up

7.11 Further Readings

7.12 Answers to Check Your Progress

7.13 Model Questions


## 7.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- define Hedonism,
- discuss different types of Hedonistic Theories,
- explain Psychological Hedonism,
- discuss Ethical Hedonism,
- elaborate Bentham's Gross or Quantitative Utilitarianism,
- make critical comments on Gross Utilitarianism.

- elaborate J. S. Mill's Refined or Qualitative Utilitarianism,
- make critical comments on Refined Utilitarianism.

## 7.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you that ethical theory which propounds that we always desire pleasure. Pleasure is the only object of desire, good or bad. You should remember that in Moral Philosophy or in Ethics actions are judged as good or bad by reference to the supreme end of life. Do you know how actions are judged as good or bad? Any action which is conducive to consistent with the supreme end of life is judged as good. Again, any action which is not conducive to or inconsistent with the supreme end of life is judged as bad. There are many ethical thinkers like Bentham. Mill etc., who have propounded that 'Pleasure is the supreme end of life or Summum Bonum of man'

## 7.3 HEDONISM IN MORAL PHILOSOPHY

The word Hedonism is derived from the Greek word 'Hedone' which means pleasure. The Moral philosophy which advocates that 'Pleasure is the supreme end of life' is known as Hedonism. The thinkers of this theory are known as Hedonists. Aristippus, **Epicurus**, Bentham and Mill are the important philosophers of the Hedonistic school. All these thinkers have accepted the importance of feeling in human life. Feeling is the highest function of mind. Hedonist thinkers have accepted that those feelings are good which give pleasure in human life. Therefore, Hedonistic Ethics is called the 'Ethics of Sensibility'.



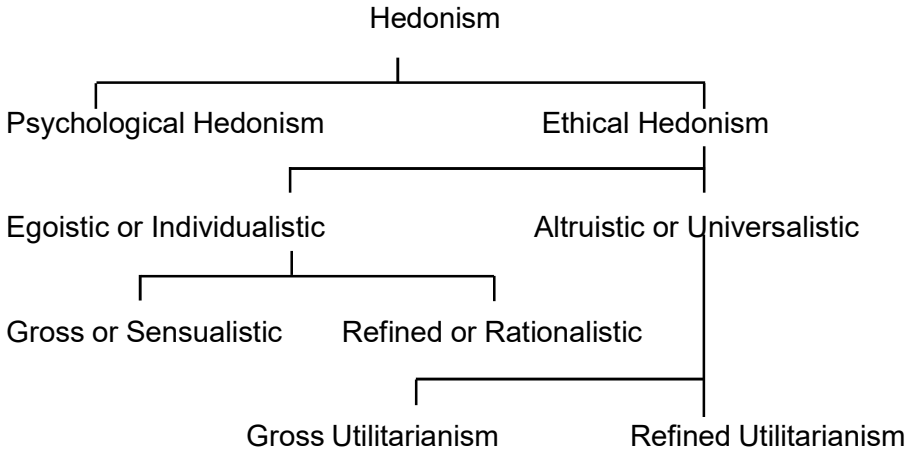
***Epicurus*** (341-270 BC) recognizes that reason is most fundamental in the conduct of life.

## 7.4 CLASSIFICATION OF HEDONISTIC THEORIES

Hedonism is broadly classified into two categories. They are Psychological Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism. Again, Ethical Hedonism is broadly classified into two categories. They are: Egoistic or Individualistic, and Altruistic or Universalistic. Egoistic Hedonism is further classified into Gross or Sensualistic Hedonism and Refined or Rationalistic Hedonism.

While Altruistic is further classified into Gross Utilitarianism and Refined Utilitarianism.

Classification of Hedonism is given in the following table:




## 7.5 PSYCHOLOGICAL HEDONISM

Psychological Hedonism advocates that 'Pleasure is the natural object of desire'. We always seek pleasure and avoid pain. Pleasure is defined as the natural end and motive of human action. According to this theory individuals desire things only for the purpose of seeking pleasure. Therefore, things are not desired for their own purpose.

The chief exponents of this theory in ancient time were Cyrenaics. They are the followers of Aristappus of Cyrene. According to the Cyrenaics we always seek pleasure and avoid pain because 'Pleasure is the natural object of desire.' Their main concern was to live a good life. It was an ethical concern. They advocated that a life of pleasure led rationally should be the ideal.

Again, the modern exponents of this theory are Bain, Jeremy Bentham and J.S.Mill. Bentham upholds that the fundamental motives of our actions are both pleasure and pain. In life we always aim at attaining this fundamental motive. But, for J.S.Mill we, only desire pleasure. Things are desired only for the attainment of pleasure.

### 7.5.1 Critical Comments on Psychological Hedonism

Psychological Hedonism is criticized because of its two fundamental doctrines. They are :

1. Pleasure is the ultimate object of every desire.
2. Humane choice is always determined by the idea of pleasure.

Criticism on Psychological Hedonism is elaborated below:

a) Critics here are of the opinion that Psychological Hedonism is based on un-psychological mental process. So it is un-psychological in nature. You know that there is a psychological mental order when we seek for any desired object. It follows as, (i) want (ii) desire of an object (iii) desire to attain the object (iv) the feeling of pleasure. But in Psychological Hedonism this mental order is not followed. When we desire pleasure and not things for their own sake then it contradicts the theory that we normally desire an object and pleasure follows as a result. Psychological Hedonism fails to explain that how pleasure is desired beforehand (i.e. before the object is desired.) Critics hold that pleasure is the result of the satisfaction of a desire which is directed to an object. Happiness is the result of the attainment of an object. For example, we may desire for wealth, good health, name and fame. Here we primarily desire for the object and pleasure follows as a consequence of its fulfillment.

b) Again, if pleasure is the only motive of human action as Psychological Hedonism advocates, then Critics point out that more we try to attain happiness or pleasure, the less we achieve it. Critics hereby comment that when we are more disinterested for pleasure we obtain pleasure more easily. Hence, ordinarily speaking, any conditional or selfish human action can never give pleasure or happiness. It is only unconditional or self-less human action that can give ample pleasure or happiness in life. Even Mill observes that those are happy who have not fixed their mind on some object other than their own happiness.

Critics like Sidgwick and Rashdall comment that this is the paradox

of Hedonism. Do you know what paradox means? Paradox means 'self contradictory statement'. So the Hedonistic conclusion 'Pleasure is the supreme end of life' is self-contradicted if we accept the above explanation that pleasure is possible if we do not run after it. Sidwick adds his comment in this regard that the complexity in Psychological Hedonism arises because 'predominating impulse towards pleasure actually defeats its own aim.'

Rashdall justifies his own opinion on the complexity of Psychological Hedonism by saying that it involves a 'hysteron proteron'. This means 'the cart before the horse'. Rashdall puts that in Psychological Hedonism pleasure is put before the object … … the 'hysteron proteron' The effect is put before the cause. It is true that the satisfaction of a desire brings pleasure but it is always not the fact that the object is desired because it is thought to be pleasurable.

c) The word pleasure itself is ambiguous because of two reasons. They are as follows:

i) the word pleasure is usually used to mean the feeling of satisfaction arising from the attainment of some object

ii) the word pleasure is sometimes used to mean an object that gives pleasure.

In the second condition we refer to a concrete object that gives us pleasure. This view is not objected to because whenever we desire an object and the attainment of it gives us pleasure. The problem is when we speak of pleasure in reference to an object because we mean here the feeling of pleasure or satisfaction which the object brings with it after its attainment. This shows that we always desire some object and the attainment of it is accompanied by a feeling of pleasure or happiness. Therefore, we desire the object and do not desire the pleasure.

d) Psychological Hedonists cannot distinguish between 'pleasure in idea' and 'the idea of pleasure '. Parents take pleasure in self-sacrifice for their children's good. But self-sacrifice is the basic motive of their action.They are prepared to sacrifice their own self-interest for the

betterment of their children which is their motive. So you can understand why pleasure cannot be the natural object of desire and as such Psychological Hedonism is not accepted as a satisfactory Ethical Theory.



**Activity 7.1**

1. What do you mean by hedonism? Discuss.

Ans: .....

.....

.....



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** Name the thinkers who have supported Psychological Hedonism in modern times.

.....

**Q2:** Define Psychological Hedonism. (Answer in about 20 words)

.....

**Q3:** State whether the following statements are True or False

a) In Psychological Hedonism pleasure is accepted as the natural end and motive of human action (True/False).

b) Psychological Hedonism is not related simply with a statement of fact. (True/False).

c) The Greek word 'hedone' means pleasure. (True/False)

d) Hedonism advocates that pleasure is the supreme end of life. (True/False)

**Q4:** What are the two main forms of hedonism?

.....

## 7.6 ETHICAL HEDONISM

After going through the table of the classification of Hedonism you can understand that Ethical Hedonism is another type of Hedonism.

Ethical Hedonism advocates that we ought to seek pleasure. These thinkers hold that 'Pleasure is the proper object of our desire'. The Hedonist thinkers like Bentham and J. S. Mill have developed their Ethical thinking on Psychological Hedonism. We find an element of difference in Sidgwick's thinking. He has not developed his Ethical Hedonism on Psychological Hedonism. Why, do you know? The reply is, for Sidgwick, pleasure is the reasonable subject of our desire.

### 7.6.1 Critical Comments on Ethical Hedonism

Let us now discuss the critical comments on ethical Hedonism :

The fundamental principle in the doctrine of Ethical Hedonism is in identifying value with pleasure. This identification is strongly criticized. We can never say that pleasure is the only value of an object. We can never identify value with pleasure. Let us consider, for example, virtue, beauty, knowledge etc. When these are attained we feel pleasure and when we fail to attain them we feel pain. So you can see that here pleasure is not identified with value.



***Sentient :*** Capable of being perceived or felt.
***Transient :*** Lasting only for a short time.

Actually value depends on the object of desire. Pleasure and pain need to be defined. Pleasure is the feeling of positive value; on the other hand pain is the sense of negative value. Pleasure, therefore, is the sign of value. It is not the value itself. You can understand why we cannot identify pleasure with value. Pleasure is **sentient** and **transient** while happiness is rational and abiding.

Moreover pleasure cannot be considered as the ultimate value of any object. Here Rashdall, holds that pleasure is one of the values of any object. Pleasure according to Rashdall is inferior to knowledge, beauty and virtue. Virtue is the highest value when compared with happiness, knowledge

and beauty.



**Activity 7.2**

1. What do you mean by hedonism? Discuss.

Ans: .....

.....

.....

2. Is psychological hedonism satisfactory? What do you think? Discuss.

Ans: .....

.....

.....



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q5:** Does Sidwick develop Ethical Hedonism on Psychological Hedonism?

.....

**Q6:** What are the different types of Ethical Hedonism?

.....

**Q7:** State whether the following statements are True or False:

a) Ethical Hedonism identifies value with pleasure. (T/F)

b) Sidwick advocates that pleasure is not the reasonable object our desire. (T/F).

## 7.7 EGOISTIC ETHICAL HEDONISM

According to Egoistic Ethical Hedonism, 'Pleasure of the individual

is the moral standard'. This theory advocates that every person ought to seek his own greatest pleasure. The doctrine of this theory is that when an action promotes the agent's own greatest happiness, that action is good. Again, when an action does not promote the agent's own greatest happiness, that action is bad. Two factors are taken into consideration while justifying the quality of pleasure. They are: intensity and duration. Egoistic Ethical Hedonism are sub-divided into Gross Egoistic Ethical Hedonism and Refined Egoistic Ethical Hedonism.

### 7.7.1 Gross Egoistic Ethical Hedonism



***Aristippus :*** (c.435-c.355 BC) Greek Philosopher, a follower of Socrates

***Thomas Hobbes :*** Thomas (1588-1679) English political philosopher.

***Mandeville :*** Bernard(1670-1733) Main Book, The Feeble of the Bees

***Helvitius:*** Claude-Adrien(1715-71)French Enlightenment philosopher.

Gross or Sensualistic Egoism is found in the teachings of Aristippus. **Aristippus** advocates that 'the only good of life is the individual's own pleasure'. All pleasures are alike in kind. Pleasures differ only in intensity or degree and duration. So he recognizes no qualitative differences among pleasures. The dictum of this Sensualistic Egoism is 'Let us eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we may die'. According to **Thomas Hobbes** man thinks only for himself. He naturally seeks his own pleasure and avoids pain.

In modern time Sensualistic Egoism has been propounded by **Mandeville** and **Helvetius**. Both of these thinkers share the same philosophy. They state that 'self-love is the only virtue for man'.

### 7.7.2 Refined Egoistic Ethical Hedonism

Refined Egoistic Ethical Hedonism is found in the teaching of Epicurus. He advocates that reason is the proper guide for the attainment of true happiness. Epicurus prefers mental pleasure than physical pleasures. The reason is that mental pleasure is more pure and un-mixed with pain. The dictum of his ethical thinking is: 'happiness is possible not in cultivating our capacities of enjoyment but by reducing our wants and desires'.

### 7.7.3 Criticism

Let us now turn to the criticism of Gross Refined Ethical Hedonism

a) Both Gross and Refined Ethical Hedonism have been criticized because critics opine that these theories actually depend on Psychological Hedonism. The fundamental paradox of Hedonism: 'impulse towards pleasure, if too predominant, defeats its own aim' is present in these two Hedonistic theories.

b) You know that human nature involves **egoistic** element but he has in him **altruistic** elements also. Hence pleasure is always relative and can never be universalized. In Egoistic Hedonism morality itself is in question because it has failed to provide us with an uniform standard of morality. There is no criterion to judge our action as right or wrong because for the Gross Ethical Hedonists, 'Happiness or bliss means the highest possible amount of physical pleasure.'

c) Refined Egoism is undoubtedly more reflective than sensualistic egoism. Refined Egoism Recognizes the function of reason in moral life because it does not regard momentary pleasure as the highest good of life.



***Egoistic :*** One who believes that our actions are caused by a Wish to benefit ourselves.
***Altruistic :*** Believing in welfare and happiness of others rather than one's own.

## 7.8 ALTRUISTIC ETHICAL HEDONISM– BENTHAM



***Bentham, Jeremy :*** (Feb15,1748-June 6, 1832) British Philosopher, Jurist, Social reformer and the founder of modern utilitarianism.

Bentham's Ethical Theory is known as Altruistic Ethical Hedonism or Universalistic Hedonism. But it is Gross or Quantitative Utilitarianism in nature. According to Bentham, universal pleasure is the supreme end in moral life. You know that Utilitarianism means that the ultimate standard of morality is 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number'. This dictum is present in Bentham's theory of Utilitarianism. But it is Gross in nature because of two fundamental principles. They are as follows:

1. Bentham justifies that 'the only standard of value is quantity'.
2. For Bentham, man is naturally egoistic

Bentham does not admit any qualitative differences among pleasure. For e.g. purity is not any superior quality. Bentham defines pleasure as pure when it is unmixed with pain. Again, he defines pain as pure when it is unmixed with pleasure. Hence, this view of Bentham makes his Utilitarianism

as Gross in nature. Moreover Bentham's Hedonism is 'Altruistic' only because he considers 'extent of pleasure'. By 'extent of pleasure' he means dimension of pleasure i.e. we ought to aim at universal happiness. Do you know what Hedonistic Calculus is? Hedonistic Calculus means that we have to calculate pleasure and pain equally. Bentham advices us to: "Weigh pleasures, weigh pains and as the balance stands, will stand the question of right and wrong".

### 7.8.1 Criticism

The basic criticism is that Bentham's Gross Utilitarianism is criticized by many thinkers. His theory of Egoistic Hedonism or Individualistic can never be Altruistic or Universalistic in nature.

- According to the critics Bentham's Gross Utilitarianism is based on psychological postulate… 'an individual is bound by his very nature', In this case the desire for 'general happiness' becomes a burden on the theory itself. How can a self-interested individual think for the welfare of the society?
- The critics also point out that the Gross nature arises because he did not recognize the qualitative difference of pleasures.
- Bentham's emphasis on the extent of pleasure makes the hedonistic calculus very difficult. It is just next to impossibile to calculate the pleasures of others. If we do so then we have to provide a new standard of value which can justify our own pleasure as well as other's pleasure. Hedonism never supports to calculate the pleasure of all mankind.



***Mill, J. S. :*** (May 20, 1806-May 8, 1873) English Philosopher, political economist, civil servant and a proponent of utilitarianism.

## 7.9 ALTRUISTIC OR UNIVERASLISTIC REFINED HEDONISM– J. S. MILL

J. S. Mill advocates Altruistic Hedonism. His theory is refined or qualitative in nature. Mill's theory of Altruistic Hedonism is also called Utilitarianism. The dictum of his ethical theory is that 'the standard is not the individual's happiness but happiness for all.' This is the qualitative value and the ethics of utility. J. S. Mill admits that 'The happiness which forms

the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned. In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility. To do as one would be done by, and to love one's neighbor as oneself constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality. (Utilitarianism, Ch.II, pp.24, 25)

You can raise two questions:

A. How can we prove that 'general happiness is desirable'?
B. What makes us to promote 'the general happiness'?

- In reply to the first question (A) Mill says that happiness is good. One's happiness is good to that individual and therefore general happiness is good to all mankind.

- Again, in reply to the second question (B) Mill says that the agent's happiness lies not in one's own but in general happiness. So every individual must promote 'the general happiness'. Mill holds that in Utilitarianism an individual must do self-less, i.e. desireless, activities because, according to him, an individual must be an impartial and benevolent spectator in selecting his own happiness and that of others.

### 7.9.1 Criticism

Mill's theory of Altruistic hedonism has been subject to following criticisms.

A. Altruistic or Universalistic Refined hedonism of J. S. Mill has been criticized by many thinkers. Martineau here points out that there cannot be transition from one to all. It is impossible to move from Egoism to Altruism. "From 'each for himself' to 'each for all'— no road"

B. Mill's argument for proving that 'general happiness is desirable' is also wrong. It is true that we desire our own happiness but it does not follow logically that we should desire happiness for all. A person desires to earn money for himself. He may desire to share his money with others but that does not logically follow that he must make all happy while

sharing his money with all. Utilitarianism, therefore, fails to give us sufficient ground of moral obligation.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q8:** Who is the main advocate of Altruistic or universalistic refined hedonism?

……

**Q9:** Define altruistic ethical hedonism? (Answer in about 70 words)

……

**Q10:** What is altruistic or universalistic refined hedonism? (Answer in about 60 words)

……

**Q11:** Fill in the blanks :

a) For Banthum man is naturally .....

b) According to Benthum and Mill ..... is the ..... in morals.

c) Banthum advocates ..... utilitarianism.

d) J. S. Mill advocates ..... utilitarianism.



## 7.10 LET US SUM UP

The following discussion has dealt with hedonism in all its aspect. The following points stand out as central to our discussion.

- Hedonism advocates that pleasure is the end of life.
- Hedonism is divided into Psychological Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism.
- Psychological hedonism advocates that pleasure is the natural object of desire.
- Psychological Hedonism has been criticized by many thinkers because

according to this theory pleasure pre-supposes the desired object. But according to the critics the attainment of any desired object gives us pleasure.

- Sidgwick has not developed his Ethical Hedonism on Psychological Hedonism. According to him, pleasure is the reasonable subject of our desire.

- Rashdall, while criticizing Ethical Hedonism, holds that pleasure or happiness can be considered as one of the values of an individual. Pleasure cannot be the only value of our life. He considers virtue as the highest value in comparison to happiness, knowledge and beauty. Pleasure and value are not identical.

- Ethical Hedonism holds that pleasure is the proper object of our desire.

- Egoistic Hedonism which is a type of Ethical Hedonism advocates that pleasure of the individual is the end of life. It is thus the standard of morality.

- According to Gross Egoistic Ethical Hedonism all pleasures are alike in kind. The pleasures of the body are more important than that of the soul. Only the present is certain. Future is uncertain.

- Sensualistic Egoism is criticized by those thinkers who have never supported the maxim: 'Happiness means the highest possible amount of physical pleasure.'

- Epicurus propounds that individual's mind should be free from those thoughts which give him pain and anxiety. Every man should seek permanent pleasures in life easily. The happiest life is that in which there is no conflict and no failures. It is 'one of simple ease, good will, serene leisure' .

- The standard of morality, according to Altruistic Hedonism, is the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

- Bentham advocates Gross Utilitarianism because he considers that the only standard of value is quantity.
- In Bentham's Gross Altruistic Hedonism there is no place for reason because according to him man is basically egoistic in nature
- Mill advocates Refined Utilitarianism. He gives priority to self-less activity in the attainment of pleasure or happiness. The standard of morality in Mill's Refined Altruistic Hedonism is the quality. of pleasure.
- In Mill's Utilitarianism actions are to de judged according to their utility. It is thus pragmatic in nature. Here utility has been considered as a means for the promotion of general pleasure and prevention of general pain.



## 7.11 FURTHER READING

1) Chatterji, Phanibhushan. (1952). Principles Of Ethics. Beadon Street Calcutta.
2) Lillie, William. (1964) An Introduction to Ethics: Methuen.
3) Sinha, Jadunath. (1973) A Manual Of Ethics. New Central Book Agency, Calcutta 9.
4) William K. Frankena: Ethics. Prentice-Hall, 1973.



## 7.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** Bain, Hume, Bentham and Mill.

**Ans. to Q. No. 2 :** Psychological Hedonism advocates that pleasure is the natural and normal object of desire.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3 :** a) True b) False c) True d) True

**Ans. to Q. No. 4 :** Psychological hedonism and ethical hedonism

**Ans. to Q. No. 5 :** No

**Ans. to Q. No. 6 :** Egoistic Hedonism and Altruistic Hedonism

**Ans. to Q. No. 7 :** a) True b) False

**Ans. to Q. No. 8 :** J. S. Mill

**Ans. to Q. No. 9 :** Bentham's Ethical Theory is known as Altruistic Ethical Hedonism or Universalistic Hedonism. This theory is Gross or Quantitative Utilitarianism in nature, because it has two reasons: 1) Bentham justifies that 'the only standard of value is quantity'. 2) For Bentham, man is naturally egoistic. Bentham holds that universal pleasure is the supreme end in moral life. But, he does not advocate any qualitative difference among pleasures. So, his theory is known as Quantitative Utilitarianism.

**Ans. to Q. No. 10 :** J. S. Mill's ethical theory is known as Altruistic Hedonism. It is refined or qualitative in nature. He gives priority to self-less activity in the attainment of pleasure or happiness. The standard of morality in Mill's Refined Altruistic Hedonism is the quality of pleasure. The dictum of his ethical theory is that 'the standard is not the individual's happiness but happiness for all.'

**Ans. to Q. No. 11 :** a) Egoistic; b) Universalistic pleasure is the supreme end; c) Gross; d) Refined.

## 7.13 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** According to hedonism, What is the supreme end of life?

**Q2:** Who are the main advocates of hedonistic school?

**Q3:** Mention the other name of the hedonistic school.

**Q4:** State the main objective of hedonism.

**Q5:** Write the names of the chief exponents of psychological hedonism.

**Q6:** What is the motto of psychological hedonism?

**Q7:** What do you mean by 'hysteron proteron?

**Q8:** Who are the advocates of Gross Egoistic Ethical Hedonism?

**Q9:** Define altruistic ethical hedonism.

**Q10:** Write the definition of altruistic or universalistic refined hedonism.

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** Briefly comment on psychological hedonism.

**Q2:** What is ethical hedonism? Discuss briefly.

**Q3:** Do you find any distinction between Gross egoistic ethical hedonism and refined egoistic ethical hedonism? Explain briefly.

**Q4:** Distinguish between altruistic ethical hedonism and altruistic or universalistic refined hedonism.

**Q5:** What is altruistic ethical hedonism? Briefly discuss.

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Explain critically Psychological Hedonism.

**Q2:** Explain and examine Ethical Hedonism.

**Q3:** Explain the different types of Hedonism.

**Q4:** How does Bentham explain Gross Ethical Hedonism? Discuss.

**Q5:** How does J. S. Mill explain Refined Ethical Hedonism? Explain.

**Q6:** What are the basic differences between Gross Ethical Hedonism and Refined Ethical Hedonism? Discuss in detail.

**Q7:** Why is J. S. Mill's Refined Ethical Hedonism called utilitarianism? Discuss.

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# UNIT 8: UTILITARIANISM: IT'S KINDS

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

8.1 Learning Objectives

8.2Introduction

8.3 Hedonism and its kinds

8.4 Altruistic Hedonism or Utilitarianism

8.4.1 Gross or Quantitative Utilitarianism

8.4.2 Refined or Qualitative Utilitarianism

8.5 Rational utilitarianism of Sidgwick

8.6 Ideal Utilitarianism of Rashdall and Moore

8.7 Act, General and Rule Utilitarianism

8.8 Let us Sum Up

8.9 Further Reading

8.10 Answer to Check Your Progress

8.11 Model Questions

## 8.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Define Utilitarianism
- Describe its various kinds
- Explain Gross Utilitarianism
- Explain Refined Utilitarianism
- Describe Act and Rule Utilitarianism
- Distinguish Gross and Refined Utilitarianism

## 8.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you Utilitarianism as a moral standard. The trend of modern ethics is generally altruistic or universalistic. In recent times none maintains the egoistic system as sufficient theory of morality and also feels unhappy about the deontological theories. Therefore, the natural alternative is the teleological theory called utilitarianism. It is the theory which holds that the sole ultimate standard of right, wrong and obligation is the

principle of utility. It says that the moral end to be sought in all we do is the greatest possible balance of good over evil in the world as a whole. According to it, actions are to be judged according to their utility or usefulness as means for the promotion of general pleasure and prevention of general pain. The theory presupposes a developed capacity of sympathy or fellow-feeling which will impel one to promote the good of others and deter him from injustice to them. Bentham and Mill are the two chief exponents of his view. In recent times Sidgwick, Rashdall, and Moore propounded ideal utilitarianism which is bases on reason as moral faculty.

William K. Frankena in his book "Ethics" distinguishes three kinds of utilitarianism. Some utilitarians are hedonists, who equates good with happiness and happiness with pleasure and some are non-hedonists. The three kinds of utilitarianism mentioned by Frankena are Act utilitarianism, General utilitarianism, and Rule utilitarianism.

## 8.3 HEDONISM AND ITS KINDS

There are different theories regarding the nature of the ultimate moral standard. They may be divided into -legal and teleological theories. According to legal theories, a law either internal or external is the ultimate moral standard. According to teleological theories, some end or good of the self is the ultimate moral standard. The teleological theories may be of different types according to the difference in the conception of self. Hedonism, Rigorism or Rationalism, perfectionism or Eudaemonism are different teleological theories. Rationalism regards the realization of the purely rational self to the suppression of the sensuous self as the ultimate moral standard. Perfectionism holds that self realization is the ultimate moral standard. Hedonism is the doctrine according to which, hedone or pleasure is the ultimate standard of morality. According to this theory, we should judge an act as right or wrong according as it tends to produce happiness or misery. Hedonism is based on two assumption,- metaphysical and psychological assumption. Hedonism based on metaphysical assumption that the self is purely sensuous in nature and hedonism based on psychological assumption

that man naturally seeks pleasure and avoids pain.

According to ethical hedonism, we ought to seek pleasure. Ethical hedonism may assume two forms, viz., Egoistic and Altruistic Hedonism. Both Egoism and Altruism may be of two types, gross and refined. According to Egoistic Hedonism, pleasure of the individual is the moral standard. According to Altruistic Hedonism, the greatest happiness is the moral standard.



**LET US KNOW**

According to Utilitarianism, actions are to be judged according to their utility or usefulness as means for the promotion of general pleasure and prevention of general pain. Hedonism is the doctrine according to which, hedone or pleasure is the ultimate standard of morality.

## 8.4 ALTRUISTIC HEDONISM OR UTILITARIANISM

According to Utilitarianism or Altruistic Hedonism, universal or general happiness is the ultimate moral standard. It is to Hume, Bentham, Mill and Bain that we owe the substitution of general happiness for the happiness of the individual as the true end of life. As Bentham (1748-1832) and Mill (1806-1873) are recognized as the two most distinguished exponent of this doctrine, in this unit we have discussed the view of both Bentham and Mill separately. Both hold that, universal pleasure is the supreme end in morals, but Universalistic Hedonism supposes that that we can represent possible future pleasures of ourselves and others in idea, compare them in respect of value, choose beforehand the best and adopt our best actions so as to realize the best. In other words, it requires an estimation of values of future pleasures. Now the question arises by what standard are we to estimate values of pleasures? Bentham holds that the only standard of value is quantity. But J. S. Mill holds that the quality of pleasures should also be taken into account. This is the main ground of difference between the system of Bentham and

Mill. The theory of Bentham is called gross or quantitative utilitarianism and the theory of Mill is called refined or qualitative utilitarianism.

### 8.4.1 Gross or Quantitative Utilitarianism

According to Bentham, the value of pleasure consists entirely in the quantity of agreeable experience it gives. Like Aristeppus, Bentham also recognizes no qualitative distinction among pleasures. All pleasures whether physical and mental are alike. He holds that "Push pin is as good as poetry", if they are equal in quantity of pleasure they produce. Thus the only standard of valuation of pleasure is quantitative according to Bentham. But quantity takes different forms. It takes seven dimension of value, viz.,

(1) Intensity- One pleasure is more intense than the other and more intense pleasure is preferable to a less intense one.

(2) Duration- Of two pleasures otherwise equal, the more durable, will be the better.

(3) Proximity- An immediate pleasure is preferable to a remote one. Present should not be sacrificed to the future.

(4) Certainty- A certain pleasure is preferable to an uncertain one.

(5) Purity- A pleasure is pure when free from pain. Apure pleasure is to be preferred to an impure one which is mixed with pain.

(6) Fecundity- A pleasure has fecundity when it gives rise to a number of other pleasures. A fecund pleasure is preferable to a barren pleasure which does not give rise to other pleasures.

(7) Extent- A pleasure of greater extent, i.e., a pleasure which is enjoyable by a large number of persons is preferable to one of less extent.

The first six criteria, viz., intensity, duration, nearness, certainty, purity, and fruitfulness may be accepted by both egoistic and altruistic hedonism. Bentham, as an advocate of Altruism adds another criterion viz., extent

which means the number of persons who will be affected. He holds that we should be very careful to calculate the interests of the number of persons affected by an act. The interest of the community, he says, is the supreme end in morals. Thus, according to him, the lines of action that should be pursued or avoided by us are indicated by these dimensions taken together. His advice to us is, "Weigh pleasures weigh pains, and as the balance stands, will stand the question of right and wrong."

Bentham's utilitarianism may be called gross or sensualistic, because he does not admit qualitative differences among pleasure. Another characteristic of Bentham's philosophy is that it involves the doctrine of psychological hedonism. Though Bentham is an altruist and says that we should seek the happiness of others, yet he clearly states that we naturally seek our own happiness. The object of every rational being is to obtain the greatest portion of happiness for himself. Bentham holds that man is naturally egoistic. Bentham is of opinion that the word 'happiness' is not always appropriate, because it represents pleasure in an elevated form. If we take away pleasure and pain, 'happiness' will be reduced to an empty sound.

Bentham believes in hedonistic calculus. According to him we can weigh pleasure and pain and the question of right and wrong should be decided according as the balance stands. An action is right if it gives pleasure in excess over pain and wrong if it gives excess of pain over pleasure. Bentham gives purely hedonistic criterion of right and wrong. However in calculating pleasure and pains we take into consideration the seven dimensions of quantity of pleasure.

Bentham's utilitarianism is called gross or sensualistic altruism or utilitarianism .His view is gross as it does not recognize any qualitative difference among pleasure. Though he mentioned about 'purity' as dimension of pleasure, by it he means that pleasure which is unmixed with pain. His view is altruistic because he takes into account the extent of pleasures, .i.e., the number of persons affected by them. Bentham by including 'extent' as a dimension of pleasure introduces altruism into his doctrine. Though

Bentham is an advocate of altruistic hedonism, he clearly recognizes the natural egoism of man. Bentham explains this transition from egoism to altruism by means of four external sanctions-physical or natural, social, political, and religious. These four external sanctions are external pressures upon the individual so as to compel him to sacrifice his own interest to those of society. Thus, according to Bentham, the individual passes from egoism to altruism under the pressure of external sanctions.

**Criticism:** Bentham's theory is open to the following objections:

(1) Bentham, though an altruist, believes in psychological hedonism. So, his doctrine suffers from all the defects of psychological hedonism. According to psychological hedonism we naturally seek pleasure. But it is not true we desire pleasure. On the contrary, we seek the desired object, which when attained gives pleasure. Moreover, the more we hanker after pleasure, the less we get it. This is the fundamental paradox of hedonism. Besides this, even if we naturally seek pleasure, it does not follow that we ought to seek pleasure.

(2) The hedonistic calculus, mentioned by Bentham, is impracticable. He looks upon pleasure and pain as concrete things which can be added and subtracted and thus quantitatively measured. But feeling of pleasure and pain are purely subjective states of mind and cannot be weighed on the two sides of a balance like material things. They are variable in character.

(3) Bentham clearly recognizes the egoistic nature of man; but still he advocates Altruistic Hedonism. He does not offer any argument for altruism. He failed to explain satisfactorily the transition from egoism to altruism. He introduces altruism into his doctrine by taking into account the extent of pleasure, i.e., the number of persons affected by them. But he gives no reason why the pleasures of greater extent are preferable to those of smaller extent.

(4) Bentham altruism is gross or sensualistic, because he does not recognize qualitative difference of pleasures. However, he has mentioned 'purity' as one of the dimensions of the quantity of pleasure. But introduction of this dimension has not been able to elevate his doctrine. By 'purity' he has not meant any superior quality. It only means 'freedom from pain'. There is no qualitative difference among pleasures. All pleasures are equally alike in kind or quality. But this cannot be accepted. Intellectual pleasure, artistic enjoyment, and spiritual bliss are decidedly higher in quality than the pleasures of eating and drinking.

(5) Bentham has mentioned four external sanctions to explain the social feelings in man who are by nature egoistic. But the external sanctions can never explain the transition from egoism to altruism. We choose to obey the laws of Nature, Society, State and God not for their sake, but for our good. These external sanctions can create physical compulsion, but never moral obligation.

## 8.4.2. Refined or Qualitative Utilitarianim

J.S. Mill advocates qualitative altruistic hedonism. He says very explicitly that the standard is not the agent's own happiness, but happiness in general. In his book "Utilitarianism", he declares that "the happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct is not agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned." According to Mill, actions are right in proportion as they tend to produce happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By "happiness" is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain and privation of pleasure. Mill uses the term 'pleasure' and 'happiness' as synonymous. He does not regard them as intrinsic value .He gives hedonistic criterion of right and wrong Rightness consists in conduciveness to pleasure and wrongness consists in conduciveness to pain.

Mill bases his hedonism on psychological hedonism. According to Mill, desiring a thing and finding it pleasant are, the two modes of naming

the same psychological fact. Mill's ethical hedonism is based on the psychological assumption that we always desire pleasure, therefore pleasure is desirable. On the analogy that an object is visible because people actually see it, and a sound is audible because people hear it, Mill conduces that a thing is desirable, because people do actually desire it.

But the question arises how can we prove that general happiness is desirable? Mill's answer is that each person's happiness is a good to that person and general happiness, therefore, is a good to the aggregate of all persons. A's happiness is good to A; B's happiness is a good to B; C's happiness is a good C. Therefore, the happiness of A, B, C i.e., general happiness is good to A+B+C i.e. , aggregate of all persons. He holds that we are bound to promote the general happiness because of sanctions of morality.

According to Mill, there are two kinds of sanction for altruistic conduct - external and internal. Bentham recognizes four external sanctions- physical, social, political and religious. Mill has added to these external sanctions the internal sanction of conscience. This internal sanction, according to Mill, is sympathy, fellow- feeling, social feeling of mankind, a desire to be unity with our fellow creatures and a feeling of pain attendant on the violation of duty.

J.S Mill has offers a psychological explanation of the transition from egoism to altruism. Altruism grows out of egoism- sympathy or fellow feeling grows out of self-love according to the laws of association and transference of interest. At first we were egoists and relieve our pain. Then by repetition our own interest was transferred from the end to the means. We forgot our own pleasure, and came to take delight in relieving the miseries of others, and thus acquired sympathy. Thus sympathy is acquired by the individual in his own life time.

J.S Mill recognizes the kinds of pleasure or qualitative difference of pleasures. The most important point in Mill's ethical system is his doctrine

of a gradation of pleasures in respect of quality. It is Mill's chief innovation that he introduces a distinction of quality in addition to the distinction of quantity. As has been said before, Mill holds, in opposition to Bentham, that pleasure differ in quality as well as in quantity. He holds that in estimating happiness, we should take into account differences of quality and quantity. According to Mill "some kinds of are more desirable and valuable than others."Epicurus also referred to the kinds of pleasures, but did not recognize the qualitative superiority of mental pleasure. Though Bentham recognizes purity of pleasure, he does not mean by it qualitative superiority, but freedom from pain. The highest good, according to Mill, lies not in intense or durable enjoyment, but in the enjoyment of noble, dignified and elevated pleasures, even though these to be of small intensity and duration. Hence Mill's doctrine is called Refined Utilitarianism or qualitative utilitarianism.

Regarding the test of quality, J. S. Mill appeals to the 'verdict of component judges'. The verdict of persons, who are acquainted with, and equally capable of enjoying both forms of pleasure, naturally goes in favour of intellectual pleasures. Competent judges always prefer intellectual pleasures to bodily and sensual pleasures. From this verdict of component judges there can be no appeal. If there is a conflict of opinion among component judges, we should abide by verdict of majority of them. In this response he refers us to the "sense of dignity", which is natural to man. It is on account of its existence that no man would consent to be changed into any of the lower animals capable of sensual pleasure only. He says, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied". It is on account of this sense of dignity that competent judges prefer noble pleasure to physical pleasure.
It is in the above ways that J. S. Mill endeavors to strengthen the system of Hedonistic Ethics. T he additions and modifications by means of which he tries to purify or refine Hedonism are three which we have mentioned in the above discussion are-

(1) Substitution of general happiness for the happiness of the individual, as the end of life and standard of rectitude.

(2) His doctrine of gradation of pleasures, in respect of quality.

(3) His view that the true sanction of morality is internal, and not external.

He tries in this ways to free the Hedonistic doctrine from charges of egoism and sensualism.

**Criticism:** Mill's refined utilitarianism is open to the following objections:

(1) J. S. Mill's doctrine is hedonistic. Hedonism is based upon a one-sided view of human nature. It considers man as essentially a sentient being. Therefore, it conceives the end of his life as sentient satisfaction of pleasure. But the true end of life must be the satisfaction of the complete total self rational as well as sentient.

(2) According to Mill, 'happiness' and pleasure are synonymous, but happiness is not the same thing as pleasure. Pleasure is transient, while happiness is abiding. Pleasure arises from the gratification of a single desire. But, happiness is a feeling that arises out of systematization of desires.

(3) According to Mill, we actually desire pleasure therefore pleasure is desirable; here Mill commits the fallacy of figure of speech. He confounds the word 'desirable' with the word 'capable of being desired'. Again, sound is audible or an object is visible because we actually hear or see it. But on this analogy we cannot say that a thing is desirable because we actually desire it. Desirable is different from audible and visible. Desirable means 'what we ought to desire, and not 'what is capable of being desired'.

(4) In support of altruism Mill argues that because each person desires his own happiness, therefore general happiness is desired by aggregate of all persons. But this argument involves two fallacies- fallacy of composition and fallacy of fallacy of division. Here, we argue from the distributive to the collective use of the term. Hence it involves the fallacy

of composition. Secondly, general happiness is a good to the aggregate of all persons; therefore, general happiness is good to each person. Here, we pass from the collective to the distributive use of term and hence involves the fallacy of division.

(5) J. S. Mill cannot offer a reasonable explanation of moral obligation or sense of duty or oughtness. As external sanctions cannot account for the feeling of moral obligation, Mill adds to it the internal sanction of conscience. But, this internal sanction of conscience is, in his view the subjective feeling of sympathy. Subjective feeling is variable, and cannot be the source of moral obligation. When Mill says that conscience is a feeling of pain attendant on violation of duty, he seems to covertly appeal to reason, and therefore introduces rationalism in his doctrine.

(6) Mill's admission of qualitative difference among pleasures seems to be an extra- hedonistic calculus in measuring the worth of pleasures. Of two pleasures if one is considered to be qualitatively superior to the other, then the quality, according to which we judge between the two, is not certainly a feeling of pleasure. When we recognize one pleasure as superior in quality to another, we do so by appeal to reason. But this admission amounts to an abandonment of the hedonistic position.

(7) Sympathy or fellow -feeling which, is purely an altruistic feeling can never be derived from pure egoism or self love. What the laws of transference of interest and association can do is to convert egoism to ego-altruism, but not to pure altruism. Hence, it is absurd to hold that altruism is developed out of egoism in the life time of individual under the influence of psychological laws.



## LET US KNOW

Bentham (1748-1832) and Mill (1806-1873) are recognized as the two most distinguished exponent of Utilitarianism. Bentham holds that the only standard of value is quantity. But J. S. Mill holds that the quality of pleasures should also be taken into account.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q1:** What is Hedonism?

.....

**Q2:** What are the seven dimension of pleasure according to Bentham?

.....

**Q3:** Why Bentham's utilitarianism is called gross or sensualistic?

.....

**Q4:** What is internal sanction according to Mill?

.....

**Q5:** According to Mill how many kinds of sanction for altruistic conduct?

.....



## Activity 8.1

1. Explain the difference between Bentham and Mill's Utilitarianism?

Ans: .....

.....

.....

## 8.5. RATIONAL UTILITARIANISM OF SIDGWICK

Henry Sidgwick accepts the theory of Utilitarianism but he has founded it on intuitional basis. He attempts to reconcile the claim of Egoism and Altruism, Hedonism and intuitionalism. He holds that pleasure is the only intrinsic value, which is good in itself. It is the only rational object of desire and it is therefore ultimately desirable. It is deliverance of conscience or moral reason. Like Kant he identifies conscience with practical reason. Practical reason dictates that pleasure is the true end, and ought to be persuade. Knowledge, beauty, virtue, etc., are means of pleasure. They have extrinsic or instrumental value. He does not distinguish between pleasure and happiness. The ultimate good is pleasure or happiness.

Bentham and J. S. Mill advocate psychological hedonism and hold that men always seek pleasure and avoid pain. But Sidgwick urges that this doctrine involves paradox of hedonism. He says "The impulse towards pleasure, if too predominant, defeats its own aim." Sidgwick, therefore, rejects psychological hedonism in favour of ethical hedonism. Mill says that pleasure is desirable, since it is normally desired by men, but Sidgwick argues that reason tell us that pleasure is the highest god which is desirable in itself. It is an intuition of reason.

Sidgwick holds that it is intuition of conscience or practical reason that pleasure or happiness is the highest good. Conscience gives us intuition not only of the ultimate good, but also supplies us with the principles of its distribution of happiness. The highest good, according to him, is sentient in nature, which consists in a desirable state of consciousness called pleasure or happiness. But the knowledge of it given by rational intuition, and not by experience, and the principles of its organization are also supplied by practical reason. Thus, as Sidgwick blends Utilitarianism with Rationalism or intuitionalism, so his theory is called Rational Utilitarianism as distinguished from Bentham and Mill's empirical utilitarianism.

He gives three rational principles - prudence, benevolence and

justice. Prudence or Rational Self-love guides us in choice and enjoyment off our own pleasure in which our good consists. Benevolence lifts us high above the plane of self-love or egoism to altruism. This principle tells us that the good of others should be considered as of equal weight with our own. Justice directs us to be impartial in the matter of distribution of happiness and tells us to satisfy the demands of the competitors according to their importance, merits and rights.

**Criticism:**

(1) Sidgwick wrongly holds that pleasure to be the ultimate good. Pleasure or sentient good cannot be ultimate good because it cannot satisfy the self. Self is both sentient and rational.

(2) Sidgwick unable to reconcile egoism with altruism, because he regards the sentient good as highest good. According to Sidgwick, prudence and benevolence are both teaching us that egoism is as reasonable as altruism. But prudence sometimes conflicts with benevolence, that egoistic impulses conflict with altruistic.

## 8.6. IDEAL UTILITARIANISM OF RASHDALL AND MOOORE

**Ideal Utilitarianism of Rashdall:** Rashdall also found his utilitarianism on reason. The moral faculty is reason. Like Kant, he regards it as moral reason or practical reason. It intuitively apprehends the highest good. Virtue, Knowledge and Culture, Beauty and Happiness constitute the highest good. Moral judgments are judgments of value. They decide what is good. Right is a means to the good. An action is right, if it is conductive to the universal well-being or eudaemonia. Virtue is the supreme value. Knowledge, Beauty, and Happiness are subordinate to it. Some pleasures are good, while some are bad and good pleasures approved by moral Reason constitute Happiness. Rightness of an action depends upon of its consequences. If it is conducsive to universal well-being, it is right. If it is subversive of it, it is wrong. Therefore, Rashdall's doctrine is called

Utilitarianism. But he regards Happiness as one o the constituents of well-being of mankind subordinate to virtue, so, his doctrine is called Ideal Utilitarianism. However it is non-hedonistic as it does not look upon Happiness as the sole Good.

Virtue is supreme value, which satisfies our intellectual nature. Beauty satisfies our aesthetic nature. Pleasures satisfy our sensuous nature. Happiness satisfies our higher nature. These elements constitute the eudaemonia or well being of humanity. Therefore it amounts to the recognition of self-realisation as the highest good. However Rashdall does not admit that self-realisation is the realization of supreme value of the self.

**G. E. Moore's Ideal Utilitarianism:** G. E. Moore regards the notion of 'good' as simple, unique and indefinable, which is known immediately or intuitively. He says " 'good' is a simple notion, just as 'yellow' is simple notion; that just as you cannot explain to one who does not already know it, what yellow is, so you cannot explain what good is."Goodness has a unique meaning; it is simply goodness. It cannot be described in terms of non-value. It has 'intrinsic value' or 'intrinsic worth'. According to Moore only complex things or notions can be defined as they have different properties and qualities. But good is simple notion, composed of no parts and so unanalysable. Hence, good is indefinable.

Rightness does not attach motive or intentions. If motives or intentions are good, but the actual consequences of an act calculated beforehand are bad, the act cannot be right. Consequences should be taken in a broad sense. The good that ought to be maximized includes the good of all persons without any invidious distinction. As an intuitionist he maintains that rightness is apprehended by intuition. Moore maintains that intrinsically good objects are organic whole and explains it in terms of value. He does not advocate hedonistic utilitarianism, because hedonism equates good with pleasure, which is a particular mode of experience. According to Moore hedonist commits 'Naturalistic Fallacy' as they identifies good with some natural property of what has goodness. Moore advocates ideal utilitarianism

like Rashdall. He regards an act 'right', if it is 'productive of greatest possible amount of good.' Rashdall gives hierarchy of goods. But Moore does not assign an order of goods.

Moore regards the concept of 'good' as simple, unanalysable, and indefinable. But 'good' may be defined by connecting it with the concept of value. Again, Moore overdoes the naturalistic fallacy when he explains 'good' by reference to particular modes of action or experience. Moreover, Moore regards intrinsically good things are organic whole and defines in terms of value. But value does not clearly state the connotation of organic whole. Further, since the rightness of an act depends on its total consequences, it cannot be known intuitively, but can be known by rational calculation of actual consequences of various acts and of their comparative intrinsic values. Again, intrinsically good things have no moral value apart from their contribution to self-realisation.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q6:** Who propounded Rational Utilitarianism?

……

**Q7:** Name the three rational principles given by Sidgwick?

……

**Q8:** Who is the philosophers that advocated Ideal Utilitarianism?

……

**Q9:** Fill in the blanks

(a) Sidgwick blends Utilitarianism with Rationalism or Intuitionalism, so his theory is called……

(b) Virtue, Knowledge, Culture, Beauty and Happiness constitute the ……

(c) According to Moore hedonists commits……

(d) Moore regards the concept of…… as simple, unanalysable, and indefinable.

**Q10:** Why according to Moore hedonist commits 'Naturalistic Fallacy'?

……



**Activity 8.2**

1. Is there any difference between the Ideal Utilitarianism of Rashdall and Moore?

Ans: .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

## 8.7 ACT, GENERAL AND RULE UTILITARIANISM

William K. Frankena in his book Ethics holds that all utilitarian theories hold that what is morally right or wrong is ultimately to be wholly determined by looking to see what promotes greatest general balance of good over evil. So he distinguishes three kinds of utilitarianism each of which includes a family of views hedonistic or non-hedonistic. These are Act, General and Rule Utilitarianism.

**Act Utilitarianism (AU):** Act utilitarians hold that in general or at least where it is practicable, one is to tell what is right or obligatory by appealing directly to the principle of utility. Here, one tries to see which of the actions open to him will or likely to be produce the greatest balance of good over evil in the universe. Generalizations like "Telling the truth is probably always for the greatest general good" or "Telling the truth is generally for the greatest general good" may be useful on the basis of past experience. But the question arises whether telling truth in this case is for the greatest general good or not. But in some exceptional situations there

arise some grounds for thinking that it would be for the greatest general good not to tell the truth in a particular case. Bentham, G. E. Moore and perhaps even Mill, probably held such a view. Today J. J. C. Smart and Joseph Fletcher hold this view and prefer to call it "situation ethics".

For Act Utilitarianism, one must include among the effects of an action any influence it may have, by way of setting an example. Pure Act Utilitarianism not allows us to use any rules or generalization from past experience. But it would insist that each and every time we calculate anew the effects of all actions open to us on general welfare, have rules of some kind. Modified Act Utilitarianism which also does not allow us to use rules of thumb based on past experience, by following some arguments committed the same mistake. Thus act utilitarianism is unsatisfactory from the moral point of view.

**General Utilitarianism (GU):** The second kind of utilitarianism is General Utilitarianism. I t holds that one is not to ask in each situation which action has the best consequences, but it does not talk about rules. This type of utilitarianism gives importance on consequences on collective actions not on individual one. The idea behind General Utilitarianism is that if something is right for one person to do in a certain situation, then it is also right for anyone else who is similarly situated to do. Hence, one cannot ask simply what effects one's proposed actions will have in a particular case. Therefore one must ask what consequences would be if everyone were to act likewise in such cases. This view has been stated by M.G. Singer.

General Utilitarianism by giving the example of poor man, can allow that the poor man's act may produce the greatest general balance of good over evil in his particular situation, and yet maintain that he ought not to do it because of what would happen if all the poor and needy were to steal from the rich. The General Utilitarianism must be an appeal to the principle that if an action is right for me to do in my situation, then it is right for everyone to do who is similarly situated in relevant respects. Now, this principle cannot be derived from the principle of utility, but is independent of

it and so one might think that in appealing to it the General Utilitarianism is appealing to another moral principle besides that of utility. This additional principle is the principle of universazability. The question arises here that whether the General Utilitarianism must recognize any basic moral principle of universalizability and principle of utility which is doubtful according to Frankena. Again, regarding the example of poor man, also objection arises.

**Rule Utilitarianism(RU):** Rule Utilitarianism emphasizes the certainty of rules in morality and insists that we are generally(not always), to tell what to do in particular situation by appeal to like truth telling rather than by asking what particular action will have the best consequences in the situation in question. It holds that we are always to determine our rules by asking which rule will promote the greatest general good for everyone. That is, the question is not which action has greatest utility, but which rule has. So, the principle of utility comes in but not in determining what particular action to perform, but in determining what the rules shall be. Rules must be selected, maintained, revised and replaced on the basis of their utility and not on any other basis. The principle of utility is still the ultimate standard, but it is to be appealed to at the level of rules rather than at the level of particular judgment. This view has been advocated by a number of writers from Bishop Berkley to R. B. Brandt. This view is attributed to Mill also.

Rule Utilitarianism may take various forms, depending on how it conceives of rules. These are primitive-rule -utilitarianism (PRU), actual-rule-utilitarianism (ARU), ideal-rule-utilitarianism (IRU). Ideal utilitarianism is gain two forms. Primitive-rule-utilitarianism is like general utilitarianism with a new dress. Actual-rule-utilitarianism holds that an action is right if it conforms to the accepted or prevailing moral rules or wrong if it does not. One kind of ideal rule utilitarianism holds that an action is right, if and only if it conforms to a set of rules general conformity to which would maximize utility. The other holds that an act is right, if and only if it conforms to a set of rules general acceptance of which would maximize utility.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q11:** Name the author of the book 'Ethics'.

.....

**Q12:** How many kinds of Utilitarianism according to Frankena?

.....



## 8.8. LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have discussed the different Utilitarian theories. The important points are:

- Hedonism is the doctrine according to which, hedone or pleasure is the ultimate standard of morality.
- Utilitarianism is the theory which holds that the sole ultimate standard of right, wrong and obligation is the principle of utility.
- According to Utilitarianism or Altruistic Hedonism, universal or general happiness is the ultimate moral standard.
- Bentham's utilitarianism may be called gross or sensualistic, because he does not admit qualitative differences among pleasure.
- Bentham holds that value of pleasure consists entirely in the quantity of agreeable experience it gives which takes seven dimensions of value, viz., Intensity, Duration, Proximity, Certainty, Purity, Fecundity, and Extent.
- J.S. Mill advocates qualitative altruistic hedonism.
- Bentham recognizes four external sanctions- physical, social, political and religious with them Mill has added to these external sanctions the internal sanction of conscience.

- Sidgwick advocates Rational Utilitarianism and holds that it is intuition of conscience or practical reason that pleasure or happiness is the highest good.
- Rashdall and Moore's Utilitarianism is called Ideal Utilitarianism.
- Rashdall regards Happiness as one of the constituents of well-being of mankind subordinate to virtue, so, his doctrine is called Ideal Utilitarianism.
- G. E. Moore regards the notion of 'good' as simple, unique and indefinable, which is known immediately or intuitively.
- According to Moore hedonist commits 'Naturalistic Fallacy' as they identifies good with some natural property of what has goodness.
- William K. Frankena in his book Ethics distinguishes three kinds of utilitarianism- Act, General and Rule Utilitarianism.

## 8.9 FURTHER READING

1) Sinha Jadunath, (1969)A Manual of Ethics, Sinha Publishing House Limited, 39, S. R. Das Road, Calcutta-26
2) Chatterji, P. B., (1952)Principles of Ethics, 32, Beadon Street, Calcutta.
3) William K. Frankena(2003), prentice Hall of INDIA, New Delhi.

## 8.10 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** Hedonism is the doctrine according to which, hedone or pleasure is the ultimate standard of morality.

**Ans.2.**The seven dimensions of value, according to Bentham are Intensity, Duration, Proximity, Certainty, Purity, Fecundity, and Extent.

**Ans.3.** Bentham's utilitarianism may be called gross or sensualistic, because he does not admit qualitative differences among pleasure.

**Ans.4.**The internal sanction according to Mill is the internal sanction of conscience.

**Ans.5.** Two kinds of sanctions according to Mill are - internal and external.

**Ans.6.** Henry Sidgwick

**Ans.7.** The three rational principles GIVEN BY Sidgwick are - prudence, benevolence and justice.

**Ans.8.** Rashdall and G. E. Moore

**Ans.9.** Fill in the blanks

(a) Sidgwick blends Utilitarianism with Rationalism or Intuitionalism, so his theory is called Rational Utilitarianism

(b) Virtue, Knowledge, Culture, Beauty and Happiness constitute the highest good.

(c) According to Moore hedonists commits "Naturalistic Fallacy"

(d) Moore regards the concept of 'good' as simple, unanalysable, and indefinable.

**Ans.10.** According to Moore hedonist commits 'Naturalistic Fallacy' as they identify good with some natural property of what has goodness.

**Ans.11.** William K. Frankena

**Ans.12.** According to Frankena there are three kinds of utilitarianism - Act, General and Rule Utilitarianism.

## 8.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** "The greatest possible balance of good over evil"- which theory is associated with this statement?

**Q2:** Is 'pleasure' and 'happiness' synonymous according to Mill?

**Q3:** "Some kinds of are more desirable and valuable than others."- Who is associated with this statement?

**Q4:** Like Kant who identifies conscience with practical reason?

**Q5:** Is'good' definable according to Moore?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** What is seven dimensions of values according to Bentham?

**Q2:** What do you mean by 'verdict of component judges'?

**Q3:** What are three rational principles according to Sidgwick?

**Q4:** How the Hedonists commit "Naturalistic Fallacy' according to Moore?

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Explain Bentham's gross or sensualistic hedonism?

**Q2:** Explain critically J. S. Mill's utilitarianism?

**Q3:** Critically discuss Sidgwick's Rational Utilitarianism.

**Q4:** Discuss briefly Ideal Utilitarianism of Rashdall and Moore.

**Q5:** Write a brief note on Frankena's distinctions of Utilitarianism.

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# UNIT 9: UTILITARIANISM: BENTHAM AND MILL

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

9.1 Learning Objectives

9.2 Introduction

9.3 Utilitarianism

9.4 Historical Background of Utilitarianism

9.5 Bentham and his Philosophy

9.6 Universalistic Hedonism

9.7 Bentham's View of Utilitarianism

9.8 Principle of Utility is the Basis of Legal and Social reforms

9.9 Criticism

9.10 Mill's Life and Works

9.11 Mill and Hedonism

9.12 Mill's Utilitarianism

9.13 Bentham and Mil

9.14 Let us sum up

9.15 Further reading

9.16 Answers to Check Your Progress

## 9.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- discuss utilitarianism as a standard of morality.
- explain Jeremy Bentham's idea of Utilitarianism
- describe the basic points of Bentham's moral philosophy
- explain the critical comments on Bentham's moral philosophy.
- explain Mill's idea of Utilitarianism
- describe the basic points of Mill's moral philosophy
- analyse why Mill's moral philosophy is called as refined utilitarianism.
- explain how Mill's Utilitarianism differ from that of Bentham's Utilitarianism.

## 9.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you Bentham's theory of morality. Ethics is primarily concerned with moral judgements. But it is evident that moral judgement presupposes a standard or norm or ideal with reference to which an action is judged to be right or wrong. The actions which are conductive to proposed moral ideal are good or right, and those that do not conform to the moral ideal are wrong or bad. There are different theories regarding the nature of the ultimate moral standard. The two prominent moral theories are: teleological theories and deontological theories. Teleological theories are concerned with the consequences of an action that is rightness or wrongness of our action depends on the good or evil generated. On the other hand deontological theories emphasises on the relationship between duty and the morality of human action

Utilitarianism is a powerful approach to normative ethics. This theory holds that the consequences of any action are considered as the standard of morality and as such it belongs to the teleological theory of obligation. According to this theory of morality, the ultimate end is the greatest general good. Utilitarianism holds that an action is right or obligatory if and only if it produces a greater balance of good over evil in the universe as a whole. Thus, Utilitarianism appeals to the 'principle of utility' for passing moral judgement.

This unit also introduces to you John Stuart Mill's Utilitarianism. Mill developed and refined Bentham's quantitative utilitarianism. Like Bentham, Mill accepts hedonism and states pleasure is the proper 'end' of all actions. But unlike Bentham, Mill says that pleasures differ in quality as well as in quantity. The highest good, according to Mill, lies in the enjoyment of noble, dignified, and elevated pleasures, even though these are of small intensity and duration. Hence, his doctrine is called Refined Utilitarianism as contrasted with Bentham's Gross Utilitarianism. Mill utilitarianism explicitly states that the standard of morality is not the agent's own happiness but happiness in general.

Mill advocated rule-utilitarianism. Rule-Utilitarianism emphasises the centrality of rules in morality and insists that rightness or wrongness of an act depends upon its conformity to a rule. He tried to meet up the criticisms against utilitarianism raised by the opponent particularly the criticism like utilitarianism is 'a doctrine worthy only of swine'.

## 9.3 UTILITARIANISM

Utilitarianism is a theory about what we ought to do. It states that the best action is the one that maximizes utility. "Utility" is defined in various ways, usually in terms of the well-being of sentient entities, such as human beings. Though there are many varieties of Utilitarianism, generally it asserts the view that morally right actions are those that provide greatest possible balance of good over evil for the majority of people. That means right action is one that produces the most good. Thus, it appeals to the 'principle of utility' to tell what is right or obligatory.

Utilitarianism is a certain kind of teleological theory of obligation. So, it is a powerful approach to normative ethics. Utilitarianism is mainly concerned with the question, "What ought a person to do?" The answer is that a person ought to act so as to produce the best consequences possible. As such it maintains that the rightness or wrongness of an action depends upon the consequences. In assessing the consequences utilitarianism relies upon some theory of intrinsic value i.e. Something is held to be good in itself, apart from further consequences.

Utilitarianism is distinguished from egoism with regard to the scope of the relevant consequences produced by an act. On the utilitarian view one ought to maximize the overall good - that is, consider the good of others as well as one's own good but egoism does not take other people seriously. Unlike egoism, utilitarianism considers all interests equally.

Utilitarianism eliminates the possible conflicts of the basic principles of ethical egoism and deontological theories. Deontological theories take other people seriously but do not take the promotion of good seriously. On

the other hand egoism takes the promotion of good seriously but does not take other people seriously. But utilitarianism remedies both of these defects at once.

Utilitarianism also differs from ethical theories that make the rightness or wrongness of an act dependent upon the motive of the agent, for, according to the utilitarian, it is possible for the right thing to be done from a bad motive.

Some utilitarians are hedonists. They equate good with pleasure. For example, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill have usually been hedonists in their view about what is good. They identify good with pleasure and asserts the view that moral end is the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. But some utilitarian are not hedonists, for example, G.E. Moore and Hasting Rashdall. They have been called 'Ideal' utilitarian.

## 9.4 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF UTILITARIANISM

Utilitarianism has its origin in the ancient Greek Philosophy. But the tradition of utilitarianism properly begins with Bentham, and has included John Stuart Mill, Henry Sidgwick, R. M. Hare and Peter Singer.

A hedonistic theory of the value of life is found in the early 5th century B.C. in the ethical teachings of Aristippus of Cyrene, founder of the Cyrenaic school and a century later in that of Epicurus and their followers in ancient Greece. Aristippus and Epicurus advocated Egoistic Hedonism. According to them, the only good of life is the individual's own pleasure i.e. every person ought to seek his own greatest pleasure.

The seeds of ethical universalism are found in the doctrines of the rival ethical school of Stoicism and in Christianity. Other significant dimensions of the theory can be traced to the 17th century writings of Hobbes, Locke and Richard Cumberland. Some historians have identified Bishop Richard Cumberland, as the first to have a utilitarian philosophy. A generation later, however, Francis Hutcheson, a British "moral sense" theorist, more

clearly held a utilitarian view. Hutcheson first spoke of 'the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers' as a principle of moral conduct in An Inquiry Concerning the Original of our Ideas of Virtue or Moral Good (1725). Bentham read David Hume's Treatise of Human Nature and from him Bentham learnt that moral philosophy, like natural science, must begin with empirical observation and the techniques of the one were equally applicable in other and he also learnt from Hume to equate virtue with utility. Of course, Bentham was not entirely satisfied with Hume's moral philosophy because Hume explained moral judgement in terms of 'moral sentiments'.

Bentham in his first product A Fragment on Government critically analysed English law and set the new foundation of the principle of utility. In this book, Bentham first stated the 'fundamental axiom' that 'it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right or wrong'.

Bentham's major work of his early period is An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (1789). In this work he clarifies the basic concepts of his utilitarian philosophy. The early chapters make it clear that utility is the operative principle upon which all else is based. Subsequent chapters explain the incricacies of human motivation, consequences of actions, classification of offences and elements of appropriate laws and punishments. Later on, Sidgwick gives the definition of Utilitarianism in his The Methods of Ethics in a precise way. He says, "By utilitarianism is here meant the ethical theory that the conduct which, under any given circumstances, is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole; that is, taking into account all whose happiness is affected by the conduct. "

Let us discuss Bentham's utilitarianism in the subsequent paragraphs.

## 9.5 BENTHAM AND HIS PHILOSOPHY

Jeremy Bentham was an English philosopher. He was born on 15 February 1748 and died on 6 June 1832. He was the elder son of an attorney, Jeremiah Bentham and his wife, Alicia Whitehorn. He entered Queen's

College, Oxford, at the age 12 and after graduation entered Lincoln's Inn to study law. He was admitted to the bar in 1767 but never practiced. He spent his life writing, advocating changes along utilitarian lines of the whole legal system.

From Bentham's early writings, it is known that he was from the first an empiricist. He held that all knowledge is derived from sensation. In the seventeenth century empiricism had been appropriated to serve the needs of physical science. Bentham also claimed that the science of legislation ought to be built on the same immovable basis of sensation and experience as that of medicine. The basis of both sciences is observation of the human nature.

Bentham rejected all forms of idealism in philosophy, and he held that there were no rational grounds which compelled belief in a God. He insisted that existence is a purely material phenomenon. As matter is quantifiable in mathematical terms, this principle is extended to the pleasures and pains that we experience.

The focus on human action and the pleasures and pains that motivate action constituted the psychological foundation of Bentham's utilitarianism. As a psychological hedonist, he holds that pleasures and pains determine what we do. The questions of utility, according to him lie at the heart of all that an individual seeks to do.

## 3.6 EUDAIMONIA AND FUNCTION

Universalistic hedonism or Altruism is the theory that what we ought to aim at is the greatest possible amount of pleasure of all human beings. According to this theory 'the greatest happiness of thegreatest number' is the ultimate moral standard. This theory encompasses two essential elements: (1) the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by the goodness of its consequences; (2) the only thing that is good in itself is pleasure and the only thing bad in itself is pain, and happiness is the aggregate of pleasures over pains. The chief exponents of this theory are

Jeremy Bentham, J.S. Mill and Henry Sidgwick. According to this theory, whatever the good and the bad are, they are capable of being measured. Bentham has recognised this most explicitly and thus he believes in hedonic calculus of pleasures and pains using seven dimensions of value: intensity, duration, proximity, certainty, purity, fecundity and extent. But Mill has introduced quality as well quantity into the evaluation of pleasures.

## 9.7 BENTHAM'S VIEW OF UTILITARIANISM

Bentham, in his major work An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation (IPML) introduced the notion of utility as a 'principle' and argued that as a first principle used to establish everything else. The principle of utility simply means usefulness, coming from the Latin word utilis meaning 'useful'. Bentham says that 'by utility is meant that property in any object, whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good or happiness or to prevent the happening of mischief, pain, evil or unhappiness'. The key point is that there is a single source of value which can be called utility, and it is to be maximized. Bentham considered that moral actions were to be justified on the basis of utilitarian principle.

Bentham in the first chapter of his major works 'An Introduction to the Principle of Morals and Legislation' states that only pleasure (or happiness) is intrinsically good, and its opposite, pain (or unhappiness),is intrinsically bad. The desire to increase pleasure and avoid pain not only determines how we do act, but how we ought to act. This forms the basis of his 'principle of utility', which he later called 'the greatest happiness principle'.

Now question is,whose happiness or unhappiness should we consider? Bentham makes it clear thatit is the entire 'community', not just certain individuals. The community is composed by the individual persons. So, the interest of the community is the sum of the interests of the several members who compose the community.Bentham therefore associated 'utility' with the aim of **'greatest happiness of the greatest number'**. The underlying notion of utilitarianism is that the end of human conduct is

happiness. This theory, therefore judges all actions according to their utility as means for the promotion of general happiness or prevention of general pain. An action that conforms to the principle is an action that 'ought' to be done.Therefore, Bentham's utility principle involves two important features. First, by this foundational principle Bentham meant to refer to a feeling that approved the utility of an action. Second, the principle of utility generally meant 'public' utility, and the utility of the individual was that part of public utility in which the individual shared.

According to Bentham, the moral worthiness of an action depends upon the consequences of that action.An action is right if it produces most good i.e. best action is the one that maximizes utility. Thus, Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism, meaning that the rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by its outcome.

Bentham's utilitarianism as it based on consequence holds that right action is justified by future states of affairs rather than by past event. For example, Bentham's account of the justification of punishment is a deterrent account. Punishment is justified if it deters people from committing undesirable actions. More precisely, for Bentham, the proper aim of punishment is to produce pleasure and to prevent pain.

Bentham's Utilitarianism reflects psychological hedonism that pleasure and pain defines the motives of human behaviour. Bentham, in the first chapter of An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation writes, "Nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign matters, pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what ought to do, as well to determine what we shall do. On the one hand the standard of right and wrong, on the other the chain of causes and effects are fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, in all we say,in all we think: every effort we can make to throw off our subjection, will serve but to demonstrate and confirm it." (IPML 11). Bentham views pleasure and pain as the primary motives by reference to which all human activities can be explained. They are the 'real entities' of individual experience, acting both

as the final cause of individual action, and as the efficient causes and means to individual happiness. For Bentham, the relationship between happiness and pleasure and pain is straightforward; pleasure contributes to happiness, while pain detracts from it.

In chapter three of Bentham's work An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, he discusses four 'sanctions' to explain how an essentially self-interested individual directed to perform actions which enhance the general happiness of both himself and others. The four external sanctions are: the physical, the moral, the political and the religious. Bentham explains the transition from egoism to altruism by means of these sanctions. In Bentham's utilitarianism, any law or action is considered as good if it can produces 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number'. In chapter Four of his work An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, Bentham raises the important question of how one is to measure pleasure and pain. In this regard, Bentham developed a 'hedonisticcalculus' of pleasure and pains using seven dimensions:intensity, duration, proximity, certainty, purity, fecundity and extent. Thus, Bentham describes that pleasure and pain can be evaluated in terms of quantity. It follows that Bentham's utilitarianism is quantitative in nature. He justifies that only standard of value is quantity.As he said, "quantity of pleasure being equal, pushpin is as good as poetry". That is, 'pushpin is as good as poetry' if they are equal in the quantity of pleasure they produce. Of course, John Stuart Mill introduced quality as well as quantity into the evaluation of pleasures.

## 9.8 PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY IS THE BASIS OF LEGAL AND SOCIAL REFORMS

Bentham based the legal system on his utilitarian principle. He understood the legal system in the same way of his moral thought. Bentham announced that the principle of utility is the foundation of his system and the business of government is 'promote the happiness of the society by punishing and rewarding'.

Bentham did not acknowledge any necessity for the intercession of religion in moral life. Bentham's theory of utilitarianism evaluates actions considering their consequences. Bentham in his work A Fragment on Governmentattacked the legal theory of Sir William Blackstone vehemently, who was advocating tradition, and Bentham holds that the justification of obedience to Government depends upon the calculation of consequences.He wrote, "The principle of utility' neither requires nor admits of any other regulator than itself'. Bentham holds that pleasure is itself a 'good' and pain is itself an 'evil'.

Bentham was particularly indebted to Hume and Helvetitus. From Hume he learnt that moral philosophy; like natural science must begin with empirical observation and that the techniques of the one were equally applicable in the other. Also, in Hume's moral philosophy Bentham found that the source of the rules of justice were located in general utility and he learnt to equate virtue with utility.

Bentham was conscious that to achieve its objectives the science of legislation had to combine a study of what the law is and of what the law ought to be. What ought to be the end of legislation is the greatest happiness. Thus, any action or law is could be considered good if it can produce 'the greatest happiness for the greatest number'.

Bentham considered utility principle as the foundation of social science. In the same way, he viewed pleasures and pains as the ultimate matter to which all social constructs and human activity could be reduced and thereby explained. They were the 'real entities' of individual experience, acting both as the final cause of individual action and as the efficient causes and means to individual happiness.

## 9.9 CRITICISM

Bentham's utilitarianism may be criticised on many accounts. Since Bentham's own day there has been continuous criticism. Both J. S. Mill and Sidgwick, although they continued the utilitarian tradition, were also critics

of Bentham. Bentham's utilitarianism is open to the following objections:

- Bentham has been much criticised because he thought that two pleasures are equal in value, if they are equally intense, enduring etc. As he said, "Push pin is as good as poetry" if they are equal in the quantity of pleasure they produce. But it has been thought that some pleasures, especially intellectual ones, are higher and deserve to count more. Thus, Bentham does not seem to recognise any qualitative difference among pleasures. Therefore, Mill thought that Bentham's philosophy did not acknowledge some of 'the deeper feelings of human nature', when he calculated the consequences of actions. Mill therefore introduced differences in quality between pleasures.

- One of the serious criticisms against Bentham's Utilitarianism is that this theory is thought to be "a doctrine worthy only of swine."

- Mill thought that in addition to the moral aspect of actions, there is also the aesthetic aspect of action. But Bentham treated only the moral view of actions.

- As feeling of pleasure and pain are subjective and variable so the hedonistic calculus, mentioned by Bentham is impractical.

- Bentham fails to explain satisfactorily the transition from egoism to universalism. Bentham mentioned four external sanctions to explain the social feelings in men but these external sanctions can create a physical compulsion not of moral obligation.

## 9.10 MILL'S LIFE AND WORKS

John Stuart Mill was one of the most influential English-speaking philosophers of the nineteenth century. He was a British empiricist, economist, administrator, moral and political theorist and utilitarian social reformer. Mill was born in London on May 20th, 1806. He was the eldest son of James and Harriet Burrow Mill. His fatherJames Mill was a Scottish

philosopher, historian, economist, and psychologist. He was the most influential person in Mill's life during his formative years. James Mill was a proponent of Bentham's utilitarianism. He met Bentham in 1808. He soon became Bentham's 'lieutenant' and Bentham did what he could to help the family. Mill's father thus, educated him with the help of Bentham. Mill concluded in his Autobiography, that as result of the formal instruction which he received from his father, he started life "with an advantage of a quarter of a century over my contemporaries."

The similar political thought of James Mill and Bentham prompted them to start and led the movement of 'philosophic radicals'. This group adhered Bentham's utilitarian political philosophy which was culminated in the doctrine of John Stuart Mill in 19th century. Utilitarianism as moral philosophy argues that maximizing happiness should be measured. Philosophical Radicalism tried to apply the implications of the utilitarian principles to legal and other social institutions. Mill was working in East India Company for almost thirty years. The year he began working for the East India Company, Mill began writing for newspapers, starting with letters to the editor.

Mill's works include books and essays covering logic, epistemology, ethics, religion, and social and political philosophy. Among them System of Logic, Deductive and Inductive, Political Economy, On Liberty, Utilitarianism, The Subjection, of Women are his major works.

## 9.11 MILL AND HEDONISM

Some utilitarian are hedonists equating the good with happiness and happiness with pleasure. Mill advocates Altruistic Hedonism. His theory is refined or qualitative in nature. He explicitly says that the standard is not the agent's own happiness, but happiness in general. Now question arises, how can we prove that general happiness is desirable? Mill answers that each person's happiness is a good to that person and general happiness is, therefore, a good to the aggregate of all person.

## 9.12 MILL'S UTILITARIANISM

Mill urges, with his father and Bentham, that the basic moral norm is the principle of utility, that an action is right provided it maximizes human welfare. But he wanted to be a utilitarian with a difference. He himself was one of Bentham's critics and as such tries to improve upon Bentham's utilitarianism. Mill, in his book 'Utilitarianism' offers a philosophical defence of his utilitarian principle in ethics. In this work, Mill makes an attempt to defend utilitarian position against its opponents-intuitionists, and makes an attempt to refine Bentham's utilitarianism and also tries to take utilitarianism as the principle of justice.

Mill argues against the intuitionists' principles of morality claiming that the intuitionists' principles are abstract, and there are no external standards to pass judgement in case of different moral claims. Mill claims that by the utility principle, we can evaluate different moral claims on the basis of an external standard of pleasure and pain.

In Chapter Two of Utilitarianism, Mill tries to describe "What utilitarianism Is"? Like Bentham, Mill accepts Hedonism stating the proper 'end' of all actions and so it forms the basis for the theory. Mill's principle of utilitarianism becomes clearer from the criticisms which he considers and which force him to provide more details as he responds to them.

The first criticism Mill considers finds fault with the hedonistic basis of the theory:

To suppose that life has no higher end than pleasure - no better and nobler object of desire and pursuit-they designate as utterly mean and grovelling; as a doctrine worthy only of swine…" (Utilitarianism, p.257-8)

Mill's response to this objection is not only a reply to the critics, but a reaction to the narrowness of Bentham's hedonistic utilitarianism as well. Unlike Bentham and others utilitarians, who take quantity for measuring pleasures, Mill says that some pleasures are qualitatively superior to others.

Mill often preferred a life as a human being dissatisfied against the life of a pig that is satisfied. Mill gives the famous line: "it is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied." Bentham recognises only quantitative difference among pleasures, but Mill has admitted the qualitative as well. Pleasures differ in quality as well as in quantity. The highest good, according to Mill, lies not in intense or durable enjoyment of noble, dignified and elevated pleasure. Hence Mill doctrine is called Refined Utilitarianism as contrasted with Bentham's Gross Utilitarianism. In the matter of measuring quality against quantity, Mill appeals to the 'verdict of competent judges'. Mill insists that those who are 'equally capable of appreciating and enjoying both' prefer mental pleasures to physical ones. If, however, there is a conflict of opinion among the competent judges, we should abide by the verdict of the majority of them. And it is on account of the sense of dignity that competent judges prefer noble pleasures to physical pleasures.

Mill now turns to a second type of critic of the hedonistic aspect of utilitarianism, one who maintains either that happiness is unattainable or that we have no right to be happy. To those who maintain that happiness is unattainable, Mill replies that even "if no happiness is to be had at all by human beings" still "something might be still said for the utilitarian theory; since utility includes not solely the pursuit of happiness, but the prevention or mitigation of happiness". (Utilitarianism, p.263) According to Mill,' want of mental cultivation' and 'a sincere interest in the public good', are the two principal obstacles for not having such an existence. For Mill, both of which can be corrected through education.

Then, the answer Mill gives to those who ask 'what right thou hast to be happy' is that the goal of action is not your own happiness, but the happiness of all. We should try to bring about the greatest net happiness, taking everyone into account. Mill states that "The utilitarian morality does recognise in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. It only refuses to admit that the sacrifice is itself a

good. A sacrifice which does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, it considers as wasted….The happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness, but that of all concerned." (Utilitarianism, p.268)

At this point, a third objection arises to utilitarianism. Some critics, thinking that we will on many occasions have to sacrifice our own welfare for the good of all, 'find fault with its standard as being too high for humanity.' But Mill points out that a good ethical theory is supposed to give us an ideal towards which to aspire. He also notes that the utilitarian theory does not require us to have a benevolent motive for our action. Mill claims, "The motive has nothing to do with the morality of the action." (Utilitarianism,p-270) We might have a self-interested motive, but as long as we do the action which is likely to result in the best consequences for all, we are acting correctly. Mill responses the objections arise to utilitarianism and try to explain his view on utilitarianism.

Mill, in Chapter Two of his work Utilitarianism claims, "The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, "Utility", or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure, and the absence of pain; by unhappiness, pain, and the privation of pleasure"(p.257). This principle of utility is the core of Mill's utilitarianism.

Mill, in Chapter Three of his work Utilitarianism considers the sanctions to influence individual to follow the principle of utility. Mill asks, why am I bound to promote the general happiness? In this regard, Mill has added to the external sanctions recognised by Bentham, the internal sanction of conscience or a 'feeling of duty'. This internal sanction refers to 'a feeling for the happiness of mankind', 'a desire to be in unity with our fellow beings', and 'a feeling of pain attendant on the violation of duty'. Mill believes that the moral feelings are not innate, but acquired. Education is the key to making sure that we have the right feelings. But Mill argues that even without

a proper education, there is a strong natural basis for accepting the utilitarian morality. Mill has given a psychological explanation of the transition from egoism to altruism. Sympathy grows out of self-love according to the laws of association and transference of interest. At first we egoist, and relieved the sufferings of others in order to relieve our own miseries. Then by repetition, our own interest became transferred from the end to the means. Thus, sympathy is acquired in the life-time of the individual.

Chapter Four of Utilitarianism is titled 'Of What Sort of Proof the Principle of Utility is Susceptible. 'It actually contains a defense of the hedonistic part of his theory of Utilitarianism. The chapter intends to provide a proof of the utility principle. Mill starts by suggesting an analogy with proving that something is visible. The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible, Mill writes 'is that people actually see it'. Similarly, for something being audible, the proof is that people hear it. In a like manner, he continues, 'the sole evidence that it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it. It generally acknowledged that this argument derives an 'ought' statement from 'is' statement. He here derives the desirable from the desired. He is saying that because people do desire happiness, they ought to be desirable. In the terminology of G.E. Moore, he commits the naturalistic fallacy.

But how can we prove that general happiness is desirable? Mill answers that each person's happiness is a good to that person and the 'general happiness' therefore, is a good to the aggregate all persons. Here he seems to move from egoism to altruism. But this argument involves two fallacies which are known in logic as 'the fallacy of composition' and 'the fallacy of division'.

Mill gives argument for the hedonistic view, that 'all pleasure is intrinsically good'. Here Mill addresses the issue of psychological hedonism. He accepts that the psychological account of human being of liking pleasure and detesting pain are the prime motivators in any course of action. Other things are sought, at least initially, as means to pleasure or the avoidance

of pain. But he argues that by the process of associative mechanism, they can be transformed and be associated with the ends for which they were means at an earlier point of time. Mill says that other things which we value, like health or money, are initially thought of as valuable because they lead to pleasure. After a while, we may think of them as desirable in and of themselves i.e. these things later on be sought as ends in themselves. He says through the process of association, it is possible that extrinsic values can over a period of time be treated as intrinsic value. Thus, though according to psychological hedonists, pleasure alone could be treated as intrinsic value and all others as extrinsic values, that is, ways of attaining pleasure, Mill argues that over a period of time that which was extrinsic value can be taking place of intrinsic value. Mill's theory in that sense goes beyond Bentham's conception of utilitarianism. Mill says,

"From being a means to happiness, it comes to be itself a principal ingredient of the individual's conception of happiness…What was once desired as an instrument for the attainment of happiness, has come to be desired for its own sake…." (Utilitarianism, pp-291)

Mill, once again tries to prove the hedonistic claim. He attempts to equate 'desiring a thing' with 'finding it pleasant'.

Mill says, "I believe that----desiring a thing and finding it pleasant,…are phenomena entirely inseparable, …in strictness of language, two different modes of naming the same psychological fact….that to desire anything, except in proportion as the idea of it is pleasant, is a physical and metaphysical impossibility. (Utilitarianism, pp-292-3) He says that we always desire pleasure, therefore pleasure is desirable.

Mill has advocated Rule-Utilitarianism as he is trying to judge the act on the basis of rule. But for utilitarians, rules by themselves are not something indispensable, because rules are selected on the basis of the principle of utility, that which can promote greatest amount of happiness. That is, the rule by itself is in a sense derived from the consequences of the

act repeated over and over again and thus to be followed as a rule for similar circumstances.

Mill has used this utility principle to come up with the principle of justice in social and political realm. He contends that whatever satisfies the principle of utility also satisfies the requirements of justice.

## 9.13 BENTHAM AND MILL

Mill Shared the utilitarianism of Bentham and James to a certain extent, and views that actions are right in proportion as they tend to produce happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. But Mill had different conception about the nature of happiness and justification of utilitarianism. We may focus on the following points and try to understand how Mill improves upon Bentham's utilitarianism.

- Bentham and James Mill understood happiness in terms of pleasure and they believed that the aim of each person is mainly the promotion of agent's own happiness, which is pleasure. Mill altered their hedonistic assumptions by introducing his idea of higher pleasure and thereby changing the notion of happiness.

- Bentham belonged to psychological egoist school and he proclaimed that persons act only to satisfy his or her self-interest. But he could not justify how and why one should concern with the happiness of others? He could not satisfactorily explain the transition from egoism to altruism. Mill rejects the traditional substantive doctrines of psychological egoism and hedonism that Bentham and Mill's father sometimes defended or suggested. Mill elaborates his criticism against Bentham in his essays 'On Bentham' and 'Remarks on Bentham's Philosophy'. Mill thought that because of Bentham's narrow concept of his philosophy, he could not accommodate many of the things within his domain of philosophy.

- Like Bentham's hedonism, Mill says that pleasure is the end of morality. Bentham's hedonism views that mental state of pleasure has intrinsic

good and similarly, the mental state of pain has intrinsic evil. All other things have value, either good or bad as far as they bring pleasure or pain. Mill, to a great extent, accepted this principle and argued that over a period of time that which was extrinsic value can be taking the place of intrinsic value.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** Name one book authored by Bentham.

……

**Q2:** What is the meaning of the 'principle of utility'?

……

**Q3:** What is utilitarianism?

……

**Q4:** What is the principle of Bentham's utilitariam?

……

**Q5:** Write two points of Bentham's utilitarianism.

……

**Q6:** Fill in the blanks:

a) Utilitarianism has its origin in the ancient ……. Philosophy.

b) According to Bentham, the moral worthiness of an action depends upon the …… of that action.

c) Bentham advocates…….hedonism.

d) Utilitarianism holds that the best action is the one that maximizes …..

**Q7:** Who advocates qualitative difference in pleasure?

……

**Q8:** Name one book authored by Mill.

……

**Q9:** What are the types of utilitarianism?

……

**Q10:** What is Rule Utilitarianism

……

**Q11:** Fill in the blanks

a) It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a … satisfied.

b) Mill's utilitarianism is called…. Utilitarianism

**Q12:** What is altruistic hedonism?.

……

**Q12:** How does Mill argue against the Intuitionists' principle of morality?

……



## 9.14 LET US SUM UP

- Utilitarianism is a teleological theory of obligation as it considers the consequences of an action for passing moral judgement. This theory holds that an action is right or obligatory if and only if it produces a greater balance of good over evil in the universe as a whole. Thus, Utilitarianism appeals to the 'principle of utility' for passing moral judgement.Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill and Henry Sidgwick are the leading representative thinkers of the British utilitarian tradition. Bentham declared that we aim at'the greatest happiness for the greatest number of the people'. Happiness is hence taken as the unique measure of value.

- Bentham's Utilitarianism reflects psychological hedonism that pleasure and pain defines the motives of human behaviour. Bentham brings hedonistic calculus in his moral theory. His utilitarianism may be called gross or sensualistic because it does not recognise any qualitative differences among pleasures.

- Mill is consistently a utilitarian, which is a collectivist philosophy. Mill believes that individuals have an ethical obligation to perform those actions which are likely to result in the greatest net good consequences, taking everyone into account. As a hedonistic utilitarian, Mill believes that it is the pleasure or happiness that is likely to result should be

considered as good consequences, and displeasure or unhappiness that is likely to result should be considered as bad consequences.

- Mill believes that quality as well as quantity must be taken into account in deciding which action is right. Thus, though Mill belongs to the school of utilitarianism, yet he differs from Bentham's utilitarianism on some key issues. Mill has used this utility principle to come up with the principle of justice in social and political realm.



## 9.15: FURTHER READING


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2) Bunnin.N., and Tsui-James. E.P., The Blackwell Companion to philosophy, Blackwell publishing, Oxford, 2003
3) Mackenzie.John.M., A Manual of Ethics,Surjeet Publications, Delhi,1997
4) Sinha. J.N., A Manual to Ethics, New Central Agency, Calcutta, 1986
5) Lillie. W., An Introduction to Ethics, Surjeet Publications, Delhi, 2007.
6) Crimmins. James E., On Bentham, Cengage learning Pvt. Ltd., Delhi, 2004




## 9.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation.

**Ans to Q No 2:** Usefulness

**Ans to Q No 3:** Utilitarianism is a moral theory which appeals to the 'principle of utility' to tell what is right or obligatory. It states thatthe best action is the one that maximizes utility.

**Ans to Q No 4:** 'The Greatest happiness of the greatest number'.

**Ans to Q No 5:** According to Bentham's Utilitarianism, we ought to aim at the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. Bentham recognises only quantitative distinction among pleasures.

**Ans to Q No 6:** a. Greek b. Consequence c. Altruistic gross d. d. Utility

**Ans to Q No 7:** Mill

**Ans to Q No 8:** Utilitarianism

**Ans to Q No 9:** Act-Utilitarianism, Rule- Utilitarianism, General Utilitarianism.

**Ans to Q No 10:** According to Rule Utilitarianism, the rightness of the act depends upon its conformity to a rule i.e. Law.

**Ans to Q No 11:** a) Pig b) Refined

**Ans to Q No 12:** According to altruistic hedonism, the standard is not the agent's own happiness, but happiness in general

**Ans to Q No 13:** Mill argues that the intuitionists' principles are abstract, and there are no external standards to pass judgement in case of different moral claims. Mill asserts that by the utility principle, we can evaluate different moral claims on the basis of an external standard of pleasure and pain.

## 9.17 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** Mention the different theories regarding the nature of the ultimate moral standard.

**Q2:** What is teleological theory?

**Q3:** What is de-ontological theory?

**Q4:** Mention the names of two hedonists.

**Q5:** Who says: "Greatest happiness of the Greatest number"?

**Q6:** Define 'utilitarianism'.

**Q7:** Mention two utilitarians' who are also considered as hedonists.

**Q8:** Write the ultimate moral standard of universalistic hedonism.

**Q9:** Mention the essential elements of universalistic hedonism.

**Q10:** Who is the author of An Enquiry concerning the origin of our Ideas of Virtues of Moral Good?

**Q11:** What is hedonism?

**Q12:** Name three famous works of Mill

**Q13:** What is altruistic hedonism?

**Q14:** Who says "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied'"

**Q15:** What is extrinsic and intrinsic value? According to Mill

**Q16:** What is rule utilitarianism?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** Write a short note on utilitarianism.

**Q2:** Is there any difference between utilitarianism and egoism? Briefly explain

**Q3:** What is universalistic hedonism? Briefly explain

**Q4:** What is altruistic hedonism? Briefly explain

**Q5:** How does Mill reject Bantham's hedonistic principle? Briefly explain

**Q6:** How does Mill argue against the Intuitionists' principle of morality? Briefly explain

**Q7:** How does Mill argue against the Hedonistic aspect of Utilitarianism? Briefly explain

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Explain critically Bentham's utilitarianism.

**Q2:** Discuss the historical background of utilitarianism.

**Q3:** Explain the theory of utilitarianism.

**Q4:** Discuss the criticisms raised on Bentham's utilitarianism.

**Q5:** State two points of differences between Mill's Utilitarianism and Bentham's Utilitarianism.

**Q6:** Describe critically Mill's Utilitarianism.

**Q7:** How does Mill improve Banthama's utilitarianism? Explain

**Q8:** How does Mill argue against the Hedonistic aspect of Utilitarianism? Discuss

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# UNIT 10: THE ETHICAL THEORY OF KANT

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

10.1 Learning Objectives

10.2 Introduction

10.3 Rationalism in Kant's Ethical Theory

10.4 Categorical Imperative

10.5 Maxims of Morality

10.6 Criticism

10.7 Let Us Sum Up

10.8 Further Readings

10.9 Answers to Check Your Progrees

10.10 Model question

## 10.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Explain rationalism in Kant's ethical theory,
- Define Categorical Imperative,
- Discuss Duty for duty's sake…the rule of life,
- Explain Kant's rejection of Teleological ethics,
- Elaborate Maxims of morality,
- Describe critically Kant's Ethical Theory.

## 10.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you Kant's Ethical Theory. Kantian Ethical Theory refers to a deontological ethical theory ascribed to the German philosopher Immanuel Kant. According to Kant, actions become good or bad by rule following, not by virtue of their consequences. Kant advocates that reason alone can judge all our actions as right or wrong. His moral theory called "Rationalism" which gives all importance to reason. According to Kant, reason should be the regulator of our moral conduct. The form of reason which is responsible for building up the conception of the world out of the materials supplied by the senses is called pure reason. The form of

reason which is responsible for regulating our moral conduct is called by Kant "practical reason". Kant's moral theory has no place for emotion. Hence it is regarded to be ascetic in character. Emotion has no place or role to play in an individual's life to judge one's action as right or wrong. In Rationalism, virtue is the highest good or the Sumum bonum. One must conquer feelings and desires in order to achieve virtue or the highest good. Rationalism rejects sensibility and considers that we can attain virtue in our life only when we absolutely depend on reason

Kant never accepts the theory that God judges all our actions and accordingly we either go to heaven or hell. He therefore rejects all Teleological grounds to judge our actions as right or wrong. Kant's, Rationalism as a Moral theory is also known as Rigorism, Purism or Formal Ethics. It gives us the pure form of morality-the Categorical Imperative, but does not recognize the importance of the matter or content of morality which is supplied by feelings and desire. Kant's point of view is deontological, which regards duty as the fundamental concept of ethics. It is not teleological, which regards end or purpose as the fundamental concept of ethics. Rightness and obligation are the central concepts of ethics. Kant assumes that Duty and Self-interest are the only two motives of actions. Kant, for the first time, makes deontological concepts central in ethics in an emphatic way. Paton says, ''Kant knew, of course, that he was trying to do something which no one had succeeded in doing before- namely, to set forth the principles of morality apart from all considerations of self interest".



**LET US KNOW**

Bradley observes that Hedonism is the doctrine of 'pleasure for pleasure's sake' and Rationalism is the doctrine of 'duty for duty's sake'.

## 10.3 RATIONALISM IN KANT'S ETHICAL THEORY

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) propounds the view that Reason is the ground of Morality. Reason can determine the nature of our actions. Reason differentiates man from all lower animals. It is the characteristics of element in human nature. Rationalism emphasises the claim of reason. Rationalism as a moral theory shows that our senses supply the materials of our knowledge and reason plays an important role in constituting the world of ideas and conceptions. Rationalism advocates self denial and self conquest. Rationalism seeks to spiritualize the nature of man. The fulfilment of the higher self or pure reason is the ideal of Rationalism.

Rationalism is not an explicit theory of the end or ideal. It is a vindication of the absoluteness of the moral law or the Categorical Imperative of the practical reason. It is only the reason which can supply us the moral law. Reason regulates our moral conduct. There are some merits of Rationalism. They are as follows:

(1) Rationalism rightly holds that moral distinctions are objective, and not merely subjective and dependent upon more personal feelings, emotions and sentiments.

(2) Rationalism emphasizes an important truth that the reason is the regulative principle in the life of a person. But it errs in holding that the life of the man must be a life of pure reason devoid of sensibility. Sensibility constitutes the matter of moral life. Reason gives the form of moral law. It regulates sensibility according to the moral law.

(3) Rationalism emphasizes the notion of duty or moral obligation. It asserts the distinction between ought and the 'is'. It asserts that the ethical end is, in its very nature, an idea demanding realization. But it gives us only the form of the moral ideal. The content comes from sensibility. Kant does not give any place to sensibility in moral life.

(4) Rationalism emphasizes the dignity and independence of man as a

rational being.

(5) Kant recognizes Right as distinct from expediency. Right, in Kant's theory, stands out clear from the taint of all prudential considerations.

(6) Rationalism is undoubtedly true in holding that self-sacrifice is a condition of self-realization.

Kant's Rationalism is akin to Philosophical Intuitionism. According to Kant, Moral law is known intuitively. Intuition is the ability to something by using our feelings rather than through the facts. Kant regards conscience as practical reason. It imposes the Moral law upon itself. The nature of moral law is a-priori and not empirical. It is self evident. Actions are good or bad from their agreement or disagreement with the Moral law. In Kant's Moral theory, intuition plays an important factor in determined the purity of motive of our action. The moral quality of an action is not determined by any end or its consequences. Intuitionism does not give any philosophical justification of the moral principles. But Kant tries to give a philosophical foundation of the Moral Law. Kant's philosophy of intuitionism has also influenced his Moral Theory of Rationalism. Therefore, it is also known as Rational Intuitionism. It regards the Moral Law or the internal law of conscience as the moral standard. Kant is an advocate of moral ethics as distinguished from teleological ethics. Conscience is moral or practical reason.

## 10.4 KANT'S CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Kant advocates the nature of moral law as '' Categorical Imperative'' which is intuited by reason. His Rationalism or Formal Ethics is Categorical in nature. According to Kant, the internal law of conscience or practical reason is the ultimate moral standard. The practical reason is unconditional.

The moral law is Categorical imperative. It is a command and in that sense it is an imperative. It is not an assertion of fact. It is subject to no qualification. Therefore, it is an imperative. (Without understanding the

Kantian conception of categorical imperative we cannot apprehend his moral philosophy.) Moral Law is not dependent upon any condition and thereby it is regarded to be categorical. It has to be obeyed not because it helps us to attain this or that end, in life, but because it is absolute and unconditionally binding upon us or rather it has to be obeyed without any purpose.

Moral Law is thus Categorical Imperative or unconditional and is independent of nature. Moral Law is not assertorial, but imperative. Moral Law never asserts our action as right or wrong. It is a-priori and it is not derived from any experience because it depends upon on our intuition i.e. our reason. According to Kant, reason has the supreme place in human constitution. Practical reason gives us the moral law which is of the nature of Categorical imperative. This moral law is absolutely binding on us. Moral law is free from empirical factors, and ought to be done under all circumstances, it is known in advance of a particular situation. Thus, according to Kant, Moral law cannot be hypothetical imperative. A Categorical imperative is different from hypothetical imperative. A hypothetical imperative is not absolutely binding on us. The following is an example of a hypothetical imperative-"If you want to understand the philosophy of Aristotle then you must have some understanding of the philosophy of Plato." It is not absolutely and unconditionally necessary for someone who understands the philosophy of Aristotle. The command or the imperative is subject to a qualification here. But moral law is not subject to any qualification. The moral law is thus categorical.

Every external end is Empirical, it is an object of experience. It can give rise only to a hypothetical imperative - "'If I wish to attain such and such an end, then I am to act in such and such a way." But a Categorical imperative or the moral law has no reference o any external ends. Moral law is referred to the right direction of the will itself. The Categorical imperative is the Universal Moral Law, it applies to all persons; it is common to mankind.

Moral Law demands unconditional obedience. We ought to obey Moral law because it is imposed by our practical reason. We ought to obey

it not for the sake of any other end. Moral Law is not a means to a higher end; it is an end in itself. It is no absolute unconditional command which admits of no question. What we ought to do we ought to do. It cannot set aside by any higher law.

Do you how Kant has judged our actions as right or wrong? According to Kant, actions are right only when they are done for the sake of duty. Any action is wrong when it is does not follow the conditions of duty. An action is right only when it is performed for the sake of its rightness. Therefore, Kant sets before us a maxim to judge our action as right or wrong. The maxim is ''Duty for duties sake''. It is the true rule of life. Duty has to be performed under all conditions. It has to be performed whatever may happen. A moral life is an autonomous life. Moral directives are directives issued by practical reason. The aim of life is virtue and not pleasure. According to Kant, good will is the only jewel which shines in its own light. Practical life itself enforces moral laws upon itself. Kant holds that it is not moral to help another if one is pained by his sorrow and the help is consequent upon this feeling. The value of actions depends upon their reason, not result. In acting there can be only one motivating cause and that is a faith in moral law. Sublime qualities like love, sympathy etc; should be adhered to only as a duty, not due to attachment. There is obligation in duty. Its directive is the ultimate directive. It does not depend upon the desire or aversion of the individual.

When Kant advocates that moral law is a categorical imperative then thereby he meant that the moral law is independent of desire. Desire may be present in following the moral law. But there may not be a desire to fulfil the moral law. Obedience to the moral law may be the most painful alternative. But still the moral law is recognised as having a binding force upon our will. Kant says that an act to be virtuous must exclude the influence of desire. It must be the outcome of a pure regards for the moral law. Kant writes, '' Nothing can possible be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification except a good will.'' For example, Kant will condemn an act of an individual who takes care of a

poor person out of pure love. To him such law is only pathological. He respects such an act when it is done of pure regards for the moral law.

Kant at one place writes that there is nothing in the world or even out of it that can be called good except the Good will. A Good will is that will which is motivated by pure respect for the moral law. Kant holds that the Good will is the only good. Good will is unconditional and necessarily independent of other conditions. The Good will is the only absolutely good. Therefore, the Good will is never affected by any desire or feeling for any result. We can say here that in Kant's categorical imperative a moral action is determined by our motive. An action is moral if its motive is moral, if it is promoted by a consciousness of duty.

Categorical imperative is possible because man is a rational being. Reason is the universal element in human nature. It imposes the categorical imperative upon itself. The will which ought to be guided by its own moral law i.e. the categorical imperative, the will which is autonomous, unconditional therefore has to be governed by itself.

Kant makes a distinction between heteronomy and the autonomy of the will. According to Kant, the will is autonomous or free, when it is a law unto itself - when it acts solely from a sense of duty. The will is heteronomous when it is guided by some end or motive by desire. Good will is autonomous. Good will is intrinsically and unconditionally good. Kant was influenced by Butler in formulating his concept of autonomy of the will. Butler recognised the autonomy of conscience and 'man as a law to himself '.

Virtue depends or lies in the cultivation of good will or rational will or holy will. The moral life is life of pure reason. In pure reason feelings and emotions have no place in it. Feelings and emotions ought to be completely suppressed. Even to give way to love or compassion is immoral. Life is pure reason undisturbed by feeling and emotion is the ideal of moral life. Kant allows only the feelings of reverence for the moral law in moral life.

Kant would condemn the act of a person who out of love or compassion, nurses a sick man or helps a poor man. Such an act would be called pathological or abnormal. Kant advocates two conditions for considering an action as right action. These two conditions are - (1) it should conform to the moral law revealed by reason, (2) the agent should perform it out pure regard for the moral law.

Do you know why Kant rejects Teleological Ethics? Kant's ethical system is notable form of deontological ethics. According to Kant, an action is right because it conforms to the formal principles of the good will. In contrast, in Teleological ethics there is no such emphasis on formal principle. In Teleological ethics morality of an action is judged by God. Teleological ethics accepts that an action is good when it satisfies certain desires. In Kant's opinion, in such moral philosophy, moral law cannot become a universal law. Here, good depends upon particular desire of an individual. This is the reason why Kant rejects all Teleological ethics.

The Categorical Imperative is a pure form devoid of content. The moral law is a pure form without any matter. It has no particular content. Anything which is pure in nature is simple and unique and without any content. Moral law being pure and simple in nature cannot tell us the content of our action. Moral law cannot tell us what we should do or what we should not do, because all particular things have in them an empirical and contingent element and because moral law can have no reference to any such element. The moral law cannot tell us that they should conform to a form. It is form of law in general. It only tells us that our actions should have self - consistency.



**LET US KNOW**

Kant writes, '' Nothing can be possible conceived in the world , or even out of it , which can be called good without qualification except a good will.'' A Good will is that will which is motivated by pure respect for the moral law. The Good will is the only absolutely good. A will is

good, not because of its effects, but in itself and for itself.

According to Kant, moral law cannot be hypothetical. A Categorical Imperative is different from hypothetical imperative. A hypothetical imperative is not absolutely binding on us.

Kant states that actions are right only when they are done for the sake of duty. Kant sets before us a maxim to judge our action as right or wrong. The maxim is " Duty for duties sake ". It is the true rule of life. According to Kant, "the will is autonomous or free, when it is a law unto itself - when it acts solely from a sense of duty. The will is heteronomous when it is guided by some end or moved by desire."



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** What is the other name of Kant's moral theory?

.....

**Q2:** Why Kant's philosophy is known as rational intuitionism?

.....

**Q3:** Why moral law is considered categorical imperative, according to Kant?

.....

**Q4:** What is Good will?

.....

**Q5:** What do you mean by autonomous of will and heteronomous of will?

.....

**Q6:** " Duty for duties sake " discuss this statement.

.....

**Q7:** What are the two conditions advocated by Kant for considering an action as right, according to Kant.

.....

## 10.5 MAXIMS OF MORALITY

Maxims helps make the moral law more certain and definite. The maxim which Kant has provided to make the moral law more certain is simple and self - consistent. This follows that self-consistency must be present in our actions. Maxims can be applied only when there are certain given pre-supposed content. In Kant's categorical imperative the maxims depend on the existence of right and duties. But in the opinion of Prof. Mackenzie the maxims of Kant's categorical imperative has form without matter. He writes on " Manual of ethics ", " Kant's principle of self-consistency gives us form without matter - the mere form of reason with all the particular content of the desires left out ".

Kant tries to make the moral law or categorical imperative more definite by laying down the following maxims -

(1) " Act only on that maxim which thou canst will to be universal law."

This maxim shows that what is right is universal, and what is expedient is not universal. Kant illustrates the maxim by the example of breaking promises. If the law of promise-breaking becomes universal or in other words everyone starts violating promise, then promise would no longer retain any meaning. In the same way, a person in an extreme state of depression can contemplate suicide but this is wrong, not being a universal law and incapable of becoming one. If suicides were committed by all persons, there would soon be no person left to commit suicide " Act in such a way as you could will that everyone else should act under the same general conditions. " This is the first maxims of morality.

Kant's first moral maxim can be criticised in the following ways:-

1. Kant wanted to give moral law a concrete form with this principle but it failed to perform this task.

2. This law does not grant licence for any exceptions and therefore becomes rigorous.

3. The speciality of this maxim is that it stresses the social aspect of Ethics but being Formal, it becomes impractical.

(2) Kant's second maxim is - "So act as to treat humanity whether in thine own person or in that of any other, always as an end, and never as a means. "

The maxim orders us to treat personality as of absolute worth. A person is an end in himself; and note means. Man is essentially rational. Only rational nature is such an end, and has absolute worth. Man is a creature of sensibility has no absolute worth. The rational nature which constitutes humanity should be respected. No man has the right to allow others to exploit him. Deception is wrong because the deceiver misleads others and exploits them as a means to his own ends. We should respect our own personality and the personality of others. This maxim does not allow any one the privilege or right to committing suicide. Suicide is wrong because the person who commits it does not give due respect to his intrinsic humanity and treat himself merely as a means to enjoyment of pleasure.

Thus, from the above law, Kant derives a corollary - " Try always to perfect thy itself, and try to conduce to the happiness of others, by bringing about favourable circumstances, as you cannot make other perfect." For the attainment of perfection, will power and control are needed and no one can control another. Consequently he cannot make them perfect.

Kant's second maxim is also criticised. Kant's moral maxim is important because it preaches respect for our own and others' personalities. Everyone will agree with the fact that it is immoral to reduce any one's personality to the level of a means to one's end but notwithstanding this, some exceptions will have to be admitted.

(3) Kant's third moral maxim is - "Act as a member of a kingdom of ends."

It means - " So act as to behave in understanding that you and everyone else are of intrinsic value : behave as befits member of a society

in which everyone looks upon the good of another as having a value equal to his own, and everyone behaves unto him as he does unto them, in which there are every means and ends in which everyone attains his own good and increases the good of others," In this way Kant imagines a " Kingdom of ends " which is an ideal state in which all members obey the moral law. Each member of that stat is autonomously controlled and applies the law upon himself, which law is his internal rational law. Rational law is universal. Thus, people who follow it are in a state of complete mutual harmony. Moral Laws are neither external laws nor supernatural orders. In a perfect society peoples are self- imposed and obedience to them does not depend upon any external pressure. In this way, in a perfect society, everyone will be free, rational and happy.

In this way, Kant treats the adjustment of virtue and happiness as essential. If it is not indeed to make morality an object of mere faith and if it also has some intrinsic value then the existence of a kingdom, in which virtue and happiness are in harmony, will have to be imagined. Only then moral laws be true inspires of actions. The aim of moral good is the ultimate good. Moral good is just doing duty for the sake of duty. In ultimate good includes both virtue and happiness.

Kant's third moral maxim is open to criticism in the following way:-

(1) Kant's moral principle is based on a psychological dualism in reason and sensibility. He treats the two as mutually contradictory, forgetting, mean while, their inseparable nature as parts of the soul. Sensibility is the subject matter of moral life. It needs the form of intellect. It is not essential that it contradicts reason.

(2) Thus, lacking sensibility Kant's moral dictum are mere forms.

(3) Kant's pure moralism is partial. It terms the moral value as a perfect state. But to fulfil one's duty completely oblivious of the result may not only asceticism but even incorrect.

## 10.6 CRITICISM

Kant's Categorical imperative has been severely criticised for the psychological dualism of reason and sensibility. Kant's total rejection of human desires in following a life of moral conduct is not accepted by the critics. It is true that pure reason helps in leading a virtuous life but we cannot overlook the point that sensibility regulates our moral actions. There are several points of observations on Kant's Categorical imperative by the critics. They are as follows:

(1) Kant's Categorical Imperative is based on psychological dualism. This psychological dualism is between reason and sensibility. Our mind is an organic unity of both feeling and desires. An individual self is controlled by both feeling and desires. Feeling and desires are interrelated. Feeling gives the matter of desire; desire gives the rise to activity. There is n action without sensibility. But Kant over look this organic unit of the mind. For him, it is only pure reason which activates our voluntary actions in a rational self.

(2) Kant advocates an ascetic view of morality. According to Kant, sensibility is irrational. But for the critics this is an important mistake that Kant commits, while advocating this theory of an independent rational mind he holds the view that morality consists in sacrificing all human desires. A virtuous man should be guided by reason alone. But in our ordinary life this is not possible. Human beings have both sensibility and rationality. Kant here fails to consider the fact that virtue is the harmony between sensibility and rationality. Moreover, Kant overlooks the fact that moral conduct is impossible without desires and impulses.

(3) Kant has condemned sensibility. So the critics observe that Kant's Rationalism is ascetic and rigoristic in nature. Kant advocates that we have to extinguish all our desires, affection, love and care. But it is a fact that an individual cannot survive without these values and feelings. Moreover, these values are part and parcel of human existence and

always permissible within its limited sphere. It becomes all black when man becomes egoist and fails to understand its real value and thus its application.

(4) According to Kant our conduct cannot be good or virtuous when it is controlled by feelings. In Kant's Moral philosophy all our acts of love and care are artificial because it is mixed with sensibility and desire. Bur this is not the case. Any virtuous act is performed with respect for the Moral law. Virtue is an inward expression of our consciousness which is pure in nature.

(5) Kant holds that moral law cannot be explained. Moral law is the ultimate good. So it is Categorical Imperative. But Kant fails to give an adequate explanation regarding the categorical nature of the Moral law.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q8:** Fill in the blanks

a) Kant's rationalism is based on…….

b) Moral Law of Kant is ……and not…….

c) Moral Law is……

d) The maxim of Kant is……

e) Kant's maxim depends upon on the existence of concrete…..and……

**Q9:** State whether the following statements are true or false

a) Rationalism of Kant's Ethical Theory ignores claim of sensibility. (T/F)

b) Kant's Rationalism is also akin to Philosophical Intuitionism. (T/)

c) Kant has accepted Teleological ethics. (T/F)

**Q10:** State one of the maxims given by Kant in his moral philosophy to make the categorical imperative more definite.

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## 10.7 LETS US SUM UP

- Kant considers conscience as practical reason.
- Kant's Rationalism is a form of Philosophical Intuitionism.
- Kant's Rationalism or Formal Ethics is Categorical in nature.
- Moral law is unconditional, independent of nature and therefore a-priori.
- Categorical imperative and hypothetical imperative is different.
- Categorical imperative is the universal moral law.
- Duty for duty's sake is the true rule of life.
- Kant rejects Teleological ethics.
- In Kant's Moral Theory, intuition plays an important factor in determining the purity of motive of our action
- Kant makes a distinction between the autonomy of will and the heteronomy of the will.
- A virtuous action must be always free from any desire.
- Kant propounds that Good will is the only will which follows "Categorical Imperative".
- Good will is unconditional and necessarily independent of other conditions.
- Kant advocates two conditions for considering an action as right action.



## 10.8 FURTHER READING

1) Sinha, Jadunath. 1973. A MANUAL OF ETHICS. New central book, Agency, Calcutta 9.
2) Ram Nath Sharma . HISTORY OF WESTERN PHILOSOPHY.

3) William K. Frankena.1973. Ethics. Prentice-Hall,1973.

4) Lilly, William.1964. Introduction to Ethics. Methuen.

## 10.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGREES

**Ans to Q1:** Rigorism or purism or formal ethics.

**Ans. To Q. no.2:** Intuition plays an important role in determining the purity of our action in Kant's moral theory. His philosophy of intuitionism has influenced moral theory of rationalism to a great extent. That is why his moral theory is known as rational intuitionism.

**Ans. To Q. no.7:** (1) It should conform to the moral law revealed by reason. (2) the agent should perform it out of pure regard for the moral law.

**Ans. To Q. no 8:** a) Reason

b) Categorical imperative and hypothetical imperative

c) Categorical imperative

d) Duty for duty's sake

e) Right and duties

**Ans. To Q. no.9:** a) yes, b) yes, c) no.

**Ans. To Q. no.10:** "Act only on that maxim which thou canst will to be a universal law".

## 10.10: MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** Who views that reason is the ground of morality?

**Q2:** How moral law is known to us?

**Q3:** What are the two conditions advocated by Kant for considering an action as right action?

**Q4:** What do you mean by autonomy of will?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** Briefly points out some critical remarks on Kant's moral law.

**Q2:** Does the autonomy of will differ from heteronomy of will? Discuss briefly.

**Q3:** What do you mean by Duty for duty's sake? Briefly discuss.

**Q4:** What are the three maxims provided by Kant to make moral law more definite?

**Q5:** Briefly comment on the rejection of Teleological Ethics by Kant.

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Is Kant's theory of Categorical imperative rigid in nature? Discuss.

**Q2:** How does Kant explain the universal nature of categorical imperative. Discuss

**Q3:** Explain the maxims of Categorical imperative.

**Q4:** Why Kant's theory is called rigoristic in nature?

**Q5:** Does Kant accept Teleological Ethics?

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# UNIT-11: KANT AND AUTONOMY OF THE WILL

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

11.1 Learning objectives
11.2 Introduction
11.3 Categorical and hypothetical imperative
11.4 Maxims of Categorical Imperative
11.5 Good Will and Autonomy of the will
11.6 Criticism
11.7 Let us Sum-Up
11.8 Further Readings
11.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
11.10 Model Questions

## 11.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- know what is the autonomy of the will,
- distinguish between categorical and hypothetical imperative,
- explain the maxims of the categorical imperative,
- know the relation between good will and the autonomy of the will,
- describe the nature of autonomous and heteronomous will,
- Critically analyse Kant's autonomy of the will.

## 11.2 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces to you Kant's autonomy of the will in his moral theory. All men have a direct and distinct consciousness of freedom. They feel that they are able to choose between alternative forces of actions. Man has autonomy to choose what is right and wrong. After an act they also feel that they could have chosen otherwise. This is a fact of experience and so must be recognized.

The sense of personal responsibility that we are responsible for what we do would be meaningless if the power of choice is denied. This is the autonomy of the will. Like ourselves we hold others also responsible for

their choices and actions. Praise and blame, approval and disapproval and punishments and the norms and standards in society assume human freedom.

Man is not a passive product of the forces acting on it from without but an active rational principle which can resist "external forces" and so all its actions. This self determinism recognizes freedom of will and makes clear the real or true meaning of freedom which is essential for morality.



**LET US KNOW**

In Kant's moral philosophy it is found that moral life begins with self-restraint and self-denial, and this negative element will never totally disappear. But it only a means to self-realization which consists in transforming the lower life of sensibility into the higher life of reason- in harmonizing the sentient self with the rational self.

## 11.3 CATEGORICAL AND HYPOTHETICAL IMPERATIVE

Before going to discuss about Kant's autonomy of the will we must discuss about the Categorical Imperative.

Although everything naturally acts in accordance with law, Kant supposed that only rational beings do so consciously, in obedience to the objective principles determined by practical reason. Human agents also have subjective impulses-desires and inclinations that may contradict the dictates of reason. So there is the claim of reason as an "obligation', a command that we act in a particular way, or in imperative. Such imperatives may occur in either of two distinct forms.

1. **Hypothetical and 2. Categorical imperative.**

**A. hypothetical imperative:**

It conditionally demands performance of an action for the sake of some other end or purpose; it has the form "Do A in order to achieve X." The application of hypothetical imperatives to ethical decision is somehow

problematic. In such cases it is clear that we are morally obliged to perform the action 'A' only if we are sure both that X is a legitimate goal and that doing 'A' will in fact produce this desirable result. For a perfectly rational being, all of this would be analytic, but given the general limitation of human knowledge, the joint conditions may rarely be satisfied.

**B. Categorical Imperative:**

Autonomy of will is related to the universal law which is categorical imperative. Categorical Imperative is the internal law of conscience or practical reason. It is an "imperative" or command as opposed to an assertion of fact. A natural law is assertorial. Matter attracts matter. It is an assertion of facts. A psychological law also is assertorial. But the Moral Law is not assertorial, but imperative. It is 'categorical' or unconditional. According to Kant, the ultimate principle of morality must be a moral law which is capable of guiding us to the right action in application to every possible set of circumstances.

A categorical imperative unconditionally demands performance of an action for its own sake; it has the form "Do A." An absolute moral demand of this sort gives rise to same difficulties like hypothetical imperative since it expresses moral obligation with the perfect necessity that would directly bind any will uncluttered by subjective inclinations, the categorical imperative must be known 'a- priori"; yet it cannot be an analytic judgment since its content is not contained in the concept of a rational agent as such. The supreme principle of morality must be a synthetic a- priori proposition.

The categorical imperative or the moral law has no reference to any external ends, but simply to the right direction of the will itself. It is the universal moral law; it applies to all persons and common to all human beings. The moral law cannot tell us about the matter or content of our actions. It simply tells us that our actions should have self-consistency.

## 11.4 MAXIMS OF CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Kant tries to make the moral law or categorical imperative more definite by laying down three maxims.

1. **"Act only on that maxim which thou canst will to be a universal law."** This maxim shows that what is right is universal, and that what is expedient is not universal. Kant illustrates the maxim by the example of breaking promises. It is wrong to break a promise, because this act cannot be universalized. The maxim makes it clear that it is wrong, because it cannot be a universal law. "Act in such a way as you could will that everyone else should act under the same general conditions." This is the first maxim of morality.
2. **"So act as to treat humanity whether in thine own person or in that of any other, always as an end never as a means only"**

   A person is an end in himself, and not means. Man is essentially rational. Only rational nature is such an end, and has absolute worth. The rational nature which constitutes humanity should be respected. No one should use himself as a means to anybody else, or use any other person as a means to him. We should respect our own personality and that of others. This is the second maxim of morality.
3. **"Act as a member of a kingdom of ends."**

   This is the third maxim Treat yourself and every other human being as of equal intrinsic value; behave as a member of an ideal republic in which each citizen is a sovereign and a subject in which each is a means and end. A "kingdom of ends" is an ideal society of rational person following the Moral Law. Each member is a sovereign, because he imposes the Moral Law upon himself, and each member is a subject because he obeys the Moral Law imposed by himself. All persons following the Moral Law live in perfect harmony with one another. A "kingdom of ends" would be an ideal society in which every person would act in a rational way and follow the categorical imperative and thus live in perfect harmony with everybody.



**LET US KNOW**

Kant denies that human self is not only the empirical self (a series of mental states) which is subject to necessity, determination or casual law.

## 11.5 GOOD WILL AND AUTONOMY OF THE WILL

According to Kant the most basic aim of moral philosophy, and so also of the Groundwork, is, to "seek out" the foundational principle of a "metaphysics of morals," which Kant understands as a system of a priori moral principles that apply the Categorical Imperative to human persons in all times and cultures. Kant pursues this project through the first two chapters of the Groundwork. He proceeds by analyzing and elucidating commonsense ideas about morality, including the ideas of a "good will" and "duty". The point of this first project is to come up with a precise statement of the principle or principles on which all of our ordinary moral judgments are based.

In the third and final chapter of the Groundwork, Kant takes up his second fundamental aim, to "establish" this foundational moral principle as a demand of each person's own rational will, his conclusion apparently tries to answering those who want a proof that we really are bound by moral requirements. He rests this second project on the position that we - or at least creatures with rational wills - possess autonomy. The argument of this second project does often appear to try to reach out to a metaphysical fact about our wills. This has led some readers to the conclusion that he is, after all, trying to justify moral requirements by appealing to a fact - our autonomy - that even a moral skeptic would have to recognize.

Autonomy is an individual's capacity for self-determination or self-governance. Moral autonomy is the capacity to deliberate and to give oneself the moral law.

Kant is a deontologist. Deontologists believe that morality is a matter of duty. We have moral duties to do things which are right to do and moral

duties not to do things which it is wrong to do. Whether something is right or wrong doesn't depend on its consequences. Rather an action is right or wrong in itself.

Deontology says that certain types of action are right or wrong. How do we distinguish types of actions? Actions are the result of choices, and so should be understood in terms of choices. Choices are made for reasons, and with a purpose in mind. These considerations determine what the action performed actually is. So, deontology argues that we do not know whether an action is right or wrong unless we know the intention. We should judge whether an action is right or wrong by the agent's intention.

Kant believed that, whenever we make a decisions, we act on a maxim. Maxims are Kant's version of intentions. They are the personal principles that guide our decisions.

Autonomy is central in certain moral frameworks. For Kant, the self imposition of universal moral law (autonomy of will) is the ground to choose of both moral obligation and the respect which others owe to us and we owe ourselves. Our ability to use reasons for our actions presupposes that we understand ourselves as free.

Freedom of will is the fundamental postulate or necessary condition of morality. Free will is implied by morality. If the will is not free, morality becomes impossible. The denial of freedom of the will gradually weakens the very foundation of morality. Freedom is presupposed by moral obligation. Kant reconciled freedom and necessity in this way.

For Kant, an action is moral if its motive is moral, if it is prompted by a conscious duty. Because wealth and talents are not unconditionally good. They can be abused by a bad will. They are good only when they are used by a good will. But a good will is an unconditional good, which is independent of other conditions. It is the good direction of the will, but not towards any particular good, - knowledge, beauty or happiness. It is the will that follows the categorical imperative. It should be promoted by pure respect for the Moral Law. Reason is the universal element in human nature. It imposes the categorical imperative upon itself.

The will ought to be guided by its own moral law or categorical imperative. According to Kant, the will is autonomous or free, when it is a law unto itself. It is entirely self-legislating. It is perfectly bound by the moral obligation. These moral obligations are those which it has imposed upon itself and these moral obligations are universally imposed on everyone else by virtue of their common possession of the same rational faculties. All genuinely moral action, Kant supposed, flows from an autonomous will. So even the possibility of morality presupposes that human agents have free will, and the final section of the Grounding is devoted to Kant's effort to prove that they do.

It is autonomous when it acts from a sense of duty. The will is heteronomous when it is guided by some end or moved by desire. A heteronomous will is one in obedience to rules of action that have been legislated externally to it. Such a will is always submitting itself to some other end, and the principles of its action will invariably be hypothetical imperatives urging that it act in such a way as to receive pleasure, appease the moral sense, or seek personal perfection. In any case, the moral obligations it proposes cannot be regarded as completely binding upon any agent, since their maxim of action comes from outside it.

Freedom means lacking barrier to our action that are external to our will, though it also requires that we utilize a law to guide our decisions, a law that can come to us only by an act of our own will. This self- imposition of the moral law is autonomy. And since this law must have no content provided by sense or desire, or any other contingent aspect of our situation it must be universal. Therefore we have the first maxim of the categorical imperative, that by virtue of our being autonomous we must act only on those maxims that we can consistently will as a universal law.

So, we owe to ourselves moral respect in virtue of autonomy. Since this capacity depends in no way on anything particular or contingent about ourselves, we owe similar respect to all other persons in virtue of their capacity. Hence, through the second maxim we are obliged to act out of fundamental respect for other person in virtue of their autonomy.

In the second maxim, the concern with human dignity combined with the principle of universalizability to produce a conception of the moral law as self- legislated by each for all. A rational being belongs to the kingdom of ends as a member when he legislates in it universal laws while also himself subject to those laws. He belongs to it as sovereign, when as legislator he is himself subject to the will of no other. A rational being must always regard himself as legislator in a kingdom of ends rendered possible by freedom of will, whether as member or as sovereign. Hence we have the third maxim of the categorical imperative that "act as a member of a kingdom of ends." So we have found that in Kant's philosophy, Autonomy serves as both a model of practical reason in the determination of moral obligation and as the feature of other persons deserving moral respect from us.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

Q.1. What is the autonomy of the will according Kant?

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Q.2. What is Good Will?

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Q.3. What is Categorical Imperative?

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Q.4. How can we determine the right or wrong actions in Deontology?

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Q.5. What is Heteronomous will?

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## 11.6 CRITICISM

Christine Korsgaard follows Kant in seeing our capacity for self-reflection as both the object of respect and the seat of normativity generally. On her view, we are all guided by what she calls a "practical identity", a point of view which orients reflection on values and manifests an aspect of our self concept. But unlike Kant, Korsgaard argues that we have different practical identities that are the source of our normative commitments, and not all of them are of fundamental moral worth. But the most general of such identities - that which makes us members of a kingdom of ends - is our moral identity, which yields universal duties and obligations independent of contingent factors.

Autonomy is the source of all obligations, whether moral or non-moral, since it is the capacity to impose upon ourselves, by virtue of our practical identities, obligations to act.

It is claimed by some critics that Kantian morality leaves too little room for the kinds of emotional reactions that are constitutive of moral response in many situations: the obligations of parents for example concern not only what they do but the passions and care they bring forth in doing it. To view obligation as arising from autonomy but understanding autonomy in a purely cognitive manner makes such an account vulnerable to this kind of charge.

The difficulty this criticism points to resides in the ambiguities of the self-description that we might utilize in valuing our "humanity" - our capacity to obligate ourselves. For we can reflect upon our decision-making capacities and value this positively (and fundamentally) but regard that "self" engaging the capacity in different ways. The Kantian model of such a self is of a pure cognizer - a reflective agent engaged in practical reason. But also involved in decision-making are our passions - emotions, desires, felt commitments, senses of attraction and aversion, alienation and comfort.

These are both the objects of our judgment and partly constitutive of them - to passionately embrace an option is different from coolly determining it to be best. Judgment is involved with all such passions when

decisions are made. And it (judgment) need not be understood apart from them, but as an ability to engage in those actions whose passionate and reasoned support we muster up.

So when the optimal decision for me is an impassioned one, I must value my ability to engage in the right passions, not merely in the ability to cold-heartedly reflect and choose. Putting the passions outside the scope of reasoned reflection, as merely an ancillary quality of the action - to consider how to do something not merely what we are doing - is to make one kind of decision. Putting passions inside that scope - saying that what it is right to do now is to act with a certain affect or passion - is another.

When we generalize from our ability to make the latter sort of decisions, we must value not only the ability to weigh options and universalize them but also the ability to engage the right affect, emotion, etc. Therefore, we value ourselves and others as passionate reasoners not merely reasoners per se.

Korsgaard (following Kant) says we must, we need not commit ourselves to valuing only the cognitive capacities of humanity but also its (relatively) subjective elements. This directly relates to the nature of autonomy, for the question of whether moral obligation rests upon and contains affective elements depends on the conception of autonomy at work and whether affective elements are included in the types of reflective judgments that form its core.



## 11.7 LET US SUM UP

- Kant is a Deontologist.
- Kant believed that, whenever we make a decisions, we act on a maxim. Maxims are Kant's version of intentions.
- They are the personal principles that guide our decisions.
- They are able to choose between alternative forces of actions. After an act they also feel that they could have chosen otherwise. This is a fact of experience and so must be recognized

- This self determinism recognizes freedom of will and makes clear the real or true meaning of freedom which is essential for morality.

- The sense of personal responsibility that we are responsible for what we do would be meaningless if the power of choice is denied. This is the autonomy of the will.

- According to Kant, the ultimate principle of morality must be a moral law which is capable of guiding us to the right action in application to every possible set of circumstances. Deontology says that certain types of action are right or wrong. How do we distinguish types of actions? Actions are the result of choices, and so should be understood in terms of choices.

- In Kant's philosophy, autonomy serves as both a model of practical reason in the determination of moral obligation and as the feature of other persons deserving moral respect from us.

- Autonomy is central in certain moral frameworks. For Kant, the self imposition of universal moral law (autonomy of will) is the ground of both moral obligation and the respect which others owe to us (we owe ourselves). The will ought to be guided by its own moral law or categorical imperative.

- According to Kant, the will is autonomous or free, when it is a law unto itself the moral obligation and the respect which others owe to us and we owe ourselves



## 11.8 FURTHER READING

1) Sinha, Jadunath. 1973. A Manual of Ethics. New Central Book Agency, Calcutta 9.
2) William K. Frankena. 1973. Ethics. Prentice-Hall, 1973
3) Lilly, William. 1964. Introduction to Ethics. Methuen.
4) Chatterji, Phanibhushan. 1952. Principles of Ethics, Calcutta.
5) Mackenzie, John S.2004. A Manual of Ethics. Surajeet Publication, Delhi.

## 11.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans. to Q. No. 1:** Autonomy is central in certain moral frameworks. For Kant, the self imposition of universal moral law (autonomy of will) is the ground to choose of both moral obligation and the respect which others owe to us and we owe ourselves. Our ability to use reasons for our actions presupposes that we understand ourselves as free.

**Ans. to Q. No. 2:** A good will is an unconditional good, which is independent of other conditions. It is the good direction of the will, but not towards any particular good, - knowledge, beauty or happiness. It is the will that follows the categorical imperative. It should be promoted by pure respect for the Moral Law.

**Ans. to Q. No. 3:** Categorical Imperative is the internal law of conscience or practical reason. It is an "imperative" or command as opposed to an assertion of fact. A categorical imperative unconditionally demands performance of an action for its own sake; it has the form "Do A."

**Ans. to Q. No.4:** Deontology argues that we do not know whether an action is right or wrong unless we know the intention. We should judge whether an action is right or wrong by the agent's intention.

**Ans.to.Q.No.5:** The will is heteronomous when it is guided by some end or moved by desire. A heteronomous will is one in obedience to rules of action that have been legislated externally to it.

## 11.10 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A: Very Short Questions**

**Q1:** Is the freedom of the will is essential for morality?

**Q2:** Self-imposition of moral principle is the autonomy of the will. Is it true?

**Q3:** Whether our will is to be guide by hypothetical or categorical imperative according to Kant?

**Q4:** What is an autonomous will?

**B: Short Questions (Answer within 150-200 words)**

**Q1:** What are the maxims of categorical imperative?

**Q2:** Distinguish between the autonomous and the heteronomous will.

**Q3:** How the categorical imperative is different from hypothetical imperative?

**Q4:** What is Deontology?

**Q5:** What is the moral principle according to Kant?

**C: Long Questions (Answer within 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Discuss about Kant's autonomy of the will.

**Q2:** Show how the autonomy of the will is related to the categorical imperative.

**Q3:** How the maxims of the categorical imperative are related to the autonomy of the will?

**Q4:** Discuss the concept of will according to Kant.

**Q5:** Give a critical estimate of Kant's autonomy of the will.

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# UNIT 12: LIBERALISM AND ITS PRINCIPLES

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

11.1 Learning objectives
12.1 Learning objectives
12.2 Introduction
12.3 Origin of liberalism
12.4 Elements of liberalism
12.5 Characteristics of liberalism
12.6 Principles of liberalism
12.7 Classification of liberalism
12.8 Implication of liberalism
12.9 Let us sum up
12.10 Further Readings
12.11 Answer to Check Your Progress
12.12 Model Questions

## 12.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Explain the origin of liberalism.
- Understand the characteristics of liberalism.
- Describe the classification of liberalism
- Understand the effects of liberalism in society.

## 12.2 INTRODUCTION

Liberalism is a worldview related to political philosophy consists of the ideas of liberty and equality. It advocates a wide array of views depending on their understanding of these principles, but generally they support ideas such as freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of religion, free markets, civil rights, democratic societies, secular governments, gender equality etc. It is the culmination of developments in western society that produced a sense of the importance of human individuality. As a political doctrine it takes protecting and enhancing the freedom of the individual to

be the central problem of politics. They typically believe that government is necessary to protect individuals from being harmed by others. Liberalism first became a distinct political movement during the age of enlightenment and it became popular among philosophers and economists in the western world. It rejected the prevailing social and political norms of hereditary privilege, state religion, absolute monarchy and the Divine Rights of kings.

The word 'liberalism' is derives from the Latin word "liber" which means "free" or "not a slave". In everyday use, it also denotes generous and open-minded, as well as free from restraint and from prejudice. The central idea of all these words is freedom or liberty. Open-mindedness and generosity indicates liberty in taking food, drink, social attitude, behaviour and selection of the alternatives.

Liberalism as a political and moral philosophy is centered on two main principles - these are individualism and liberty. Firstly, liberalism places the individual at the heart of society and argues that the highest value social order is one that is built around the individual. Secondly, the purpose of society is to allow individuals to reach their full potential if they want to, and the best way to do this is to give the individual as much liberty as possible. These two key principles are the foundations upon which the various elements of liberalism spring forth.

Liberalism believes that society should be organized in accordance with certain unchangeable and inviolable human rights, especially the rights to life, liberty and property. It also holds that traditions do not carry any inherent value, that social practices ought to be continuously adjusted for the greater benefit of humanity, and that there should be no foundational assumptions viz. the Divine Right of Kings, hereditary status or established religion that take precedence over other aspects of government.

Liberalism has a narrow and broad perspective. At the narrow level, liberalism may be viewed from political and economic points of view. And from the broader level, it is like a mental attitude that attempts in the light of its presuppositions to analyze and integrate the varied intellectual, moral, religious, social, economic and political relationship of human beings. At the social level, it stands for secularism. Here freedom is related to religion

and morality. Liberalism lays stress on the value of free individual conscious of his capacity for self expression and unregulated development of his personality. Again liberalism implies the ideal of free trade coupled with internal freedom of production at the economic level. However it stands for political liberty and the right to property at the political level.

## 12.3 ORIGIN OF LIBERALISM

John Locke was the first to develop a liberal philosophy, including the right to private property and the consent of the governed. These ideas were first unified as a distinct ideology by him who is generally regarded as the father of modern liberalism. Locke developed the radical notion that government acquires consent from the governed, which has to be constantly present for a government to remain legitimate. His influential Two Treatises (1690), the foundational text of liberal ideology, outlined his major ideas. His insistence that lawful government did not have a supernatural basis was a sharp break from previous theories of governance. Based on the social contract principle, Locke argued that there was a natural right to the liberty of conscience, which he argued must therefore remain protected from any government authority. He also formulated a general defense for religious toleration in his Letters Concerning Toleration. Locke was influenced by the liberal ideas of John Milton, who was a staunch advocate of freedom in all its forms. Milton argued for disestablishment as the only effective way of achieving broad toleration. Nevertheless, the idea of natural rights played a key role in providing the ideological justification for the American and the French revolutions, and in the further development of Liberalism.

In France, the Baron-de-Montesquieu advocated laws restraining even monarchs, rather than accepting as natural the mere rule of force and tradition. In the late French Enlightenment, Voltaire argued on intellectual grounds for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in France. Again Rousseau argued for a natural freedom for mankind for changes in political and social arrangements based around the idea that society can restrain a natural human liberty, but not obliterate its nature.

Another major contributing group to the ideas of Liberalism are associated with the Scottish Enlightenment, especially David Hume and Adam Smith. Hume's most important contribution to Liberalism was his assertion that the fundamental rules of human behaviour would eventually overcome any attempts to regulate them. Adam Smith expounded the theory that individuals could structure both moral and economic life without direction from the state and that nations would be strongest when their citizens were free to follow their own initiative. John Stuart Mill also popularized and expanded liberal ideas in the mid-19th Century, grounding them in the instrumental and the pragmatic, particularly in his "On Liberty" of 1859 and other works. Towards the end of the 19th Century, though, splits were developing within Liberalism between those who accepted some government intervention in the economy, and those who became increasingly anti-government, in some cases adopting varieties of Anarchism.

In the 20th Century, in the face of the growing relative inequality of wealth, a theory of Modern Liberalism (or New Liberalism or Social Liberalism) was developed to describe how a government could intervene in the economy to protect liberty while still avoiding Socialism. Among others, John Dewey, J.M. Keynes, Roosevelt, Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman and John Kenneth Galbraith can be singled out as influential in this respect. In Europe and North America, the establishment of social liberalism became a key component in the expansion of the welfare state.

## 12.4 ELEMENTS OF LIBERALISM

Liberalism has been branded by many as meta-ideology which means that it encompasses many principles, values and elements within its crease. John Gray identified four essential elements of liberalism. These were individualism, egalitarianism, universalism and meliorism. But egalitarianism, universalism and meliorism are critical components of liberalism. Along with individualism the other important elements of liberalism are- freedom, reason, toleration, consent, constitutionalism, equality and justice.

**1. Individualism:**

Individualism is the central idea or theme of liberalism. It believes that the interests or welfare of the individual should be given primacy over all other values and principles. Individual is the basic concept of political theory and arrangements shall be made to safeguard his interest. Liberalism says that since a political system consists of individuals it should be the chief objective of this system to see that their interests are fully protected and the individuals are quite capable of doing their own job. The role of the state is to some extent like a night watchman.

**2. Freedom:**

Another important core value, principle or element of liberalism is freedom. For the liberals it is the value of supreme importance as without it the individual will simply be a unit without any dignity. Furthermore, liberty or freedom is the best vehicle for developing the best qualities. But the liberals do not advocate for absolute or unrestricted freedom as freedom will do more harm.

The liberals are in favor of chained or restricted liberty. J. S. Mill was the pioneer of individual liberty but he favored the association of law with freedom since he believed that restriction is for the general welfare of the community. The famous British historian Isaiah Berlin has developed a famous concept of liberty according to which liberty has been discussed through two concepts-negative and positive.

The negative liberty implies that man should be allowed to enjoy an atmosphere free from all sorts of restrictions. This was the contention of classical thinkers. But modern liberals do not think of liberty where there shall be no restrictions. It is positive liberty as real liberty is one which implies laws and restrictions.

**3. Reason:**

Liberalism and reason are inseparable from each other. This relation can be viewed from many angles. Firstly, liberalism partially the product of Enlightenment which strongly emphasizes that man is rational being and guided by reason and rationality. The advent of Enlightenment

emancipated man from age- old superstition, ignorance and bondage. Enlightenment also established the age of reason.

Secondly, since individuals are rational and reasonable they are quite capable of taking any decision and to judge what is good and what is bad for them. In that case there is no necessity of imposing any decision by any outside authority.

**4. Toleration:**

Toleration is another element of liberalism. In any society there are different opinions, religious sects or communities of belief and faith. All these must live side by side peacefully and for this purpose toleration is required. It is the basic feature of any society. Liberalism believes that all these diversities must exist side by side. One community has no right to impose its decision or belief of another. Only in authoritarian community imposition of ideas and belief happens. On the other hand, liberalism attempts to accommodate all the beliefs, faiths, ideologies and opinions.

**5. Consent:**

Consent is another element of liberalism. The idea of consent though very old, its modern appearance took place in the hands of the contractualists, such as Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. Both of them assertively argued that the members of the state of nature assembled together to take a decision about the setting up of a body politic and behind this decision there was the consent of all. Locke dealt elaborately with consent and this was one of the pillars of his liberalism.

**6. Constitutionalism:**

Constitutionalism is an important element of liberalism. It has two meanings-narrow and broad. In its narrow meaning constitutionalism means certain limitations upon the government specified by constitution. It further states that whenever a government intends to discharge any function or adopt a policy it must follow the restrictions. In broader sense it implies values, principles and ideas which act as guide to the government. Whenever the government proceeds to some work it must

implement these values, principles, ideas etc. The objective is to give proper credence to the aspirations of the people and to translate them into reality.

**7. Equality:**

Liberalism is based on another principle i.e. equality. Though we treat it as a political principle it is also a religious and moral principle since the religious- minded people generally say that every person is born equal as Rousseau said man is born free. So it is unreligious to deprive him of his equal status with others. The religious people also believe that it is never the intention of God to create inequalities among men and if an artificial distinction is created among men that will go against the will of God and in that sense it is immoral. As a political ideology liberalism has also built up a nexus with religion.

**8. Justice:**

Though justice is a principle of both socialism and liberalism, the latter gives it more importance. It is also declared politically that the very basis of liberalism is justice. The liberal justice has several forms or meanings. It is the declared policy of liberalism that each individual will have his due share and since all men are born equal. No one can deprive other of the share.

While individualism is probably the most important element, egalitarianism, universalism and meliorism are less effective components of liberalism. Egalitarianism means equal opportunity in the sense promoted by classical liberals. It does not mean equality in a positive way.

Universalism implies that the moral principles that follow liberalism apply to all human beings, no matter what culture they are in.

Meliorism is the belief that human beings have the capacity to become better just as their social and political institutions can become better.

## 12.5 CHARACTERISTICS OF LIBERALISM

John Hallowell has pinpointed the following characteristics of liberalism:

- Liberalism is a principle in the absolute value of human personality and spiritual quality of the individual.
- It believes in the autonomy of the individual will.
- It is an idea in the essential rationality and goodness of man.
- Liberalism believes in the inalienable rights of the individual, particularly the rights of life, liberty and property.
- Liberalism believes in individual freedom in all spheres of life-political, economic, social, intellectual and religious.
- Liberalism believes that truth is accessible to man's natural reason.

## 12.6 PRINCIPLES OF LIBERALISM

As liberalism tends to pragmatic rather than theoretical has many principles and regain prominence most specifically in response to the recent problems of the world. The basic principles of liberalism are-

1. **Liberation of Individual over the state:** Liberalism is often used upon the founding of the country that divorced the relationship between the individual and the state. The prevailing concepts of the time held that an individual was property of the state and the founding fathers sought to utilize liberalism to give individuals their own rights that were independent of the state. The individuals were no longer properties of the state, but they were human beings who deserved their own inalienable rights.
2. **Promotion of Freedom:** As liberalism upholds individual rights, it has the principle of promotion of freedom. Freedom to vote, speaks a person's mind, publish government criticisms, protest and own weapons are all associated with the rights of an individual. The main tenant of liberalism is that individuals may do as they please as long as it does not harm others or affect their freedom.
3. **Associated with progress:** The term liberalism is used to connote progress by many thinkers. It implies progress as it seeks to constantly re-evaluate the overbearing presences of the government. It always

tries to bring the power back to the individual as it promotes future change instead of being back stuck in tradition.

4. **Respect minorities:** One of the great principles of liberalism is its capacity to respect minorities and minority traditions. Liberalism promotes equal rights for all. Regardless of beliefs, liberalism holds that individuals deserve to practice their own beliefs as long as it does not limit the freedom of others.
5. **Equality of opportunity:** Equality of opportunity is an important principle of liberalism. It is the stage where everyone starts out with the same opportunities i.e. access to similar levels of education, healthcare etc. and it's up to the individual to do what they want with these opportunities. It differs from socialism that wants equality of outcome, where everyone comes out with an equal outcome regardless of their actions or decisions.
6. **Believe in smaller government:** Liberalists tend to believe in smaller governments which are very democratic and accountable to the people.
7. **Openness:** Openness is also the principle of liberalism. The followers of liberalism believe on free market, public education and both small government and representative democracy. It is also right and proper to end colonialism.

## 12.7 CLASSIFICATION OF LIBERALISM

In political philosophy two major currents of thought within Liberalism are found-- Classical Liberalism and Social Liberalism:

- Classical Liberalism holds that the only real freedom is freedom from coercion, and that state intervention in the economy is a coercive power that restricts the economic freedom of individuals, and so should be avoided as far as possible. It favors economic policy to maintain individual liberty, peace, security and property rights and opposes the welfare state.
- Social Liberalism argues that governments must take an active role in promoting the freedom of citizens, and that real freedom can only exist when citizens are healthy, educated and free from poverty. Social Liberals believe that this freedom can be ensured when governments guarantee

the right to an education, health care and a living wage, in addition to other responsibilities such as laws against discrimination in housing and employment, laws against pollution of the environment, and the provision of welfare, all of which would be supported by a progressive taxation system.

As with many political philosophies, there are several forms and variations of Liberalism, including the following:

- Conservative Liberalism is a variant of Liberalism representing the right-wing of the Liberal movement. It combines liberal values and policies with conservative stances. Unlike Liberal Conservatives, however, who tend to be more committed to authority, tradition and established religion, Conservative Liberals are supporters of the separation between church and state.
- Economic Liberalism is the theory of economics in Classical Liberalism that developed during the Enlightenment, particularly by Adam Smith. It advocates minimal interference by government in the economy. Libertarianism, Neo-liberalism and some schools of Conservatism, particularly Liberal Conservatism are often referred to as Economic Liberalism.
- Neo liberalism refers to a program of reducing trade barriers and internal market restrictions, while using government power to enforce opening of foreign markets. In some ways it is a modern attempt, championed by Conservatives to revert to a more pure Classical Liberalism.
- American Liberalism is largely a combination of social liberalism, social progressivism, and mixed economy philosophy. It is distinguished from Classic Liberalism and Libertarianism, which also claim freedom as their primary goal, in its insistence upon the inclusion of positive rights ( for e.g. education, health care and other services and goods believed to be required for human development and self-actualization) and in a broader definition of equality.
- National Liberalism is a variant of Liberalism commonly found in several European countries in the 19th and 20th Century. It combines nationalism with policies mainly derived from Economic Liberalism.

- Ordo liberalism is a mid-20th Century school of Liberalism, developed mainly in Germany. It emphasizes the need for the state to ensure that the free market produces results close to its theoretical potential.
- Paleo liberalism is a term though largely ambiguous, means extreme Liberalism, and very socialist or socially libertarian Liberalism, and opposed to Neo liberalism.
- Cultural Liberalism is a liberal view of society that stresses the freedom of individuals from cultural norms.

## 12.8 IMPLICATION OF LIBERALISM

There are some important implications that liberalism has for society. Since individuals can only truly be individuals when they make their own decisions, there is a requirement for the government to take a liberal approach to society that is made up of individuals. Individuals are to be controlled neither for the state's benefit nor even for their own 'benefit'. However, that classical liberal argue that any kind of state interference other than that pertaining to upholding the harm principle will harm the individual - no benefit is possible. Such a belief does not mean that there will be continuous conflict. Classical liberals believe that individuals can voluntarily come together and form peaceful associations. Melleuish stressed that liberty should not be confused with competition or Social Darwinism, but that it involves the freedom of people to cooperate. Another implication is that the government should not force people to reach their potential as any such attempt by government would probably hinder overall potential. For example, the redistribution of goods to help the poor reach their potential requires taxes, and these impose restrictions on the already successful to further their potential even more. Although liberty is the best way for individuals to reach their potential, it should also be acknowledged that liberty has value in itself. As a result if people want to be hermits they should be allowed to do so. Furthermore, this liberal approach applies to individuals as well - individuals should not force their beliefs on other individuals. An individual that is forced but not convinced is still of the same mind and any such

action following would be the result of fear and not conviction would be morally wrong. In addition to the harm principle, there is the 'free-rider' problem whereby individuals benefit from the good works of others and through no effort of their own. Hence, there is another possible justification for state intervention to prevent such free-riding. Liberalism is not only morally good, but it provides society with the most material wealth as a by-product of individuals reaching their full potential. Finally, another area where government intervention may be legitimate is in the case of individuals who are not able to exercise judgment and make their own choices. Therefore, liberalism can shape society in many different ways, but always in the advancement of individual freedom.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

Q1) What is Liberalism?

Q2) According to Liberalism, what is necessary what is necessary to protect individualisms?

Q3) What is literal meaning of the term 'liberalism'?

Q4) What are two main principles of Liberalism?

Q5) Who for the first time has developed liberalism?

Q6) Who is the author of the book, 'Two Treatises'?

Q7) Who is the author of the book, 'On Liberty'?

Q8) What are the two essential elements of liberalism identified by John Gray?

Q9) What are the two major thoughts of liberalism found in political philosophy?

Q10) What is cultural liberalism?



## 11.7 LET US SUM UP

We have discussed the concept of liberalism and its principles. The basic points of this philosophical thought are:

- Liberalism is a multi-faceted ideology with wide-ranging implications for society.
- It takes protecting and enhancing the freedom of the individual to be the central problem of politics.
- There are two basic grounds of liberalism-individualism and liberty.
- John Locke was the first profounder of liberalism.
- Liberalism has some important elements- freedom, reason, toleration, consent, constitutionalism, equality, justice etc.
- Liberalism has some significant principles that create great implication in society.
- There are basically two divisions of liberalism-classical liberalism and social liberalism. Besides it some other classifications are also found.



## 12.10 FURTHER READINGS

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6) Berlin, Isaiah. 1969. Two Concepts of Liberty,' in his Four Essays on Liberty, Oxford: Oxford University Press: 118-72.

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## 12.11 ANSWER TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** Liberalism is a worldview related to political philosophy consists of the idea of liberty and equality.

**Ans to Q2:** Government

**Ans to Q3:** The world liberalism is derives from the Latin term 'liber', which means 'free' or 'not slave'.

**Ans to Q4:** Individualism and liberty.

**Ans to Q5:** John Locke

**Ans to Q6:** John Locke

**Ans to Q7:** J.S. Mill

**Ans to Q8:** John Gray

**Ans to Q9:** Classical liberalism and Social Liberalism

**Ans to Q10:** Cultural liberalism is a liberal view of society that stresses the freedom of individuals form cultural norms.

## 12.12 MODEL QUESTION

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** What is liberalism?

**Q2:** From which term 'liberalism' is derived?

**Q3:** Who was the profounder of liberalism?

**Q4:** What are the two basic grounds of liberalism?

**B. Q1: Write short note on**

a) Classical liberalism

b) Characteristics of liberalism

**Q2:** Write about individualism as an element of liberalism.

**Q3:** Is freedom a necessary element of liberalism? Give your comments.

**C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500)**

**Q1:** Explain the principles of liberalism.

**Q2:** Discuss justice and equality as elements of liberalism.

**Q3:** Explain the origin of liberalism.

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# UNIT 13: INDIVIDUALISM

**UNIT STRUCTURE**

13.1 Learning objectives

13.2 Introduction

13.3 Philosophical views on the individual

13.4 History of Western Individualism

13.5 Philosophical Individualism

13.6 Moral Individualism

13.7 Criticisms

13.8 Let us sum up

13.9 Further readings

13.10 Answers to check your progress

13.11 Model questions

## 13.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Explain the concept of individualism
- Understand the philosophical views on the individual
- Understand the history of western individualism
- Distinguish between individualism and collectivism
- Understand different positions of philosophical individualism
- Criticisms of individualism
- Examine individualism in terms of ethics and morality

## 13.2 INTRODUCTION

Individualism is the moral stance, political philosophy, ideology, or social outlook that emphasizes the moral worth of the individual. Individualists promote the exercise of one's goals and desires and so value independence and self-reliance and advocate that interests of the individual should achieve precedence over the state or a social group, while opposing external interference upon one's own interests by society or institutions such as the

government. Individualism is often defined in contrast to totalitarianism, collectivism and more corporate social forms.

Individualism regards every man as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life, a right derived from his nature as a rational being. Individualism holds that a civilized society, or any form of association, cooperation or peaceful coexistence among men, can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights-and that a group, as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members.

Individualism makes the individual its focus and so starts with the fundamental premise that the human individual is of primary importance in the struggle for liberation. Classical Liberalism, existentialism, and anarchism are examples of movements that take the human individual as a central unit of analysis. Individualism thus involves the right of the individual to freedom and self-realization.



**LET US KNOW**

Individual rights refer to the liberties of each individual to pursue life and goals without interference from other individuals or the government. Examples of individual rights include the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness as stated in the United States Declaration of Independence.

## 13.3 PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS ON THE INDIVIDUAL

Before discussing further on individualism it becomes important to understand the very idea of an individual. An individual is a person or any specific object in a collection. In the 15th century and earlier, and also today within the fields of statistics and metaphysics, individual means "indivisible", typically describing any numerically singular thing, but sometimes meaning "a person." From the 17th century on, individual indicates separateness,

as in individualism. Individuality is the state or quality of being an individual; a person separate from other persons and possessing his or her own needs, goals, and desires.

The word "individuality is the state or quality of being an individual who exists as a distinct entity and possesses sum total of qualities and characteristics that form the individual's identity and distinguish the individual from others. However, the concept of individuality and the doctrines in which it has been embodied are not easy to unravel. They have been viewed differently in various historical periods, and they can be examined from different perspectives, such as that of psychology, sociology, political science, and ethics.

Here, we are faced with an important distinction between the two concepts "individualism" and "individuality". From a technical viewpoint, the former is often depicted as social and ethical phenomena of human relations and conduct, while the latter is often depicted as a psychological phenomenon of mental growth. In this sense, not without exceptions, individualism is a proper subject matter within the disciplines of sociology and ethics while individuality is an appropriate subject matter within the discipline of psychology. Nonetheless, each discipline has its own distinct concepts of individualism and individuality.

Let us understand the different views on the concept of the individual:

**Empiricism:** John Locke in late 17th century introduced the idea of the individual as a tabula rasa ("blank slate"), shaped from birth by experience and education. This ties into the idea of the liberty and rights of the individual, society as a social contract between rational individuals, and the beginnings of individualism as a doctrine.

**Hegel:** Hegel regarded history as the gradual evolution of Mind as it tests its own concepts against the external world. Each time the mind applies its concepts to the world, the concept is revealed to be only partly true, within a certain context; thus the mind continually revises these incomplete concepts so as to reflect a fuller reality (commonly known as the process of thesis, antithesis, and synthesis). The individual comes to rise above his or

her own particular viewpoint and grasps that he or she is a part of a greater whole insofar as he or she is bound to family, a social context, and/or a political order.

**Existentialism:** With the rise of existentialism, Kierkegaard rejected Hegel's notion of the individual as subordinated to the forces of history. Instead, he elevated the individual's subjectivity and capacity to choose his or her own fate. Later Existentialists built upon this notion. Nietzsche, for example, examines the individual's need to define his/her own self and circumstances. The individual is also central to Sartre's philosophy, which emphasizes individual authenticity, responsibility, and free will. In both Sartre and Nietzsche, the individual is called upon to create his or her own values, rather than rely on external, socially imposed codes of morality.

**Buddhism:** In Buddhism, the concept of the individual lies in anatman, or "no-self." According to anatman, the individual is really a series of interconnected processes that, working together, give the appearance of being a single, separated whole. Instead of an atomic, indivisible self distinct from reality, the individual in Buddhism is understood as an interrelated part of an ever-changing, impermanent universe.

**Ayn Rand's Objectivism:** Philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand's objectivism regards every human as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his or her own life, a right derived from his or her nature as a rational being. Individualism and Objectivism hold that a civilized society, or any form of association, cooperation or peaceful coexistence among humans, can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of individual rights and that a group, as such, has no rights other than the individual rights of its members.



**LET US KNOW**

What happens when the source of moral values is the individual? He is the sole arbitrator of what is right and wrong, the creator of values he deems right.

Thus, the German economist and sociologist Max Weber (1864-1920) wrote that when faced with conflicting moral positions, "the individual has to decide which is God for him and which is the devil."



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

Q.1. What is individualism?

.....

Q.2. Who is an individual?

.....

Q.3. Differentiate between individuality and individualism?

.....

Q.4. Give example of movements that take the human individual as a central unit of analysis.

.....

Q.5. What is individualism opposed to?

## 13.4 HISTORY OF WESTERN INDIVIDUALISM

With the dawn of the modern era, individualism gradually began as a way of adapting to the new social, economic, and political conditions in Europe. And, henceforth, it evolved into social, economic, political, and philosophical doctrines expressive of one's independence, self-reliance, self-determination, and, hence, individuality. In general, individualism gives

primacy to the individual over what opposes her/his individuality, be it a social institution or the state. This new way of adapting to life under the new circumstances found diverse expressions, not always in agreement with each other, in the philosophies of the French philosophes, Immanuel Kant, W.G.F. Hegel, John Stuart Mill, Karl Marx, Søren Kierkegaard, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean Paul Sartre etc.

Let us now briefly explore the complex phenomenon of individualism mainly within a historical context, starting with the Greece of antiquity.

**Ancient Greece:** There seems to have been no awareness of individuality in ancient times. The Greeks, unlike the contemporary Western societies, probably did not have high-ranking value for individuality. To them, our contemporary individualism would have been an unconscionable act of social division-estranging ourselves from each other and the society. Fifth century Athenians were interested not in the rights of man as an individual, but in the rights of Athenians as a whole. To the Greeks, the Delphic Oracle's maxim "know thyself" did not mean to individuate or dissociate themselves from the society. For them, one's livelihood, well-being, and personal developments were essentially dependent on the communal life. This is manifest in life of Socrates when he, out of respect for the laws of Athens which had condemned him to death, chose not to escape from his own execution when he had the chance. He argued that individuals who disobey the laws of their own society tear away at the foundation of communal life. The Greek sense of community is also exhibited in their intellectual activities. For the Athenians, the pursuit of philosophical truths was no private, individual affair; truth was not something that could be attained individually and monologically, but something that could be achieved collectively and dialogically.

**Medieval Age:** During the Medieval Age in Europe (roughly from 476 to 1517), Christian beliefs and values dominated the scene. The Medieval Christianity put an end to free thinking, and replaced it with dogmas and authoritarianism, enforcing strict obedience to the authority of the Church. As a general rule, anyone who dared to challenge the dogmas or

authority of the Church was tortured and/or put to death. Consequently, individualism found no significant expressions in the Dark Ages of Europe. However, there gradually developed a growing sense of doubt and mistrust toward the Church, its authority, its worldview, and its political control. Hence, the conditions were ripe to gradually give birth to the age of individualism. History seems to demonstrate that when religious, social, and political institutions are untrustworthy and lose their legitimacy and no longer function for the sake of the common good, people individuate and break away from them to shape their own fragmented lives.

**Renaissance:** The 15th century Renaissance (which is a French word for "rebirth") in Europe brought about a revival of Greco-Roman art, literature, philosophy, and humanism. The Greek man-centered view of the world (Protagoras's statement, "Man is the measure of all thing.") inspired them and brought about an intellectual and social revolution, which reaffirmed the dignity, worth, and powers of human beings. Renaissance is deemed as the rediscovery of the human, that man is a capable being, with the power to direct one's own destiny. This emergent view, of course, undermined the influence of the Church and weakened the structure of the Medieval feudalism. The new ethical posture of the Europeans, coupled with the invention of the printing press, Columbus' discovery of the New World, and the discovery of new trade routes via water and land, gradually promoted advent of a new social order.

**Protestant Reformation and Cartesian Thinking:** As individualism gradually began to unfold in Europe, there was a growing sense of incertitude and mistrust of the Church and the medieval institutions. In fact, this sense of incertitude and mistrust seems to have inspired the way of thinking as exemplified by French mathematician, philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), the father of modern philosophy. Modern philosophy is recognizably different in many ways from the Greek philosophy. While the Greeks of antiquity philosophized dialogically and outdoors in the public, Descartes (and many subsequent thinkers) philosophized monologically and in seclusion away from the public view. Modern philosophy begins with

Descartes, with the self thinking in solitude, becoming conscious of the false and doubtful ideas one has accepted so far in life, and deciding that the time has come to overthrow all of one's beliefs.

**The Age of Enlightenment:** Following the footsteps of Renaissance, the Age of Enlightenment (roughly from 1650 to 1770) celebrated human reason and reawakened a sense of self-confidence and self-discipline. Having observed how human reason had managed to discover the natural laws of nature under the hands of Nicolaus Copernicus, Galileo Galilei, Johannes Kepler, and Sir Isaac Newton, the Enlightenment figures applied reason to human nature and society to infer natural rights of liberty, equality, and property for all mankind. French philosophes, such as Voltaire, charged the Church and the political establishment with having conspired together to fetter human reason and to keep the masses ignorant and impoverished. Jean Jacque Rousseau, another Enlightenment philosopher, stated, "Man is born free, and everywhere he is in chains." (The Social Contract) Eventually, such Enlightenment ideas contributed to the French Revolution (1789-1799), which put an end to the dominance of the Church and monarchy in France. Thereafter, the Enlightenment gospel of independence and freedom spread throughout Europe, paving the way for the modern individualism, which was concurrent with the rise of secularization and bureaucratization of the social and political structures of European societies, adding to the complexity of the modern life.

**The Modern Age:** With the diminution of the power and influence of the Church hand in hand with the cessation of the Medieval age and its feudal socio-economic structures, the modern age gradually took form as a result of many factors, among which are: the new Cartesian mode of thought, the scientific understanding of the world, the Enlightenment values and their applications, propagation of money, and the formation of the nation-states accompanied by secularization and bureaucratization of their social and political institutions, and the advent of capitalism and industrialism. With the rise of "modernity", a new ethical view of human conduct, which put the accent on the individual, emerged in the Western societies.

**The Post-Modern Era:** Postmodern may mean that which occurred after the modern era, a period often identified as the first half, or even most, of the twentieth century. More philosophically, postmodern connotes an outlook that rejects the accessibility, perhaps even the existence, of absolute truth and advocates relativism as the basis for human thought, including ethics, philosophy, and religion. Postmodern individualism refers to a radical individualism linked to total, or nearly total, relativism. There are at least two problems with radical postmodern individualism. First, postmodern individualism carried to its logical conclusion makes community, whether family, tribe, nation, church, or any other form of community, impossible. Secondly, postmodern individualism with its absolute relativism provides no basis for declaring any behaviour wrong for everyone.

## 13.5 PHILOSOPHICAL INDIVIDUALISM

There are many positions of philosophical individualism. Let us briefly look at some of them.

**Ethical egoism** is the normative ethical position that moral agents ought to do what is in their own self-interest. Ethical egoism contrasts with ethical altruism, which holds that moral agents have an obligation to help and serve others. Egoism and altruism both contrast with ethical utilitarianism.

**Existentialism** is a term applied to the work of a number of 19th- and 20th-century philosophers who, despite profound doctrinal differences, generally held that the focus of philosophical thought should be to deal with the conditions of existence of the individual person and his or her emotions, actions, responsibilities, and thoughts. The early 19th century philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, posthumously regarded as the father of existentialism, maintained that the individual solely has the responsibilities of giving one's own life meaning and living that life passionately and sincerely, in spite of many existential obstacles and distractions including despair, angst, absurdity, alienation, and boredom.

Subsequent existential philosophers retain the emphasis on the

individual, but differ, in varying degrees, on how one achieves and what constitutes a fulfilling life, what obstacles must be overcome, and what external and internal factors are involved, including the potential consequences of the existence or non-existence of God. Existentialism became fashionable in the post-World War years as a way to reassert the importance of human individuality and freedom.

**Free thought** holds that individuals should not accept ideas proposed as truth without recourse to knowledge and reason. Thus, freethinkers strive to build their opinions on the basis of facts, scientific inquiry, and logical principles, independent of any logical fallacies or intellectually limiting effects of authority, confirmation bias, cognitive bias, conventional wisdom, popular culture, prejudice, sectarianism, tradition, urban legend, and all other dogmas. Regarding religion, freethinkers hold that there is insufficient evidence to scientifically validate the existence of supernatural phenomena.

**Humanism** is a perspective common to a wide range of ethical stances that attaches importance to human dignity, concerns, and capabilities, particularly rationality. Although the word has many senses, its meaning comes into focus when contrasted to the supernatural or to appeals to authority. 21st century Humanism tends to strongly endorse human rights, including reproductive rights, gender equality, social justice, and the separation of church and state. The term covers organized non-theistic religions, secular humanism, and a humanistic life stance.

**Objectivism** is a system of philosophy created by philosopher and novelist Ayn Rand that holds: reality exists independent of consciousness; human beings gain knowledge rationally from perception through the process of concept formation and inductive and deductive logic; the moral purpose of one's life is the pursuit of one's own happiness or rational self-interest. Rand thinks the only social system consistent with this morality is full respect for individual rights, embodied in pure laissez faire capitalism; and the role of art in human life is to transform man's widest metaphysical ideas, by selective reproduction of reality, into a physical form, a work of art, that he

can comprehend and to which he can respond emotionally. Objectivism celebrates man as his own hero, "with his own happiness as the moral purpose of his life, with productive achievement as his noblest activity, and reason as his only absolute."

**Philosophical anarchism** is an anarchist school of thought which contends that the State lacks moral legitimacy and - in contrast to revolutionary anarchism - does not advocate violent revolution to eliminate it but advocate peaceful evolution to superate it. Though philosophical anarchism does not necessarily imply any action or desire for the elimination of the State, philosophical anarchists do not believe that they have an obligation or duty to obey the State, or conversely, that the State has a right to command.

Philosophical anarchism is a component especially of individualist anarchism. Philosophical anarchists of historical note include Mohandas Gandhi, William Godwin, Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, Max Stirner, Benjamin Tucker, and Henry David Thoreau.



**LET US KNOW**

There is a debate between individualism and collectivism. Does the individual's life belong to him-or does it belong to the group, the community, society, or the state?

Individualism is the idea that the individual's life belongs to him and that he has an inalienable right to live it as he sees fit, to act on his own judgment, to keep and use the product of his effort, and to pursue the values of his choosing. It's the idea that the individual is sovereign, an end in himself, and the fundamental unit of moral concern

Collectivism is the idea that the individual's life belongs not to him but to the group or society of which he is merely a part, that he has no rights, and that he must sacrifice his values and goals for the group's "greater good." According to collectivism, the group or society is the

basic unit of moral concern, and the individual is of value only insofar as he serves the group. As one advocate of this idea puts it: "Man has no rights except those which society permits him to enjoy. From the day of his birth until the day of his death society allows him to enjoy certain so-called rights and deprives him of others; not . . . because society desires especially to favour or oppress the individual, but because its own preservation, welfare, and happiness are the prime considerations."

## 13.6 MORAL INDIVIDUALISM

How do you decide what is right and what is wrong? What is the nature of good and bad, right and wrong? How, in principle, should people act? Such are the questions of ethics or morality. Morality is a code of conduct adopted by a society. But who decides what it is? In previous centuries people generally agreed on a common idea of morality, but times have changed. The hypocrisy of organized religion and the secularization of society have left us adrift and without a shared notion of right and wrong, and society suffers for it. Has the time come for us to reconsider a shared understanding of right and wrong based on timeless, universal and proven principles?

The Greek ethical view of human conduct often referred to as "virtue ethics", valued cultivation of character and virtues, such as strength, courage, prudence, justice, and moderation, in a society that principally functioned for the common benefit of the citizenry. In contrast, the Medieval ethical view was principally "authority ethics", that is, the right conduct was prescribed by whoever had the authority within the hierarchy of power, such as the Church, prince, feudal lord, or community. In contrast to the Greek and Medieval ethical postures, the modern ethics is generally based not on "character" or "authority"-but fundamentally based on "autonomy" of the individual in choosing her/his own conduct.

German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and English philosopher John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) put forth noteworthy, ethical theories based on autonomy of the individual.

Today, our Kantian and Millian legacy is that the individual's autonomy is central in making ethical decisions. In principle, the modern ethical view is a narrow inquiry, on the part of the autonomous individual, into whether action a, b, or c will be the good one to choose. And, in choosing, the individual applies a formula to judge the action. Kant's celebrated ethical formula is, "Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law of nature." (Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals) In other words, do not lie or cheat if you do not like to be lied to or cheated. And, Mill's ethical formula is, "One should always act so as to bring the greatest happiness to the greatest number of people." (Utilitarianism) Since the French Revolution until present, the authority that has been most recognizable has been fundamentally that of the autonomous individual.

## 13.7 CRITICISM

1) One of the criticisms against individualism is that when people believe and act so autonomously as individuals, they tend to forget that they are social beings. Individualism fosters private life at the expense of the community. This loss of the traditional community has ruinous consequences for society and individuals alike.
2) In the modern era where individuals are estranged from one another in a society where social bonds are fragmented and not as fundamental anymore, ethics has become formulaic, instrumental, and considerably quantitative. For the most part, the new ethical view of man does not seem to put high value on the cultivation of character or virtues. As mentioned earlier, the existing modern ethical view is principally a narrow inquiry into whether action a, b, or c will be the good one to choose, a choice that is often predicated on safety, pleasure, expediency, profitability, efficiency of time, and/or minimization of hardship.
3) German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) had a negative view of political individualism and found it detrimental to the state. Inspired by the classical Greek city-state, in his Philosophy of

Right, he gave primacy and power to the state over the individual. In the book, he insisted that individuals exist for the sake of the state, not the other way around. In fact, according to Hegel, nation-states are the true individuals of world history. Furthermore, for Hegel, individualism does not make possible one's selfhood. In other words, one would not know that he is a self until he is looked at by another self, acknowledged by another self. Other selves act as mirrors through which one can become conscious of one's own self.

4) It is argued that individualism, which is oftentimes associated with cynicism, narcissism, pretentiousness, fanaticism, facile nationalism/ patriotism, is a dead-end. , postmodern individualism dehumanizes instead of humanizes people, the opposite of what it promises.

5) Regardless of what we might want to think, no person can exist entirely and completely as an individual.



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

Q.6. Fill in the blanks:

a) Individualism is the moral stance, political philosophy, ideology, or social outlook that emphasizes the …… of the individual.

b) Individual rights include the …… , ……. and the pursuit of happiness as stated in the United States Declaration of Independence.

c) Individualism holds that a civilized society, or any form of association, cooperation or peaceful coexistence among humans, can be achieved only on the basis of the recognition of ……

d) In contrast to the Greek and Medieval ethical postures, the modern ethics is generally based not on "character" or "authority" but

fundamentally based on …… of the individual in choosing her/his own conduct.

e) …… is the idea that the individual's life belongs not to him but to the group or society of which he is merely a part.

Q.7. State whether the following statements are true or false:

a) Individualists advocate that interests of the individual should achieve precedence over the state or a social group. (T/F)

b) Individualists do not oppose external interference upon one's own interests by society or institutions such as the government. (T/F)

c) Individual rights refer to the liberties of each individual to pursue life and goals without interference from other individuals or the government. (T/F)

d) Kierkegaard accepted Hegel's notion of the individual as subordinated to the forces of history. (T/F)

Q.8. What is the primary focus of Individualism?



## 11.7 LET US SUM UP

We have discussed in this unit the concept of individualism. The most important points are:

- Individualism emphasizes the moral worth of the individual.
- Individualism believes that interests of the individual should achieve precedence over the state or a social group.
- Individualism regards every man as an independent, sovereign entity who possesses an inalienable right to his own life.
- There are the different views on the concept of the individual.
- There seems to have been no awareness of individuality in ancient times.
- In the medieval age, the conditions were ripe to gradually give birth to the age of individualism.

- As individualism gradually began to unfold in Europe, there was a growing sense of incertitude and mistrust of the Church and the medieval institutions during the renaissance and the Enlightenment period.

- This paved the way for modern individualism and a new ethical view of human conduct, which put the accent on the individual, emerged in the Western societies.

- Today, our Kantian and Millian legacy is that the individual's autonomy is central in making ethical decisions. In principle, the modern ethical view is a narrow inquiry, on the part of the autonomous individual.

- Since the French Revolution until present, the authority that has been most recognizable has been fundamentally that of the autonomous individual.



## 13.9 FURTHER READING

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5) "https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ian_Watt" \o "Ian Watt" Watt, Ian . (1996) Myths of Modern Individualism. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
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## 13.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** Individualism is the moral stance, political philosophy, ideology, or social outlook that emphasizes the moral worth of the individual.

**Ans. To Q. No. 2:** An individual is a person or any specific object in a collection. In the 15th century and earlier, and also today within the fields of statistics and metaphysics, individual means "indivisible", typically describing any numerically singular thing, but sometimes meaning "a person".

**Ans. To Q. No. 3:** Individualism is often depicted as social and ethical phenomena of human relations and conduct, while individuality is often depicted as a psychological phenomenon of mental growth.

**Ans. To Q. No. 4:** Classical Liberalism, existentialism, and anarchism are examples of movements that take the human individual as a central unit of analysis.

**Ans. To Q. No. 5:** Individualism is opposed to external interference upon one's own interests by society or institutions such as the government. Individualism is often defined in contrast to totalitarianism, collectivism and more corporate social forms.

**Ans. To Q. No. 6:** a) moral worth
b) right to life, liberty
c) individual rights
d) autonomy
e) Collectivism

**Ans. To Q. No. 7:** a) True
b) False
c) True
d) False

**Ans. To Q. No. 8:** Individualism gives primacy to the individual over what opposes her/his individuality, be it a social institution or the state.

## 13.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** Define individual rights?

**Q2:** Give an example of an individual right?

**Q3:** What is morality?

**Q4:** What is collectivism?

**B. Short questions: (answer in about 150-200 words)**

**Q1:** What is individualism? What is its primary focus?

**Q2:** State the differences between individuality and individualism?

**Q3:** What is the difference between individualism and collectivism?

**Q4:** Discuss individual rights.

**C. Long Questions (Answer in about 300-500)**

**Q1:** Discuss Hegel's concept of the individual. How did Kierkegaard oppose Hegel's view?

**Q2:** Discuss the evolution of the concept of the individual.

**Q3:** Write a note on philosophical individualism.

**Q4:** Critically examine the concept of individualism.

**Q5:** Trace the historical development of western individualism.

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# UNIT-14 LIBERALISM VS. COMMUNITARIANISM

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


14.1 Learning objectives

14.2 Introduction

14.3 Liberalism

14.4 Types of Liberalism

14.5 Communitarianism

14.6 Types of Communitarianism

14.7 Conclusion

14.8 Let us sum up

14.9 Further readings

14.10 Answer to check your progress

14.11 Model questions


## 14.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- know What is Liberalism
- know What are the types of Liberalism
- know What is Communitarianism
- know What are the types of Communitarianism

## 14.2 INTRODUCTION

The liberal-communitarian debate, which took its present form, can be traced back to the beginning of the modern age, when liberalism emerged as a political and philosophical movement. John Locke in 17th-century England and Immanuel Kant in 18th-century Prussia developed theoretical views of society and human nature that stressed equality, personal autonomy, individual rights, and universalizable moral principles. Considering the now-familiar preference within liberalism for autonomous reasoning rather than unquestioning acceptance of received opinions, it is not surprising that their own views were at odds with the pre-enlightenment political philosophies then prevailing, all of which assumed the legitimacy and necessity of

traditional political authority and hierarchical social structures. Thus Locke, Kant, and other early liberals can be thought of as reacting against the communitarianism, or proto-communitarianism, of their day, which culminated in William Blackstone's outrageously complacent belief that in English law and society "all is as it should be" and echoed Aristotle's ancient notion that the 'polis' is the natural normative base of all human activity. However, that "proto-communitarian" theory grew out of theological conceptions of society (Christendom, the divine right of kings, etc.), whereas today's communitarian views (including those most friendly to religion) begin with the secular, psychological insight that social affiliation is not only a profoundly urgent human need but also the ground for all thinking, valuing, and self-awareness.

## 14.3 LIBERALISM

The word "liberal" is derived from the Latin "liber" (meaning "free" or "not a slave"). In everyday use, it means generous and open-minded, as well as free from restraint and from prejudice. Its use as a political term, however, only dates from the early 19th Century.Liberalism has intruded into everything: religion, philosophy, economics, politics, sociology etc. It has tried to promote free thinking in every sphere of human affair.To think freely is one of the important propensities of man. Liberalism has contributed to subscribe to this propensity.

The modern ideology of Liberalism can be traced back to the Humanism which challenged the authority of the established church in Renaissance Europe, and more particularly to the 17th and 18th Century British and French Enlightenment thinkers, and the movement towards self-government in colonial America.

The main philosopher behind the liberalist movement has been John Locke. The man behind the glorious revolution of 1688 has been Locke himself. He has led the movement of opening the way to curtailing the monarchial power. He has however been against the abolition of monarch

as without it there would be anarchy. Absolute monarchy has been unwanted, so he has sought for responsible or enlightened monarchy with parliamentary form of government. John Locke's "Two Treatises on Government" of 1689 established two fundamental liberal ideas: economic liberty (meaning the right to have and use property) and intellectual liberty (including freedom of conscience). His natural rights theory ("natural rights" for Locke being essentially life, liberty and property) was the distant forerunner of the modern conception of human rights, although he saw the right to property as more important than the right to participate in government and public decision-making, and he did not endorse democracy, fearing that giving power to the people would erode the sanctity of private property. Nevertheless, the idea of natural rights played a key role in providing the ideological justification for the American and the French revolutions, and in the further development of Liberalism.

In France, the Baron de Montesquieu (1689 - 1755) advocated laws restraining even monarchs (then a novel concept), rather than accepting as natural the mere rule of force and tradition, and French physiocrats (believers that the wealth of nations was derived solely from the value of land agriculture or land development) established the idea of "laissez-faire" economics as an injunction against government interference with trade.

In the late French Enlightenment, Voltaire argued on intellectual grounds for the establishment of a constitutional monarchy in France, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued for a natural freedom for mankind, and for changes in political and social arrangements based around the idea that society can restrain a natural human liberty, but not obliterate its nature.

Rousseau was also instrumental (along with Locke) in the development of a key liberal concept, that of the social contract (the idea that the people give up some rights to a government in order to receive social order). He asserted that each person knows their own interest best, and that man is born free, but that education was sufficient to restrain him within society, an idea that rocked the monarchical society of his age. He

also asserted, again in contravention of established political practice, that a nation could have an organic "national will" and a capacity for self-determination which would allow states to exist without being chained to pre-existing social orders, such as aristocracy.

Another major contributing group to the ideas of Liberalism are those associated with the Scottish Enlightenment, especially David Hume and Adam Smith. Possibly Hume's most important contribution to Liberalism was his assertion that the fundamental rules of human behaviour would eventually overwhelm any attempts to restrict or regulate them (which also influenced Immanuel Kant's formulation of his categorical imperative theory). Adam Smith expounded the theory that individuals could structure both moral and economic life without direction from the state, and that nations would be strongest when their citizens were free to follow their own initiative. In his influential "The Wealth of Nations" of 1776, he argued that the market, under certain conditions, would naturally regulate itself and would produce more than the heavily restricted markets that were the norm at the time, and he agreed with Humethat capital, not gold, is the wealth of a nation.

Much of the intellectual basis for the American Revolution (1775 - 1783) was framed by Thomas Paine (1737 - 1809), Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826) and John Adams (1735 - 1826) who encouraged revolt in the name of "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" (echoing Locke), and in favour of democratic government and individual liberty. In particular, Paine's widely-read pamphlet "Common Sense" (1776) and his "The Rights of Man" (1791) were highly influential in this process. The goal was to ensure liberty by preventing the concentration of power in the hands of any one man.

The French Revolution (1789 - 1799) was even more drastic and less compromising, although in its first few years the revolution was very much guided by liberal ideas. However, the transition from revolt to stability was to prove more difficult than the similar American transition, and later, under the leadership of Maximilien Robespierre (1758 - 1794) and the Jacobins, power was greatly centralized and most aspects of due process

were dispensed with, resulting in the Reign of Terror. Nevertheless, the French Revolution would go further than the American Revolution in establishing liberal ideals with such policies as universal male suffrage, national citizenship and a far reaching "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen".

John Stuart Mill popularized and expanded liberal ideas in the mid-19th Century, grounding them in the instrumental and the pragmatic, particularly in his "On Liberty" of 1859 and other works. He also propounded a utilitarian justification of Liberalism, in which the moral worth of the economic system is determined solely by its contribution to overall utility in maximizing happiness or pleasure among all people.

Gradually, the idea of liberal democracy (in its typical form of multiparty political pluralism) gathered strength and influence over much of the western world, although it should be noted that, for liberals, democracy is not an end in itself, but an essential means to securing liberty, individuality and diversity). Towards the end of the 19th Century, though, splits were developing within Liberalism between those who accepted some government intervention in the economy, and those who became increasingly anti-government, in some cases adopting varieties of Anarchism.

In the 20th Century, in the face of the growing relative inequality of wealth, a theory of Modern Liberalism (or New Liberalism or Social Liberalism) was developed to describe how a government could intervene in the economy to protect liberty while still avoiding Socialism. Among others, John Dewey, John Maynard Keynes (1883 - 1946), Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882 - 1945) and John Kenneth Galbraith (1908 - 2006) can be singled out as instrumental in this respect. Other liberals, including Friedrich Hayek (1899 - 1992), Milton Friedman (1912 - 2006), and Ludwig von Mises (1881 - 1973), argued that phenomena such as the Great Depression of the 1930's and the rise of Totalitarian dictatorships were not a result of "laissez-faire" Capitalism at all, but a result of too much government intervention and regulation on the market.

Liberalism is mainly a socio-philosophical concept. Liberalism fights the authority of the Church on the one hand and the rigid social system on the other. It fights the Church with reason and the social rigidity with the cry of freedom. Liberalism has held the sway over the last four centuries. It is regarded as one of the outstanding doctrines of modern civilization. Formerly religion was a controlling factor giving shape to human thoughts. At present science does so. The modern age is characterized by progress and reason. New material conditions have replaced old social relationships. New discoveries in various fields have made their contributions to the formation of the concept of liberation.

Liberalism is a reaction against traditionalism. Tradition, the advocates of liberalistic philosophy feel, prevents man from asserting himself. They have discarded the binding of authority. They welcome the liberal temper of man and give weight to individual consents. They entertain anarchist tendencies, welcome change coming from individual initiatives.

Liberalism includes a broad spectrum of political philosophies that consider individual liberty to be the most important political goal, and emphasize individual rights and equality of opportunity. Although most Liberals would claim that a government is necessary to protect rights, different forms of Liberalism may propose very different policies. They are, however, generally united by their support for a number of principles, including extensive freedom of thought and freedom of speech, limitations on the power of governments, the application of the rule of law, a market economy (or a mixed economy with both private-owned and state-owned enterprises) and a transparent and democratic system of government.

Like the similar concept of Libertarianism, Liberalism believes that society should be organized in accordance with certain unchangeable and inviolable human rights, especially the rights to life, liberty and property. It also holds that traditions do not carry any inherent value, that social practices ought to be continuously adjusted for the greater benefit of humanity, and that there should be no foundational assumptions (such as the Divine Right

of Kings, hereditary status or established religion) that take precedence over other aspects of government.

Anarchism is a much more radical form of Liberalism, although, like Anarchism, Liberalism historically stands in opposition to any form of authoritarianism, whether in the form of Communism, Socialism, Fascism or other types of Totalitarianism. Its emphasis on individual rights (Individualism) also puts it in opposition to any kind of collectivism, which emphasize the collective or the community to a degree where the rights of the individual are either diminished or abolished (e.g. Communitarianism).

## 14.4 TYPES OF LIBERALISM

There are two major currents of thought within Liberalism, Classical Liberalism and Social Liberalism:

**Classical liberalism**

Classical liberalism holds that the only real freedom is freedom from coercion, and that state intervention in the economy is a coercive power that restricts the economic freedom of individuals, and so should be avoided as far as possible. It favours laissez-faire economic policy (minimal economic intervention and taxation by the state beyond what is necessary to maintain individual liberty, peace, security and property rights), and opposes the welfare state (the provision of welfare services by the state, and the assumption by the state of primary responsibility for the welfare of its citizens).

**Social Liberalism**

Social Liberalism argues that governments must take an active role in promoting the freedom of citizens, and that real freedom can only exist when citizens are healthy, educated and free from dire poverty. Social Liberals believe that this freedom can be ensured when governments guarantee the right to an education, health care and a living wage, in addition to other responsibilities such as laws against discrimination in housing and employment, laws against pollution of the environment, and the provision

of welfare, all of which would be supported by a progressive taxation system.

As with many political philosophies, there are several forms and variations of Liberalism, including the following:

**Conservative Liberalism**

Conservative Liberalism is a variant of Liberalism representing the right-wing of the Liberal movement, and combines liberal values and policies with conservative stances. Unlike Liberal Conservatives, however, who tend to be more committed to authority, tradition and established religion, Conservative Liberals are supporters of the separation between church and state. It also differs from Libertarianism in that it is far less radical in its economic program, and in its support for an active defense policy and military interventions.

**Economic Liberalism**

Economic Liberalism is the theory of economics in Classical Liberalism, developed during the Enlightenment, particularly by Adam Smith, which advocates minimal interference by government in the economy. Libertarianism, Neoliberalism and some schools of Conservatism, particularly Liberal Conservatism are often referred to as Economic Liberalism.

**Neoliberalism**

Neoliberalism refers to a program of reducing trade barriers and internal market restrictions, while using government power to enforce opening of foreign markets. In some ways it is a modern attempt, championed by Conservatives like Ronald Reagan (1911 - 2004) and Margaret Thatcher (1925 - 2013) since the 1970's, to revert to a more pure Classical Liberalism.

**American Liberalism**

American Liberalism is largely a combination of social liberalism, social progressivism, and mixed economy philosophy. It is distinguished from Classic Liberalism and Libertarianism, which also claim freedom as

their primary goal, in its insistence upon the inclusion of positive rights (such as education, health care and other services and goods believed to be required for human development and self-actualization) and in a broader definition of equality.

**National Liberalism**

National Liberalismis a variant of Liberalism commonly found in several European countries in the 19th and 20th Century, which combines nationalism with policies mainly derived from Economic Liberalism.

**Ordoliberalism**

Ordoliberalismis a mid-20th Century school of Liberalism, developed mainly in Germany, emphasizing the need for the state to ensure that the free market produces results close to its theoretical potential.

**Paleoliberalism**

Paleoliberalismis a term that has at least a few distincts, though largely ambiguous, meanings, including extreme Liberalism, and very socialist or socially libertarian Liberalism, and opposed to Neo liberalism.

**Cultural Liberalism**

Cultural Liberalism is a liberal view of society that stresses the freedom of individuals from cultural norms.

## 14.5 COMMUNITARIANISM

Communitarianism is a philosophy that emphasizes the connection between the individual and the community. Although the community might be a family unit, communitarianism usually is understood, in the wider, philosophical sense, as a collection of interactions, among a community of people in a given place (geographical location), or among a community who share an interest or who share a history. Communitarian philosophy is based upon the belief that a person's social identity and personality are

largely molded by community relationships, with a smaller degree of development being placed on individualism.

The philosophy of communitarianism originated in the 20th century, but the term "communitarian" was coined in 1841, by John Goodwyn Barmby, a leader of the British Chartist movement, who used it in referring to utopian socialists, and other idealists, who experimented with communal styles of life.

In moral and political philosophy, communitarians are best known for their critiques of John Rawls' political liberalism, detailed at length in his book "A Theory of Justice". Communitarians criticize the image Rawls presents of humans as atomistic individuals, and stress that individuals who are well-integrated into communities are better able to reason and act in responsible ways than isolated individuals, but add that if social pressure to conform rises to high levels, it will undermine the individual self. Communitarians uphold the importance of the social realm, and communities in particular, though they differ in the extent to which their conceptions are attentive to liberty and individual rights. Even with these general similarities, communitarians, like members of many other schools of thought, differ considerably from one another.

Responding to criticism that the term 'community' is too vague or cannot be defined, Amita iEtzioni, one of the leaders of the American communitarian movement, pointed out that communities can be defined with reasonable precision as having two characteristics: first, a web of affect-laden relationships among a group of individuals, relationships that often crisscross and reinforce one another (as opposed to one-on-one or chain-like individual relationships); and second, a measure of commitment to a set of shared values, norms, and meanings, and a shared history and identity - in short, a particular culture. Further, author David E. Pearson argued that "to earn the appellation 'community,' it seems to me, groups must be able to exert moral suasion and extract a measure of compliance from their members. That is, communities are necessarily, indeed, by definition,

coercive as well as moral, threatening their members with the stick of sanctions if they stray, offering them the carrot of certainty and stability if they don't."

What is specifically meant by "community" in the context of communitarianism can vary greatly between authors and time periods. Historically, communities have been small and localized. However, as the reach of economic and technological forces extended, more-expansive communities became necessary in order to provide effective normative and political guidance to these forces, prompting the rise of national communities in Europe in the 17th century. Since the late 20th century there has been some growing recognition that the scope of even these communities is too limited, as many challenges that people now face, such as the threat of nuclear war and that of global environmental degradation and economic crises, cannot be handled on a national basis. This has led to the quest for more-encompassing communities, such as the European Union. Whether truly supra-national communities can be developed is far from clear.

More modern communities can take many different forms, but are often limited in scope and reach. For example, members of one residential community are often also members of other communities - such as work, ethnic, or religious ones. As a result, modern community members have multiple sources of attachments, and if one threatens to become overwhelming, individuals will often pull back and turn to another community for their attachments.

Beginning in the late 20th century, many authors began to observe a deterioration in the social networks of the United States. This results in a decline in "social capital", described by Putnam as "the collective value of all 'social networks' and the inclinations that arise from these networks to do things for each other". According to Putnam and his followers, social capital is a key component to building and maintaining democracy. Communitarians seek to bolster social capital and the institutions of civil society.

Important to some supporters of communitarian philosophy is the concept of positive rights, which are rights or guarantees to certain things. These may include state-subsidized education, state-subsidized housing, a safe and clean environment, universal health care, and even the right to a job with the concomitant obligation of the government or individuals to provide one. To this end, communitarians generally support social security programs, public works programs, and laws limiting such things as pollution.

A common objection is that by providing such rights, communitarians violate the negative rights of the citizens; rights to not have something done for you. For example, taxation to pay for such programs as described above dispossesses individuals of property. Proponents of positive rights, by attributing the protection of negative rights to the society rather than the government, respond that individuals would not have any rights in the absence of societies-a central tenet of communitarianism-and thus have a personal responsibility to give something back to it. Some have viewed this as a negation of natural rights. However, what is or is not a "natural right" is a source of contention in modern politics, as well as historically; for example, whether or not universal health care, private property or protection from polluters can be considered a birthright.

Alternatively, some agree that negative rights may be violated by a government action, but argue that it is justifiable if the positive rights protected outweigh the negative rights lost. In the same vein, supporters of positive rights further argue that negative rights are irrelevant in their absence. Moreover, some communitarians "experience this less as a case of being used for others' ends and more as a way of contributing to the purposes of a community I regard as my own".

Still other communitarians question the very idea of natural rights and their place in a properly functioning community. They claim that instead, claims of rights and entitlements creates a society unable to form cultural institutions and grounded social norms based on shared values. Rather, the liberalist claim to individual rights leads to a morality centered on

individual emotivism, as ethical issues can no longer be solved by working through common understandings of the good. The worry here is that not only is society individualized, but so are moral claims.

## 14.6 TYPES OF COMMUNITARIANISM

Philosophical communitarianism:

Philosophical Communitarianism considers classical liberalism to be ontologically and epistemologically incoherent, and opposes it on those grounds. Unlike classical liberalism, which construes communities as originating from the voluntary acts of pre-community individuals, it emphasizes the role of the community in defining and shaping individuals. Communitarians believe that the value of community is not sufficiently recognized in liberal theories of justice.

**Academic communitarianism:**

Whereas the classical liberalism of the Enlightenment can be viewed as a reaction to centuries of authoritarianism, oppressive government, overbearing communities, and rigid dogma, modern communitarianism can be considered a reaction to excessive individualism, understood as an undue emphasis on individual rights, leading people to become selfish or egocentric.

The close relation between the individual and the community was discussed on a theoretical level by Michael Sandel and Charles Taylor, among other academic communitarians, in their criticisms of philosophical liberalism, especially the work of the American liberal theorist John Rawls and that of the German Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant. They argued that contemporary liberalism and libertarianism presuppose an incoherent notion of the individual as existing outside and apart from society, rather than embedded within it. To the contrary, they argued, there are no generic individuals but rather only Germans or Russians, Berliners or Muscovites-or members of some other particularistic community. Because individual identity is partly constructed by culture and social relations, there

is no coherent way of formulating individual rights or interests in abstraction from social contexts. Thus, according to these communitarians, there is no point in attempting to found a theory of justice on principles decided behind Rawls' veil of ignorance, because individuals cannot exist in such an abstracted state, even in principle.

Academic communitarians also contend that the nature of the political community is misunderstood by liberalism. Where liberal philosophers described the polity as a neutral framework of rules within which a multiplicity of commitments to moral values can coexist, academic communitarians argue that such a thin conception of political community was both empirically misleading and normatively dangerous. Good societies, these authors believe, rest on much more than neutral rules and procedures-they rely on a shared moral culture. Some academic communitarians argued even more strongly on behalf of such particularistic values, suggesting that these were the only kind of values which matter and that it is a philosophical error to posit any truly universal moral values.

In addition to Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel, other thinkers sometimes associated with academic communitarianism include Michael Walzer, Alasdair MacIntyre, SeylaBenhabib, and Shlomo Avineri.

**Ideological communitarianism:**

Ideological communitarianism is characterized as a radical centrist ideology that is sometimes marked by leftism on economic issues and centrism on social issues. This usage was coined recently. When the term is capitalized, it usually refers to the Responsive Communitarian movement of AmitaiEtzioni and other philosophers.

**Responsive communitarianism:**

The main thesis of responsive communitarianism is that people face two major sources of normativity: that of the common good and that of autonomy and rights, neither of which in principle should take precedence

over the other. This can be contrasted with other political and social philosophies which derive their core assumptions from one overarching principle (such as liberty/autonomy for libertarianism). It further posits that a good society is based on a carefully crafted balance between liberty and social order, between individual rights and social responsibilities, and between pluralistic and socially established values.

Responsive communitarianism stresses the importance of society and its institutions above and beyond that of the state and the market, which are often the focus of other political philosophies. It also emphasizes the key role played by socialization, moral culture, and informal social controls rather than state coercion or market pressures. It provides an alternative to liberal individualism and a major counterpoint to authoritarian communitarianism by stressing that strong rights presume strong responsibilities and that one should not be neglected in the name of the other.

Early communitarians were charged with being, in effect, social conservatives. However, many contemporary communitarians, especially those who define themselves as responsive communitarians, fully realize and often stress that they do not seek to return to traditional communities, with their authoritarian power structure, rigid stratification, and discriminatory practices against minorities and women. Responsive communitarians seek to build communities based on open participation, dialogue, and truly shared values. Linda McClain, a critic of communitarians, recognizes this feature of the responsive communitarians, writing that some communitarians do "recognize the need for careful evaluation of what is good and bad about [any specific] tradition and the possibility of severing certain features . . . from others."And R. Bruce Douglass writes, "Unlike conservatives, communitarians are aware that the days when the issues we face as a society could be settled on the basis of the beliefs of a privileged segment of the population have long since passed."

One major way the communitarian position differs from the social

conservative one is that although communitarianism's ideal "good society" "reaches into the private realm, it seeks to cultivate only a limited set of core virtues through an organically developed set of values rather than having an expansive or holistically normative agenda given by the state. For example, American society favors being religious over being atheist, but is rather neutral with regard to which particular religion a person should follow. There are no state-prescribed dress codes, "correct" number of children to have, or places one is expected to live, etc. In short, a key defining characteristic of the ideal communitarian society is that in contrast to a liberal state, it creates shared formulations of the good, but the scope of this good is much smaller than that advanced by authoritarian societies."

Authoritarian governments often embrace extremist ideologies and rule with brute force, accompanied with severe restrictions on personal freedom, political and civil rights. Authoritarian governments are overt about the role of the government as director and commander. Civil society and democracy are not generally characteristic of authoritarian regimes.

## 14.7CONCLUSION

The contemporary liberal-communitarian debate operates at several levels. At the level of political theory, it is a debate over the relationship between legal or governmental structures and cultural structures such as religions or ethnic groups. At the level of moral theory, it is a debate over the relationship of values and obligations, or more specifically, over whether conceptions of what is good can logically ground principles about what is right, or vice versa. Finally, at the level of what is sometimes called philosophical psychology, it is a debate over the nature of the self.



## CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Q1:** Objective type questions.

(a) The word "liberal" is derived from which word?

(b) Who wrote the book "Two Treatises on Government"?

(c) Who wrote the book "A Theory of Justice"?

(d) What is Communitarianism?

**Q2:** Fill in the blanks.

(a) _____ argues that real freedom can only exist when citizens are healthy, educated and free from dire poverty.

(b) _____ is a liberal view of society that stresses the freedom of individuals from cultural norms.

(c) _____ considers classical liberalism to be ontologically and epistemologically incoherent.

(d) Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel are the supporters of _____.

**Q3:** Write true or false.

(a) The main philosopher behind the liberalist movement has been John Locke.

(b) Liberalism is a reaction against traditionalism.

(c) Communitarians supports that humans are atomistic individuals.

(d) According to academic communitarians individuals canexist outside and apart from society.

**Q4:** Short questions.

(a) What is Liberalism?

(b) What is Laissez-faire economic policy?

(c) What is Welfare state?

(d) What is Positive right?



## 14.8 LET US SUM UP

- The word "liberal" is derived from the Latin word "liber" which means "free" or "not a slave".
- The main philosopher behind the liberalist movement has been John Locke.
- Liberalism is a reaction against traditionalism because tradition prevents man from asserting himself.
- Anarchism is a much more radical form of Liberalism, although, like Anarchism, Liberalism historically stands in opposition to any form of authoritarianism, whether in the form of Communism, Socialism, Fascism or other types of Totalitarianism.
- Communitarianism is a philosophy that emphasizes the connection between the individual and the community. Although the community might be a family unit, communitarianism usually is understood, in the wider, philosophical sense, as a collection of interactions, among a community of people in a given place (geographical location), or among a community who share an interest or who share a history.
- According to academic communitarianism individual identity is partly constructed by culture and social relations, there is no coherent way of formulating individual rights or interests in abstraction from social contexts.
- Responsive communitarianism stresses the importance of society and its institutions above and beyond that of the state. Responsive communitarians seek to build communities based on open participation, dialogue, and truly shared values.



## 14.9 FURTHER READING

The Liberal-Communitarian Debate

by Thomas E. Wren (from The Blackwell's Dictionary of Business Ethics, 1999)

Falcon, Andrea. Aristotle on causality, Stanford Encyclopedia of philosophy 2008

## 14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** (a) The word "liberal" is derived from the Latin word "liber" which means "free" or "not a slave".

(b) John Locke wrote the book "Two Treatises on Government".

(c) John Rawls'wrote the book "A Theory of Justice".

(d) Communitarianism is a philosophy that emphasizes the connection between the individual and the community.

**Ans.2.** (a) Social Liberalism

(b) Cultural Liberalism

(c) Philosophical communitarianism

(d) Academic communitarianism

**Ans.3.** (a) True

(b) True

(c) False

(d) False

**Ans.4.**(a)Liberalism means generous and open-minded, as well as free from restraint and from prejudice.

(b) Laissez-faire economic policy means where there is minimal economic intervention and taxation by the state beyond what is necessary to maintain individual liberty, peace, security and property rights.

(c) Welfare state means where there is the provision of welfare services by the state, and where the state takes primary responsibility for the welfare of its citizens.

(d) Positive rights are rights or guarantees to certain things. These may include state-subsidized education, state-subsidized housing, a safe and clean environment, universal health care, and even the right to a job.

## 14.11 MODEL QUESTIONS

**A. Very short Questions**

**Q1:** What is the literal meaning of 'liberal'?

**Q2:** Who had written the book 'Two Treatises on Government'?

**Q3:** Mention the author of the book, 'On Liberty'.

**Q4:** Liberalism is a reaction against what?

**Q5:** What is anarchism?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** What is classical liberalism? Explain briefly.

**Q2:** Briefly explain social liberalism.

**Q3:** Write a short note on Philosophical Communitarianism.

**Q4:** What is responsive Communitarianism?

**Q5:** How the communitarian position is different from conservative one?

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Explain the development of Liberalism.

**Q2:** Describe the various types of Liberalism.

**Q3:** Discuss the concept of Communitarianism.

**Q4:** Discuss the concept of Positive right.

**Q5:** Describe the various types ofCommunitarianism.

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# UNIT-14 LIBERAL JUSTICE AND JUSTICE AS DESERT

**UNIT STRUCTURE**


15.1. Learning Objectives

15.2. Introduction

15.3. The Libertarian Concept of Justice

15.4. The Liberal Conception of Justice

15.5. Justice as Fairness: Justice within a Liberal Society (Rawls's theory)

- 15. 5.1. The Basic Structure of Society
- 15. 5.2. Two Guiding Ideas of Justice as Fairness
- 15. 5. 3. The Two Principles of Justice as Fairness

15. 6.The Conception of Citizens

15. 7. The Conception of Society

- 15.7.1. The Original Position
- 15. 7. 2. The Argument from the Original Position: The Selection of Principles
- 15. 7. 3. The Argument from the Original Position: The Check for Stability

15.8. Institutions: The Four-Stage Sequence

15. 9. The Original Position and Political Constructivism

15. 10. The Law of Peoples: Liberal Foreign Policy

15. 11. The International Basic Structure and the Principles of the Law of Peoples

15. 12. Peoples: Liberal and Decent

15. 13. International Toleration and Human Rights

- 15. 13. 1The International Original Position

15.14. Non-Ideal Theory: Outlaw States and Burdened Societies

15.15. Let us sum up

15.16 Further Reading

15.17 Answers to Check your Progress

15.18 Model Questions

## 15.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to

- Explain justice and the relevance of justice;
- Learn how justice reflects the moral status of the society, community and state;
- Explain individualistic conception of justice, the liberal concept of justice and Rawls's theory of justice for a liberal society;
- Discuss Justice as fairness, Guiding Ideas of Justice as Fairness; Principles of Justice as Fairness; the Conception of Citizens, Society, Institutions;
- Define the good and give an account of primary goods;
- Discuss the Law of Peoples, International Toleration and Human Rights, Non-Ideal Theory: Outlaw States and Burdened Societies, Reconciliation and Realistic Utopia and many more.

## 15.2 INTRODUCTION

Nothing other than justice finds its relevance in human life in a greater way. Justice reflects the moral status of the society, community and state. Everybody is pleading for justice. What then is justice? Justice means what is just in the real sense of the term. The term justice may be evaluated from various perspectives. People are talking of social justice, economic justice, political justice, moral justice, liberal justice. The relevance of justice was prevailing from the antiquity. The Greek philosophers were vocal about the concept of justice. According to Plato, justice is the quality of the soul. In the 19th century, John Rawls introduced the mainstream theory of justice. In fact, Rawls' deontological approach of justice appeared as the semblance of justice in the contemporary social and political philosophy. Our point of discussion is liberal justice and justice as Desert or reward.

There is no question of doubt that the concept of justice is a complete one. It is used both for law and also for social morality. Constitutional laws are framed to project political and economic justice. However, the impact of

social and moral justice has far more impact than other forms of justice. Justice is also concerned with the order of the society as a whole. Besides, justice also functions as a conservative and reformative principle. Social justice aims at reconciliation of the interests of individuals with the overall interests of the community. In this sense, social justice maintains a balance between the rights of individuals and the needs of the society. The ideal of social justice per see addresses the welfare of the people, especially the poor, needy, and weaker sections of the society, in short, the downtrodden and marginal class.

## 15.3 THE LIBERTARIAN CONCEPT OF JUSTICE

Libertarian concept of justice is known as individualistic conception of justice. It states that liberty is to be the ultimate moral ideal. According to this form of justice, individual liberty is more important than anything else. A libertarian considers that a society is just which provides maximum liberty to the individual. The sole function of the government is to protect the moral rights of people, i.e., the right to life, liberty, and property against force and fraud. It states that if A has the right to X, A is entitled to have it and to possess it. It talks in favor of welfare to those who cannot or will not provide for themselves. To make such provisions, the government would have to take from some people against their will in order to give others. Taxing some people to give to others is analogous to robbery. John Hospers, who defends a libertarian position, argues that the laws requiring people to help one another through welfare payments are just like "rob Peter to pay Paul".

## 15.4 THE LIBERAL CONCEPTION OF JUSTICE

The liberal concept of justice slightly differs from the libertarian concept of justice. It tries to combine both liberty and equality into one ultimate moral ideal. Liberals consider some of the libertarian's negative rights as extremely important. They advocate that social institutions should follow two important functions: (a) to ensure certain basic liberties, and (b) to provide basic needs to the disadvantaged members of society. However, liberals

differ from socialists on the communal ownership of the means of production. John Rawls' argues that only those social goods are justified that will contribute to raising the position of the least-advantaged groups in the society. Here one may justice Rawls' mainstream theory of justice as model of liberal conception of justice.

## 15.5 JUSTICE AS FAIRNESS: JUSTICE WITHIN A LIBERAL SOCIETY (RAWLS'S THEORY)

Justice as fairness is Rawls's theory of justice for a liberal society. As a member of the family of liberal political conceptions of justice it provides a framework for the legitimate use of political power. Yet legitimacy is only the minimal standard of political acceptability; a political order can be legitimate without being just. Justice is the maximal moral standard: the full description of how a society's main institutions should be ordered.

Rawls constructs justice as fairness around specific interpretations of the defining liberal ideas that citizens are free and equal and that society should be fair. He holds that justice as fairness is the most egalitarian, and also the most plausible, interpretation of liberalism's fundamental concepts. Rawls sees justice as fairness as answering to the demands of freedom and equality, a challenge posed by the socialist critique of liberal democracy and by the conservative critique of the modern welfare state. Justice as fairness sets out a version of social contract theory that Rawls believes provides a superior understanding of justice to that of the dominant tradition in political philosophy.

### 15.5.1 The Basic Structure of Society

Justice as fairness aims to describe a just arrangement of the major political and social institutions of a liberal society: the political constitution, the legal system, the economy, the family, and so on. The arrangement of these institutions is a society's basic structure. The basic structure is the location of justice because these institutions distribute the main benefits and burdens of social life, for example who will receive social recognition,

who will have which basic rights, who will have opportunities to get what kind of work, what the distribution of income and wealth will be, and so on. The form of a society's basic structure will have profound effects on the lives of citizens, influencing not only their prospects but more deeply their goals, their attitudes, their relationships, and their characters. Institutions that have such pervasive influence on people's lives require justification. Since leaving one's society is not a realistic option for most people, one cannot say that citizens have consented to the arrangement of their institutions by staying in the country. And since the rules of any basic structure will be coercively enforced, often with serious penalties, the demand to justify the imposition of any particular set of rules intensifies further.

In setting out justice as fairness Rawls assumes that the liberal society in question is marked by reasonable pluralism as described above, and also that it is under reasonably favorable conditions: that there are enough resources for it to be possible for everyone's basic needs to be met. Rawls makes the simplifying assumption that the society is self-sufficient and closed, so that citizens enter it only by birth and leave it only at death.

### 15.5.2 Two Guiding Ideas of Justice as Fairness

Social cooperation in some form is necessary for citizens to be able to lead a decent life. Yet citizens are not indifferent to how the benefits and burdens of cooperation will be divided amongst them. Rawls's principles of justice as fairness embody the central liberal ideas that cooperation should be fair to all citizens regarded as free and equal. The distinctive interpretation that Rawls gives to these concepts can be seen in broad terms as a combination of a negative and a positive thesis. Rawls's negative thesis is that citizens do not deserve to be born into a rich or a poor family, to be born naturally more or less gifted than others, to be born female or male, to be born a member of a particular racial group, and so on. Since these features of persons are in this sense morally arbitrary, citizens are not at the deepest level entitled to more or less of the benefits of social cooperation because of them. For example the fact that a citizen was born rich, white, and male

provides no reason in itself for this citizen to be either favored or disfavored by social institutions.

This negative thesis does not in itself say how social goods should be distributed; it merely clears the decks. Rawls's positive distributive thesis is equality-based reciprocity. All social goods are to be distributed equally, unless an unequal distribution would be to everyone's advantage. The guiding idea is that since citizens are fundamentally equal, reasoning about justice should begin from a presumption that all cooperatively-produced goods should be equally divided. Justice then requires that any inequalities must benefit all citizens, and particularly must benefit those who will have the least. Equality sets the baseline; from there any inequalities must improve everyone's situation, and especially the situation of the worst-off. These strong requirements of equality and reciprocal advantage are hallmarks of Rawls's theory of justice.

### 15.5.3 The Two Principles of Justice as Fairness

These guiding ideas of justice as fairness are expressed in its two principles of justice:

**First Principle:** Each person has the same indefeasible claim to a fully adequate scheme of equal basic liberties, which scheme is compatible with the same scheme of liberties for all;

**Second Principle:** Social and economic inequalities are to satisfy two conditions: (a) They are to be attached to offices and positions open to all under conditions of fair equality of opportunity; (b)They are to be to the greatest benefit of the least-advantaged members of society (the difference principle). (JF, 42-43)

The first principle of equal basic liberties is to be used for designing the political constitution, while the second principle applies primarily to economic institutions. Fulfillment of the first principle takes priority over fulfillment of the second principle, and within the second principle fair equality

of opportunity takes priority over the difference principle.

The first principle affirms for all citizens' familiar basic rights and liberties: liberty of conscience and freedom of association, freedom of speech and liberty of the person, the rights to vote, to hold public office, to be treated in accordance with the rule of law, and so on. The principle ascribes these rights and liberties to all citizens equally. Unequal rights would not benefit those who would get a lesser share of rights. So justice requires equal rights for all in all normal circumstances.

Rawls's first principle accords with widespread convictions about the importance of equal basic rights and liberties. Two further features make this first principle distinctive. First is its priority: the basic rights and liberties must not be traded off against other social goods. The first principle disallows, for instance, a policy that would give draft exemptions to college students on the grounds that educated civilians will increase economic growth. The draft is a drastic infringement on basic liberties, and if a draft is implemented then all who are able to serve must be equally subject to it.

The second distinctive feature of Rawls's first principle is that it requires fair value of the political liberties. The political liberties are a subset of the basic liberties, concerned with the rights to hold public office, the right to affect the outcome of national elections and so on. For these liberties Rawls requires that citizens be not only formally but also substantively equal. That is, citizens similarly endowed and motivated should have the same opportunities to hold office, to influence elections, and so on regardless of their social class. This fair value proviso has major implications for how elections should be funded and run, as described below.

Rawls's second principle of justice has two parts. The first part, **fair equality of opportunity,** requires that citizens with the same talents and willingness to use them have the same educational and economic opportunities regardless of whether they were born rich or poor. "In all parts of society there are to be roughly the same prospects of culture and

achievement for those similarly motivated and endowed" (JF, p. 44). So for example if we assume that natural endowments and willingness are evenly distributed across children born into different social classes, then within any type of occupation (generally specified) we should find that roughly one quarter of people in that occupation were born into the top 25% of the income distribution, one quarter were born into the second-highest 25% of the income distribution, one quarter were born into the second-lowest 25%, and one-quarter were born into the lowest 25%. Since class of origin is a morally arbitrary fact about citizens, justice does not allow class of origin to turn into unequal real opportunities for education or meaningful work.

The second part of the second principle is the difference principle, which regulates the distribution of wealth and income. With these goods inequalities can produce a greater total product: higher wages can cover the costs of training and education, for example, and can provide incentives to fill jobs that are more in demand. The difference principle requires that social institutions be arranged so that any inequalities of wealth and income work to the advantage of those who will be worst off. The difference principle requires, that is, that financial inequalities be to everyone's advantage, and specifically to the greatest advantage of those advantaged least.

Consider four hypothetical economic structures A-D, and the lifetime-average levels of income these would produce for representative members of three different groups:

| Economy | Least-Advantaged Group | Middle Group | Most-Advantaged Group |
|---|---|---|---|
| A | 10,000 | 10,000 | 10,000 |
| B | 12,000 | 30,000 | 80,000 |
| C | 30,000 | 90,000 | 150,000 |
| D | 20,000 | 100,000 | 500,000 |

Here the difference principle selects Economy C, because it contains the distribution where the least-advantaged group does best. Inequalities in C are to everyone's advantage relative to an equal division (Economy A), and relative to a more equal division (Economy B). But the difference principle does not allow the rich to get richer at the expense of the poor (Economy D). The difference principle embodies equality-based reciprocity: from an egalitarian baseline it requires inequalities that are good for all, and particularly for the worst-off.

The difference principle gives expression to the idea that natural endowments are undeserved. A citizen does not merit more of the social product simply because she was lucky enough to be born with gifts that are in great demand. Yet this does not mean that everyone must get the same shares. The fact that citizens have different talents and abilities can be used to make everyone better off. In a society governed by the difference principle citizens regard the distribution of natural endowments as an asset that can benefit all. Those better endowed are welcome to use their gifts to make themselves better off, so long as their doing so also contributes to the good of those less well endowed. "In justice as fairness," Rawls says, "men agree to share one another's fate." (TJ, 102)



**Activity 51.1**

1. Do you find any difference between the liberal concept of justice and the libertarian concept of justice?

Ans: .....

.....

2. What do you know about the two Principles of Justice as Fairness? Discuss

.....

.....



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q1:** Justice means what is just. (True/ False)

.....

**Q2:** According to Plato/ John Rawls justice is the quality of the soul.

.....

**Q3:** _____ introduced the mainstream theory of justice.

.....

**Q4:** According to _____ of justice, individual liberty is more important than anything else.

.....

**Q5:** "Men agree to share one another's fate"- Who said this?

.....

## 15.6 THE CONCEPTION OF CITIZENS

Having surveyed Rawls's two principles of justice as fairness, we can return to Rawls's interpretations of the liberal ideas that citizens are free and equal and that society should be fair. Rawls uses his conceptions of citizens and society to build his official argument for his two principles: the argument from the original position.

Rawls's interpretation of the idea that citizens are free is as follows. Citizens are free in that each sees himself as being entitled to make claims on social institutions in his own right-citizens are not slaves or serfs, dependent for their social status on others. Citizens are also free in that they see their public identities as uncoupled from any particular comprehensive doctrine: a citizen who converts to Islam, or recants his faith, will expect, for example, to retain his political rights and liberties throughout the transition. Finally citizens are free in being able to take responsibility for planning their own lives, given the opportunities and

resources that they can reasonably expect.

Citizens are equal, Rawls says, in virtue of having the capacities to participate in social cooperation over a complete life. Citizens may have greater or lesser skills, talents, and powers "above the line" required to cooperate, but differences above this line have no bearing on citizens' underlying equal status.

Rawlsian citizens are not only free and equal; they are also reasonable and rational. The idea that citizens are reasonable is familiar from political liberalism. Reasonable citizens have the capacity to abide by fair terms of cooperation, even at the expense of their own interests, provided that others are also willing to do so. In justice as fairness Rawls calls this reasonableness the capacity for a sense of justice. Citizens are also conceived as rational: they have the capacity to pursue and revise their own view of what is valuable in human life. Rawls calls this the capacity for a conception of the good. Together these underlying capacities are the two moral powers.

Like every theory of justice (for example those of Locke, Rousseau and Mill), justice as fairness requires an account of citizens' fundamental interests: what citizens need qua citizens. Rawls derives his account of primary goods from the conception of the citizen as free and equal, reasonable and rational. Primary goods are essential for developing and exercising the two moral powers, and useful for pursuing a wide range of specific conceptions of the good life. Primary goods are: (a) The basic rights and liberties; (b) Freedom of movement, and free choice among a wide range of occupations; (c) The powers of offices and positions of responsibility; (d) Income and wealth; and (e) The social bases of self-respect: the recognition by social institutions that gives citizens a sense of self-worth and the confidence to carry out their plans. (JF, 58-59)

All citizens are assumed to have fundamental interests in getting more of these primary goods, and political institutions are to evaluate how

well citizens are doing according to what primary goods they have. It is equality and inequality of primary goods that, Rawls claims, are of the greatest political importance.

## 15.7 THE CONCEPTION OF SOCIETY

Rawls's conception of society is defined by fairness: social institutions are to be fair to all cooperating members of society, regardless of their race, gender, religion, class of origin, reasonable conception of the good life, and so on. Rawls also emphasizes publicity as an aspect of fairness. In what he calls a well-ordered society the principles that order the basic structure are publicly known to do so, and the justifications for these principles are knowable by and acceptable to all reasonable citizens. The idea behind publicity is that since the principles for the basic structure will be coercively enforced, they should stand up to public scrutiny. The publicity condition requires that a society's operative principles of justice be neither esoteric nor ideological screens for deeper power relations: that in "public political life, nothing need be hidden." (PL, 68)

### 15.7.1 The Original Position

Rawls's conceptions of citizens and society are still quite abstract, and some might think innocuous. The original position aims to move from these abstract conceptions to determinate principles of social justice. It does so by translating the question: "What are fair terms of social cooperation for free and equal citizens?" into the question "What terms of cooperation would free and equal citizens agree to under fair conditions?" The move to agreement among citizens is what places Rawls's justice as fairness within the social contract tradition of Locke, Rousseau and Kant.

The strategy of the original position is to construct a method of reasoning that models abstract ideas about justice so as to focus their power together onto the choice of principles. So Rawls's conceptions of citizens and of society are built into the design of the original position itself. Rawls's intent is that readers will see the outcome of the original position as justified

because they will see how it embodies plausible understandings of citizens and society, and also because this outcome confirms many of their considered convictions about justice on specific issues.

The original position is a thought experiment: an imaginary situation in which each real citizen has a representative, and all of these representatives come to an agreement on which principles of justice should order the political institutions of the real citizens. Were actual citizens to get together in real time to try to agree to principles of justice for their society the bargaining among them would be influenced by all sorts of factors irrelevant to justice, such as who could appear most threatening or who could hold out longest. The original position abstracts from all such irrelevant factors. In effect the original position is a situation in which each citizen is represented as only a free and equal citizen, as wanting only what free and equal citizens want, and as trying to agree to principles for the basic structure while situated fairly with respect to other citizens. For example citizens' basic equality is modeled in the original position by imagining that the parties who represent real citizens are symmetrically situated: no citizen's representative is able to threaten any other citizen's representative, or to hold out longer for a better deal.

The most striking feature of the original position is the veil of ignorance, which prevents other arbitrary facts about citizens from influencing the agreement among their representatives. As we have seen, Rawls holds that the fact that a citizen is for example of a certain race, class, and gender is no reason for social institutions to favor or disfavor him. Each party in the original position is therefore deprived of knowledge of the race, class, and gender of the real citizen they represent. In fact the veil of ignorance deprives the parties of all facts about citizens that are irrelevant to the choice of principles of justice: not only their race, class, and gender but also their age, natural endowments, and more. Moreover the veil of ignorance also screens out specific information about the citizens' society so as to get a clearer view of the permanent features of a just social system.

Behind the veil of ignorance, the informational situation of the parties that represent real citizens is as follows:

**Parties do not know:**

a. The race, ethnicity, gender, age, income, wealth, natural endowments, comprehensive doctrine, etc. of any of the citizens in society, or to which generation in the history of the society these citizens belong.

b. The political system of the society, its class structure, economic system, or level of economic development.

**Parties do know:**

a. That citizens in the society have different comprehensive doctrines and plans of life; that all citizens have interests in more primary goods.

b. That the society is under conditions of moderate scarcity: there is enough to go around, but not enough for everyone to get what they want;

c. General facts about human social life; facts of common sense; general conclusions of science (including economics and psychology) that are uncontroversial.

The veil of ignorance is intended to situate the representatives of free and equal citizens fairly with respect to one another. No party can press for agreement on principles that will arbitrarily favor the particular citizen they represent, because no party knows the specific attributes of the citizen they represent. The situation of the parties thus embodies reasonable conditions, within which the parties can make a rational agreement. Each party tries to agree to principles that will be best for the citizen they represent (i.e., that will maximize that citizen's share of primary goods). Since the parties are fairly situated, the agreement they reach will be fair to all actual citizens.

The set-up of the original position also models other aspects of Rawls's conceptions of citizens and society. For example the publicity of a

well-ordered society is modeled by the fact that the parties must choose among principles that can be publicly endorsed by all citizens. There are also some assumptions that make the hypothetical agreement determinate and decisive: the parties are not motivated by envy (i.e., by how much citizens besides their own end up with); the parties are not assumed to be either risk-seeking or risk-averse; and the parties must make a final agreement on principles for the basic structure: there are no "do-overs" after the veil of ignorance is lifted and the parties learn which real citizen they represent.

### 15.7.2 The Argument from the Original Position: The Selection of Principles

The argument from the original position has two parts. In the first part the parties agree to principles of justice. In the second part the parties check that a society ordered by these principles could be stable over time. Rawls only attempts to show that his two principles of justice would be favored over utilitarian principles, since he sees utilitarianism as the main competing tradition of reasoning about justice. The parties are thus presented with a choice between Rawls's two principles and utilitarian principles, and asked which principles they would prefer to agree to.

The first part of the original position contains two fundamental comparisons between Rawls's two principles and utilitarian principles. In the first comparison the parties compare the two principles to the principle of average utility: the principle that the basic structure should be arranged so as to produce the highest level of utility averaged among all citizens.

In this first comparison Rawls argues that the parties would prefer his two principles to average utility because it is rational for the parties here to use maximin reasoning: to maximize the minimum level of primary goods that the citizens they represent might find themselves with. Under average utilitarianism the basic liberties of some citizens might be restricted for the sake of greater benefits to other citizens. For example, restrictions on the political and religious liberties of a weak minority might benefit the majority

and so lead to a higher average overall. A party in the original position would find the possibility that their citizen might be a member of such a weak minority intolerable, given that the party could secure equal liberties for their citizen by choosing the two principles instead. A party would not be taking seriously the political standing and deepest commitments of the citizen they represent, Rawls argues, were they to gamble with their citizen's basic liberties by favoring average utility.

Moreover, Rawls says, a society governed by his two principles has other advantages over a utilitarian society. Securing equal basic liberties for all encourages a spirit of cooperation among citizens on the basis of mutual respect, taking divisive conflicts about whether to deny liberties to certain groups off of the political agenda. By contrast a utilitarian society would be riven by mutual suspicions, as different groups put forward highly speculative arguments that average utility could be increased by implementing various partisan policies. The two principles, by requiring permanent equal liberties for all, increase social harmony by making it much easier for justice to be seen to be done. The balance of considerations in favor of the two principles over average utility is, Rawls claims, decisive.

The second fundamental comparison in the first part of the original position is between the two principles and the principle of restricted utility, which is identical to Rawls's two principles except that the difference principle is replaced with a principle of average utility to regulate the distribution of wealth and income, constrained by a social minimum. While the first comparison turned on the importance of the basic liberties, the second scrutinizes the reasons for the difference principle.

Maximin reasoning plays no role in the argument for the difference principle. Nor does aversion to uncertainty (JF, xvii, 43, 95, 96). Rather, the parties will favor Rawls's two principles because these provide a better basis for enduring cooperation among all citizens. The two principles ask less of the better-off than restricted utility asks of the worst-off. Under the two principles those who are better endowed are permitted to gain more

wealth and income, on the condition that their doing so also benefits their fellow citizens. Under restricted utility, in contrast, those living at the minimum will suspect that their interests have been sacrificed to make the better-off better off still. These citizens at the minimum may become cynical about their society, and withdraw from active participation in public life. Moreover, it is again difficult to maintain a public agreement as to which policies actually will maximize average utility, and debates over for example where to set the social minimum may lead to mistrust among social classes. The difference principle encourages mutual trust and the cooperative virtues by instantiating an ideal of economic reciprocity. Each party will see the advantages of securing such a social world for the citizen they represent.

### 15.7.3 The Argument from the Original Position: The Check for Stability

Having selected the two principles of justice as fairness, the parties next check that these principles can order a society stably over time. They check, that is, whether those who grow up under institutions arranged by these principles will develop sufficient willingness to abide by them that the principles can serve as the focus of an enduring overlapping consensus.
Rawls argues that his two principles are congruent with each citizen's good. Under the two principles the society's basic institutions affirm the freedom and equality of each citizen, giving a public basis to each citizen's self-respect. Citizens will see that the basic liberties allow sufficient social space to pursue their reasonable conceptions of the good. Citizens will tend to be neither envious nor imperious due to their economic situation, as they will see how the economy works toward the reciprocal advantage of all. And they can reflect on the collective good that they all can achieve together by working to maintain just institutions over time.

Given that the two principles are congruent with citizens' good, Rawls argues that it is reasonable to suppose that citizens will develop a desire to act in accordance with them. It is a deep thesis in Rawls's understanding of moral psychology that people will become attached to people and institutions

that they see benefitting them and those close to them. The two principles create a social world in which each can pursue his own ends on a basis of mutual respect with others. Since this is experienced as a good, the principles will gain citizens' willing and stable allegiance. "The most stable conception of justice," Rawls says, "is one that is perspicuous to our reason, congruent with our good, and rooted not in abnegation but in affirmation of the self" (TJ, 261).

## 15.8 INSTITUTIONS: THE FOUR-STAGE SEQUENCE

The two parts of the argument for the two principles of justice just surveyed occur at the first stage of the original position. At this stage the parties also agree to a principle of just savings to regulate how much one generation must save for future generations. Since the parties do not know which era the citizens they represent live in, it is rational for them to choose a savings principle that is fair to all generations. Rawls says that the parties need not choose a savings principle that requires endless economic growth. Rather, the parties may prefer a Millian "steady state" of zero real growth once a generation has been reached in which the two principles are satisfied. After agreeing on the two principles and a principle of just savings, the parties then proceed further through the four-stage sequence, tailoring these general principles to the particular conditions of the society of the citizens they represent. The veil of ignorance that screens out information about society's general features is gradually thinned, and the parties use the new information to decide on progressively more determinate applications of the two principles.

At the second stage the parties are given more information about the society's political culture and economic development, and take on the task of crafting a constitution that realizes the two principles. At the third stage the parties learn still more about the details of the society, and agree to specific laws and policies that realize the two principles within the constitutional framework decided at the second stage. At the final stage the parties have full information about the society, and reason as judges and

administrators to apply the previously-agreed laws and policies to particular cases. When the four stages are complete the principles of justice as fairness are fully articulated for the society's political life.

To illustrate: at the constitutional and legislative stages the parties specify abstract basic liberties such as "freedom of thought" into more particular rights like the right to free political speech, which is then further specified as the right to criticize the government, the special rights of the press, and so on. The parties also adjust the basic liberties to fit with one another and with other values, always aiming for an overall scheme of liberties that will best enable citizens to develop and exercise their two moral powers and pursue their determinate conceptions of the good. (PL, 289-371) At these stages the parties also work out the institutions necessary to realize the fair value of the equal political liberties. On this topic Rawls is adamant: unless there is public funding of elections, restrictions on campaign contributions, and substantially equal access to the media, politics will be captured by concentrations of private economic power, making it impossible for equally-able citizens to have equal opportunities to influence politics regardless of their class.

The parties attempt to realize the second principle of justice at the legislative stage by shaping the laws that regulate property, contract, inheritance, taxation, hiring and minimum wages, and so on. Their task is not to allocate some fixed set of goods that appear from nowhere, but rather to devise a set of institutions for training, production, and distribution whose operation will realize fair equality of opportunity and the difference principle over time.

For fair equality of opportunity Rawls emphasizes that laws and policies must go beyond merely preventing discrimination in education and hiring. To ensure fair opportunity regardless of social class of origin, the state must also fund high-quality education for the less well off. Moreover the state must also guarantee both a basic minimum income and health care for all.

For the difference principle Rawls says that the goal is an economic order that maximizes the position of the worst off group (e.g., unskilled laborers, or those with less than half the median wealth and income over their lifetimes). Given that institutions realizing the prior principles are already in place, this should be approximately achievable by, for example, varying marginal rates of tax and exemptions.

Rawls explicitly rejects the welfare state (JF, 137-40). Welfare state capitalism leaves control of the economy in the hands of a group of rich private actors. It therefore fails to ensure for all citizens enough resources to have even roughly equal chances of influencing politics, or to have sufficiently equal opportunity in education and employment. The welfare state tends therefore to generate a demoralized under-class. Laissez-faire capitalism is even worse for equality than the welfare state along these dimensions. And a socialist command economy puts too much power in the hands of the state, again endangering political equality and also threatening basic liberties such as free choice of employment.

Justice as fairness, Rawls says, favors either a property owning democracy or democratic socialism. The government of a property owning democracy takes steps to encourage widespread ownership of productive assets and broad access to education and training; democratic socialism is similar but features worker-managed firms. The aim of both systems of political economy is to enable all citizens, even the least advantaged, to manage their own affairs within a context of significant social and economic equality. "The least advantaged are not, if all goes well, the unfortunate and unlucky-objects of our charity and compassion, much less our pity-but those to whom reciprocity is owed as a matter of basic justice" (JF, 139).

## 15.9 THE ORIGINAL POSITION AND POLITICAL CONSTRUCTIVISM

Rawls puts forward the original position as a useful device for reaching greater reflective equilibrium. He holds that the value of the original

position as a method of reasoning is affirmed when it selects the first principle of justice, since the first principle accords with many people's deep convictions about the importance of assuring the basic rights and liberties for all. Having gained credibility by confirming these settled moral judgments, the original position then goes on to select principles for issues on which people's judgments may be less certain, such as how society should structure employment opportunities and what a just distribution of wealth and income might be.

In this way the original position first confirms and then extends judgments about justice. For Rawls it is important that the same method of reasoning that explains equal basic rights also justifies more political and economic equality than many people might have initially expected. The momentum of the argument for the first principle carries through to the argument for the second principle. Those who believe in equal basic rights, but who reject the other egalitarian features of justice as fairness, must try to find some other route to justifying those basic rights.

The original position is also the crux of Rawls's meta-ethical theory, political constructivism. Political constructivism is Rawls's account of the objectivity and validity of political judgments. The original position embodies, Rawls says, all of the relevant conceptions of person and society and principles of practical reasoning for making judgments about justice. When there is an overlapping consensus focused on justice as fairness, the original position specifies a shared public perspective from which all citizens can reason about the principles of justice and their application to the society's institutions. Judgments made from this perspective are then objectively correct, in the sense of giving reasons to citizens to act regardless of their actual motivations or the reasons they think they have within their particular points of view. Political constructivism does not maintain that the principles of justice are true: questions of truth are ones about which reasonable citizens may disagree, and are to be addressed by each citizen from within their own comprehensive doctrine. Judgments made from the original position

are, however, valid, or as Rawls says, reasonable.

## 15.10 THE LAW OF PEOPLES: LIBERAL FOREIGN POLICY

With the theories of legitimacy and justice for a self-contained liberal society completed, Rawls then extends his approach to international relations with the next in his sequence of theories: the law of peoples.

Rawls takes it as a constraint of realism that no tolerable world state could be stable. He cites Kant in asserting that a world government would either be a global despotism or beleaguered by groups fighting to gain their political independence. Rawls's law of peoples will be international, not cosmopolitan: it will guide a liberal society in its interactions with other societies, both liberal and non-liberal.

Rawls describes the main ideas motivating his law of peoples as follows:

Two main ideas motivate the Law of Peoples. One is that the great evils of human history-unjust war and oppression, religious persecution and the denial of liberty of conscience, starvation and poverty, not to mention genocide and mass murder-follow from political injustice, with its own cruelties and callousness… The other main idea, obviously connected with the first, is that, once the gravest forms of political injustice are eliminated by following just (or at least decent) social policies and establishing just (or at least decent) basic institutions, these great evils will eventually disappear. (LP, 6-7)

The most important feature of the "realistic utopia" that Rawls envisages is that the great evils of human history is no longer occur. The most important condition for this realistic utopia to obtain is that all societies are internally well-ordered: that all have just, or at least decent, domestic political institutions.

## 15.11 THE INTERNATIONAL BASIC STRUCTURE AND THE PRINCIPLES OF THE LAW OF PEOPLES

Much of Rawls's presentation of the law of peoples parallels that of justice as fairness and political liberalism. As a liberal society has a basic structure of institutions so, Rawls says, there is an international basic structure (LP, 33, 62, 114, 115, 122, 123). While Rawls does not say that the international basic structure has a pervasive impact on the life chances of individuals, the rules of this basic structure are coercively enforced (for example, Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was coercively reversed by a coalition of other countries). The principles that should regulate this international basic structure thus require justification. The justification of these principles must accommodate the fact that there is even more pluralism in worldviews among contemporary societies than there is within a single liberal society.

Rawls puts forward eight principles for ordering the international basic structure:

(i) Peoples are free and independent, and their freedom and independence are to be respected by other peoples.

(2) Peoples are to observe treaties and undertakings.

(3) Peoples are equal and are parties to the agreements that bind them.

(4) Peoples are to observe the duty of nonintervention (except to address grave violations of human rights).

(5) Peoples have a right of self-defense, but no right to instigate war for reasons other than self-defense.

(6) Peoples are to honor human rights.

(7) Peoples are to observe certain specified restrictions in the conduct of war.

(8) Peoples have a duty to assist other peoples living under unfavorable conditions that prevent their having a just or decent political and social regime. (LP, 37)

All of these principles, with the exception of the last one, are familiar from contemporary international law (though Rawls's list of human rights for principles 4 and 6 is shorter than the list in international law). Rawls also leaves room for his law of peoples to accommodate various organizations that may help societies to increase their political and economic coordination, such as idealized versions of a United Nations, a World Trade Organization, and a World Bank.

## 15.12 PEOPLES: LIBERAL AND DECENT

The actors in Rawls's international theory are not individuals (citizens) but societies (peoples). A people is a group of individuals ruled by a common government, bound together by common sympathies, and firmly attached to a common conception of right and justice. "People" is a moralized concept, and not all states currently on the world map qualify as such.

Rawls's conception of peoples within the law of peoples parallels his conception of citizens within justice as fairness. Peoples see themselves as free in the sense of being rightfully politically independent; and as equal in regarding themselves as equally deserving of recognition and respect. Peoples are reasonable in that they will honor fair terms of cooperation with other peoples, even at cost to their own interests, given that other peoples will also honor those terms. Reasonable peoples are thus unwilling to try to impose their political or social ideals on other reasonable peoples. They satisfy the criterion of reciprocity with respect to one another.

Rawls describes the fundamental interests of a people as follows:

- Protecting its political independence, its territory, and the security of its citizens;

- Maintaining its political and social institutions and its civic culture;
- Securing its proper self-respect as a people, which rests on its citizens' awareness of its history and cultural accomplishments.

Rawls contrasts peoples with states. A state, Rawls says, is moved by the desires to enlarge its territory, or to convert other societies to its religion, or to enjoy the power of ruling over others, or to increase its relative economic strength. Peoples are not states, and as we will see peoples may treat societies that act on such desires as outlaws.

Peoples are of two types, depending on the nature of their domestic political institutions. Liberal peoples satisfy the requirements of political liberalism: they have legitimate liberal constitutions, with governments that are under popular control and not driven by large concentration of private economic power.

Decent peoples are not internally just from a liberal perspective, since their basic institutions do not recognize reasonable pluralism or realize the liberal ideas of free and equal citizens cooperating fairly. The institutions of a decent society may be organized around a single comprehensive doctrine, such as a dominant religion. The political system may not be democratic, and women or members of minority religions may be excluded from public office. Nevertheless decent peoples are well-ordered enough, Rawls says, to merit equal membership in international society.

Like all peoples, decent peoples do not have aggressive foreign policies. Beyond this Rawls describes one type of decent society-a decent hierarchical society-to illustrate what decency requires. A decent hierarchical society's basic structure specifies a decent system of social cooperation. First, it secures a core list of human rights. Second, its political system takes the fundamental interests of all persons into account through a decent consultation hierarchy. This means that the government genuinely consults with the representatives of all groups, which together represent all persons in the society, and that the government justifies its laws and policies to

these groups. The government does not close down protests, and responds to any protests with conscientious replies. The government also supports the right of citizens to emigrate.

Rawls imagines a decent hierarchical society he calls "Kazanistan." Here Islam is the favored religion, and only Muslims can hold the high office. However non-Muslim religions may be practiced without fear and believers in them are encouraged to take part in civic culture of the wider society. Minorities are not subject to arbitrary discrimination by law, or treated as inferior by Muslims. Kazanistan would qualify, Rawls says, as a decent, well-ordered member of the society of peoples.

## 15.13 INTERNATIONAL TOLERATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Liberal peoples tolerate decent peoples, and indeed treat them as equals. Not to do so, Rawls says, would be to fail to express sufficient respect for acceptable ways of ordering a society. Liberal peoples should recognize the good of national self-determination, and let decent societies decide their futures for themselves. The government of a liberal people should not criticize decent peoples for failing to be liberal, or set up incentives for them to become more so. Criticism and inducements may cause bitterness and resentment within the decent people, and so be counter-productive.

Indeed public reason imposes duties of civility upon the members of international society, just as it does upon members of a liberal society. Government officials and candidates for high office should explain their foreign policy positions to other peoples in terms of the principles and values of the law of peoples, and should avoid reliance on contentious parochial reasons that all peoples cannot reasonably share.

One major reason that liberal peoples tolerate decent peoples, Rawls says, is that decent peoples secure for all persons within their territory a core list of human rights. These core human rights include rights to

subsistence, security, personal property, and formal equality before the law, as well as freedoms from slavery, protections of ethnic groups against genocide, and some measure of liberty of conscience (but not, as we have seen, a right to democratic participation). These core human rights are the minimal conditions required for persons to be able to engage in social cooperation in any real sense, so any well-ordered society must protect them.

The role of human rights in the law of peoples is thus to set limits on international toleration. Any society that guarantees Rawls's list of human rights is to be immune from coercive intervention from other peoples. Societies that violate human rights overstep the limits of toleration, and may rightly be subject to economic sanctions or even military attack.

### 15.13.1 The International Original Position

The international original position parallels the domestic original position of justice as fairness. This original position answers the question: "What terms of cooperation would free and equal peoples (liberal and decent) agree to under fair conditions?" The strategy is to build the conception of peoples into the set-up of this original position, along with restrictions on reasons for favoring basic principles of international law: to describe reasonable conditions under which a rational agreement on principles can be made.

In the international original position representatives of each people agree on principles for the international basic structure. Each party is behind a veil of ignorance, deprived of information about the people it represents such as the size of its territory and population, and its relative political and economic strength. Each party tries to do the best it can for the people it represents, in terms of the fundamental interests that all peoples have.

Rawls claims that the parties in the international original position would favor the eight principles listed above. Starting from a baseline of equality and independence, the parties would see no reason to introduce

inequalities into the relationships among peoples (beyond certain functional inequalities in the design of cooperative organizations, such as richer countries contributing more to an idealized United Nations). The parties would reject international utilitarian principles, as no people is prepared to accept that it should sacrifice its fundamental interests for the sake of greater total global utility.

After selecting the eight principles of the law of peoples, the parties next check that these principles can stably order international relations over time. Analogously to the domestic case, the parties will see that the principles of the law of peoples affirm the good of peoples, and that peoples will develop trust and confidence in one another as all willingly abide by these principles over time. The stability of the international political order will thus be stability for the right reasons (and not a mere modus vivendi), since each people will affirm the principles as its first-best option whatever the international balance of power might become.

Rawls also attempts to draw empirical support for his stability argument from the literature on the democratic peace. Social scientists have found that historically democracies have tended not to go to war with one another. Rawls explains this by saying that liberal societies are, because of their internal political structures, satisfied. Liberal peoples have no desires for imperial glory, territorial expansion, or to convert others to their religion, and whatever they need from other countries they can gain through trade. Liberal peoples, Rawls says, have no reasons to fight aggressive wars, so a genuine peace can endure among them. And since decent peoples are defined as non-aggressive, any decent people can join this liberal peace as well.

Once the parties have agreed to the eight principles of the law of peoples, they then continue to specify these principles more precisely in a process analogous to the domestic four-stage sequence.

## 15.14 NON-IDEAL THEORY: OUTLAW STATES AND BURDENED SOCIETIES

The principles selected in the international original position contain provisions for non-ideal situations: situations in which nations are unwilling to comply with the ideal principles, or are unable to cooperate on their terms. These provisions are embedded in principles 4 through 8 of the law of peoples.

Outlaw states are non-compliant: they threaten the peace by attempting to expand their power and influence, or by violating the human rights of those within their territory. The principles of the law of peoples allow peoples to fight these outlaw states in self-defense, and to take coercive actions against them to stop the violation of human rights. In any military confrontations with outlaws, peoples must obey the principles of the just prosecution of war such as avoiding direct attacks on enemy civilians in all but the most desperate circumstances. The aim of war, Rawls says, is to bring all societies to honor the law of peoples, and eventually to become fully participating members of international society.

Burdened societies struggle with social and economic conditions that make it difficult to maintain either liberal or decent institutions. They may lack sufficient material or social resources to support a scheme of social cooperation, perhaps having allowed population growth beyond their territory's current means. Rawls holds that it is the basic structure of a society and its political culture that are most essential for its self-sufficiency; yet there are situations in which the international community must help a burdened society to rise above that threshold. The law of peoples (eighth principle) requires that burdened peoples be assisted until they can handle their own affairs (i.e., become well-ordered). This duty of assistance is Rawls's greatest divergence from the rules of current international law. Accepting this duty would require significant changes in how nations now respond to global poverty and failed states.



**Activity 15.2**

1. Discuss elaborately about the Law of Peoples.

Ans: .....

.....

.....

2. Write a note on International Toleration and Human Rights.

Ans: .....

.....

.....



**CHECK YOUR PROGRESS**

**Q6:** The actors in Rawls's international theory are not individuals (citizens) but societies (peoples). (True/False)

**Q7:** "Citizens are equal"- Who said this?

**Q8:** Societies that violate human rights overstep the limits of toleration - Is it true?

.....

**Q9:** What is the goal of Rawls's law of peoples?

.....

**Q10:** What is the aim of war according to Rawls?

.....



## 15.15 LET US SUM UP

- Reconciliation and Realistic Utopia: Rawls's vision is of a perpetually peaceful and cooperative international order, where liberal and decent peoples stand ready to pacify aggressive states, to secure core human

rights, and to help struggling countries so long as they need assistance.

- To some degree this is a vision of limited ambition. Officials of democratic societies can do little more than hope that merely decent societies will become internally more tolerant and democratic.
- Once the duty to assist burdened peoples is satisfied there are no further requirements on economic distribution within Rawls's law of peoples: inequalities across national borders are of no political concern as such.
- Individuals around the world may suffer greatly from bad luck, and may be haunted by spiritual emptiness.
- The practical goal of Rawls's law of peoples is the elimination of the great evils of human history: unjust war and oppression, religious persecution and the denial of liberty of conscience, starvation and poverty, genocide and mass murder.
- The limits of this ambition mean that there will be much in the world to which Rawls's political philosophy offers no reconciliation.
- Nevertheless, while Rawls's vision is realistic it is also utopian. To believe that Rawls's vision is possible is to believe that individuals are not merely selfish or amoral, and that international relations can be more than a contest for power, wealth, and glory.
- Affirming the possibility of a just and peaceful future can inoculate against a resignation or cynicism that might otherwise seem inevitable.
- "By showing how the social world may realize the features of a realistic utopia, political philosophy provides a long-term goal of political endeavor, and in working toward it gives meaning to what we can do today" (LP, 128).



## 15.16 FURTHER READING

1) Andersson, Emil. 2011. Political Liberalism and the Interests of Children:

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## 15. 17. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

**Ans to Q1:** True

**Ans to Q2:** Plato

**Ans to Q3:** John Rawls

**Ans to Q4:** Libertarian concept

**Ans to Q5:** John Rawls

**Ans to Q6:** True

**Ans to Q7:** John Rawls

**Ans to Q8:** True

**Ans to Q9:** The practical goal of Rawls's law of peoples is the elimination of the great evils of human history: unjust war and oppression, religious persecution and the denial of liberty of conscience, starvation and poverty, genocide and mass murder.

**Ans to Q10:** The aim of war, Rawls says, is to bring all societies to honour the law of peoples, and eventually to become fully participating members of international society.

## 15.18. MODEL QUESTIONS

### A. Very short Questions

**Q1:** Define Justice.

**Q2:** What do you mean by Libertarian concept of justice?

**Q3:** What is liberal concept of justice?

**Q4:** What is society?

**Q5:** Write the name of two guiding ideas of justice.

**Q6:** Define institution.

**Q7:** What is meant by Justice as Fairness?

**Q8:** State an important feature of the realistic utopia.

**Q9:** What do you mean by Burdened societies?

**Q10:** Who introduced the concept of Justice as fairness is a theory of justice for a liberal society?

**B. Short Questions (Write in about 100-150 words)**

**Q1:** Is there any difference between the liberal concept of justice and the libertarian concept of justice? Discuss.

**Q2:** Write briefly about the conception of the Goods.

**Q3:** Name five Primary goods.

**Q4:** What are the eight principles for ordering the international basic structure?

**Q5:** Write a short note on international toleration and Human Rights.

**Q6:** Explain two main ideas motivate the Law of Peoples.

**Q7:** Discuss briefly the law of peoples.

**Q8:** Name three fundamental interests of a people.

**Q9:** Define Outlaw states.

**Q10:** Explain, after Rawls, the concept of citizens.

**C. Long Questions (Write in about 300-500 words)**

**Q1:** Explain and discuss Justice.

**Q2:** How many ways justice reflects the moral status of the society? Discuss.

**Q3:** Discuss Rawls's theory of justice for a liberal society.

**Q4:** What is meant by Justice? Discuss the relevance of justice in the 20th century.

**Q5:** Write an essay on the International Basic Structure and the Principles of the Law of Peoples.

**Q6:** Explain and examine Rawls's two principle of justice.

**Q7:** What does Rawls mean by citizen? Explain Rawls's conceptions of citizens and societies are quite abstract.

**Q8:** Explain the relation between international toleration and human rights according to Rawls.

**Q9:** State and comment on Rawls theory of justice and the Law of Peoples.

**Q10:** "The actors in Rawls's international theory are not individuals (citizens) but societies (peoples)"- Explain.

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