

BLOCK-1 INTRODUCTION

The history of ethics in the West is concerned solely with the various philosophical systems which in the course of time have been elaborated with reference to the moral order. Ethics in the West began its philosophical articulation among the Greeks, i.e. in the teaching of Socrates (470-399 B.C.). According to him the ultimate object of human activity is happiness, and the necessary means to reach it is virtue. Since everybody necessarily seeks happiness, no one is deliberately corrupt. The disciple of Socrates, Plato (427-347 B.C.), declares that the *summum bonum* consists in the perfect imitation of the Absolute Good. Plato's illustrious disciple, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), must be considered the real founder of systematic ethics in the West. With characteristic keenness he solved, in his ethical and political writings, most of the problems with which ethics concerns itself. He set out from the point that all humans tend to happiness as the ultimate object of all their endeavours, as the highest good, which is sought for its own sake, and to which all other goods merely serve as means. This view was accepted by Augustine (354 – 430), who proceeded to thoroughly develop along philosophical lines with a theological orientation. The eternal law, the original type and source of all temporal laws, the natural law, conscience, the ultimate end of human, the cardinal virtues, sin, marriage, etc. were treated by him in the clearest and most penetrating manner. A sharper line of separation between philosophy and theology, and in particular between ethics and moral theology, is first met within the works of the great Schoolmen of the Middle Ages, especially of Thomas Aquinas (1225 – 1274), who treated with his wonted clearness and penetration nearly the whole range of ethics in a purely philosophical manner, so that even to the present day his teachings are an inexhaustible source whence ethics draws its supply. A complete revolution in ethics was introduced by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). From the wreck of pure theoretical reason he turned for rescue to practical reason, in which he found an absolute, universal, and categorical moral law. This law is not to be conceived as an enactment of external authority which is foreign to true morality; it is rather the law of our own reason, which is, therefore, autonomous, that is, it must be observed for its own sake, without regard to any pleasure or utility arising therefrom. Only that will is morally good which obeys the moral law under the influence of such a subjective principle or motive as can be willed by the individual to become the universal law for all humans. According to Karl Marx (1818 – 1883), Friedrich Engels (1820 – 1895), and other exponents of the so-called materialistic interpretation of history, all moral, religious, juridical and philosophical concepts are but the reflex of the economic conditions of society in the minds of human. All these ethical systems, according to Emmanuel Levinas (1906 – 1995), have stressed egology and self-centred approach; hence what we need today is an 'other-centred and other-oriented ethics' in which the concerns of the self take back-seat. Levinas' phenomenological account of the "face-to-face" encounter serves as the basis for his ethics and the rest of his philosophy. For Levinas, "Ethics is the first philosophy." He argues that the encounter of the Other through the face reveals a certain poverty which forbids a reduction to sameness and, simultaneously, installs a responsibility for the Other in the Self.

Unit 1 is "An Introduction to Ethics." This unit introduces you to 'ethics,' to the nature and the different aspects of ethics, development of ethics as a systematic philosophical discipline in the western philosophy, the methods, different approaches and the division of ethics, relation of ethics to other sciences, the relationship between ethics and religion, the importance of studying ethics in the context of today and the need for being moral.

Unit 2 is on “Ethics in Greek Philosophy.” This gives an account of the ethical teachings of ancient Greek philosophers from Thales to Stoicism. Strictly speaking, this is a collection of selected moral principles that kept important all along the history of humankind till today. These principles have played a very good role in the discussion of virtue ethics and helped the growth of moral life of human. Greek ethics is generally known as the *eudaimonistic* ethics. That means human life ought to be happy. Happiness consists in the attainment of human’s highest good attained through a life of virtue.

Unit 3 is on “Ethics in Medieval Philosophy.” This unit aims at explaining ethics in medieval philosophy. Although this unit deals with the moral philosophy of medieval period in general, it concentrates on ethics in the philosophies of Augustine and Aquinas in particular. Medieval philosophy is conventionally construed as the philosophy of Western Europe between the decline of classical Roman culture and the Renaissance.

Unit 4 is on “Ethics in Modern Philosophy.” This unit sheds some light on the developments of ethical thoughts in the modern period. Although we see many philosophers of this period formulating ethical theories of their own, all these fall in the groups of either consequentialist or non-consequentialist views. In the ethical stand of Bentham and Kant we can decipher a strong representation of consequentialism and non-Consequentialism respectively.

Unit 5, “Ethics in Contemporary Philosophy,” focuses on prominent schools and philosophers whose philosophies have been ethically centred or ethically oriented. Within the last century, philosophy has increasingly become an activity practiced with ethical perspectives, and accordingly it has grown more specialized and more distinct from other sciences. Much of philosophy in this period is dominated by the protagonists of pragmatism, phenomenology, existentialism, analytic philosophy, hermeneutics, and postmodernism who have occupied themselves to a great extent with ethical issues.

These five units on western ethical perspectives take into account the whole history of ethics in the West. The history of ethics in the West is concerned solely with the various philosophical systems which in the course of time have been elaborated with reference to the moral order. Ethics in the West began its philosophical articulation among the ancient Greeks whose reflections influenced the succeeding generations of philosophers in formulating their own views challenging and modifying the earlier ones.

Block

1

PERSPECTIVES IN ETHICS: WESTERN

UNIT 1

An Introduction to Ethics

UNIT 2

Ethics in Greek Philosophy

UNIT 3

Ethics in Medieval Philosophy

UNIT 4

Ethics in Modern Philosophy

UNIT 5

Ethics in Contemporary Philosophy

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PERSPECTIVES IN ETHICS: INDIAN

UNIT 1

Ethics in Ancient Philosophy

UNIT 2

Ethics in Medieval Philosophy

UNIT 3

Ethics in Modern Philosophy

UNIT 4

Ethics in Contemporary Philosophy



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3

MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

UNIT 1

Moral Experience

UNIT 2

Virtues and Vices

UNIT 3

Analysis of Human Action

UNIT 4

Norm of Morality

UNIT 5

Natural and Moral Law

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4

SOCIAL ETHICS

UNIT 1

Suicide

UNIT 2

Euthanasia

UNIT 3

Abortion

UNIT 4

Violence

UNIT 5

Terrorism



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BPY-007 ETHICS (4 Credits)

COURSE INTRODUCTION

Ethics, also known as moral philosophy, is a branch of philosophy which seeks to address questions concerning human conduct and discusses issues related to good and bad, and right and wrong. Major branches of ethics are meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. *Meta-ethics* is about the theoretical meaning of moral propositions and how their truth-values may be determined. It focuses on the issues of universal truths, the role of reason in ethical judgments, and the meaning of ethical terms themselves. *Normative ethics* studies the practical means of determining a moral course of action. It takes on a more practical task, which is to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. This may involve articulating the virtues that we should acquire, the duties that we should follow, or the consequences of our behaviour on others. *Applied ethics* examines specific controversial issues, such as suicide, euthanasia, abortion, violence, terrorism, etc. By using the conceptual tools of meta-ethics and normative ethics, discussions in applied ethics try to resolve these controversial issues. The lines of distinction between meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics are often blurry. For example, the issue of abortion is an applied ethical topic since it involves a specific type of controversial behaviour. But it also depends on more general normative principles, such as the right of self-rule and the right to life, which are litmus tests for determining the morality of that procedure. The issue also rests on meta-ethical issues such as, “where do rights come from?” and “what kind of beings have rights?”

The present course on “Ethics” consists of 4 blocks with 19 units. The first two blocks deal with the History of Ethics viewed from both Western and Indian perspectives. Block 1 is on “Perspectives in Ethics: Western.” This block begins with an introduction to ethics and explains the perspectives of ethics in Greek Philosophy, Medieval Philosophy, Modern Philosophy, and Contemporary Philosophy.

Block 2 deals with “Perspectives in Ethics: Indian.” The block explains the perspectives of ethics in ancient Indian philosophy, medieval Indian philosophy, modern Indian philosophy, and contemporary Indian philosophy.

Block 3 studies “Moral Consciousness.” This block investigates into moral experience, virtues and vices, human action, norm of morality, and natural and moral law.

Block 4 is on “Social Ethics.” Social Ethics (Applied Ethics) includes the social issues of suicide, euthanasia, abortion, violence and terrorism.

All these Blocks as a whole form an introduction to ethics. The concepts and issues of the three main fields of ethics – meta-ethics, normative ethics and applied ethics – are implied in the content of these four blocks.

UNIT 1

AN INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Scope of Ethics
- 1.3 History of Ethics
- 1.4 The Methods of Ethics
- 1.5. Different Approaches to the Study of Ethics
- 1.6 Division of Ethics
- 1.7 Ethics and Other Sciences
- 1.8 Ethics and Religion
- 1.9 Importance of Ethics
- 1.10 Why be moral?
- 1.11 Let us Sum Up
- 1.12 Key Words
- 1.13 Further Readings and References
- 1.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0. OBJECTIVES

The objective of this unit is to introduce you to ‘ethics’ or moral philosophy. Ethics is a wide topic. Through the analysis of its various aspects we can learn that:

- the nature and the different aspects of ethics
- how ethics developed as a systematic philosophical discipline in the western philosophy
- the methods, different approaches and the division of ethics
- how ethics is related to other sciences
- the relationship between ethics and religion
- the importance of studying ethics in the context of today and the need for being moral.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Etymologically the term “ethics” correspond to the Greek word “*ethos*” which means character, habit, customs, ways of behaviour, etc. Ethics is also called “moral philosophy”. The word “moral” comes from Latin word “*mores*” which signifies customs, character, behaviour, etc. Thus ethics *may be defined as the systematic study of human actions from the point of view of their rightfulness or wrongfulness, as means for the attainment of the ultimate happiness.* It is the reflective study of what is good or bad in that part of human conduct for which human has some personal responsibility. In simple words ethics refers to what is good and the way to get it, and

what is bad and how to avoid it. It refers to what ought to be done to achieve what is good and what ought not to be done to avoid what is evil.

As a philosophical discipline, ethics is the study of the values and guidelines by which we live. It also involves the justification of these values and guidelines. It is not merely following a tradition or custom. Instead it requires analysis and evaluation of these guidelines in light of universal principles. As moral philosophy, ethics is the philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems, and moral judgements.

Ethics is a science in as much as it is a set or body of reasoned truths organised in a logical order and having its specific material and formal objects. It is the science of what human ought to be by reason of what one is. It is a rational science in so far as its principles are deduced by human's reason from the objects that concern the free will. Besides it has for its ulterior end the art by which human may live uprightly or comfortably to right reason. It is a normative/regulative science in as much as it regulates and directs human's life and gives the right orientation to one's existence.

Ethics is also theoretical and practical. It is theoretical in as much as it provides the fundamental principles on the basis of which moral judgements are arrived at. It is practical in as much as it is concerned about an end to be gained, and the means of attaining it.

Ethics is sometimes distinguished from morality. In such cases, ethics is the explicit philosophical reflection on moral beliefs and practices while morality refers to the first-order beliefs and practices about good and evil by means of which we guide our behaviour (e.g. music and musicology). However, in most cases they are referred to as having the same meaning.

Ethics is not merely a set of 'codes'. Ethics certainly deals with moral codes yet one cannot identify ethics to moral codes. Ethics is not primarily to restrict one's behaviour, rather to help one to find what is good and how to get it. The obligatory character of ethical norms derives from the very purpose of ethical enquiry, i.e. to discover the most ultimate principles of explanation or the most ultimate reasons why one ought to do anything.

1.2 SCOPE OF ETHICS

Ethics deals with voluntary actions. We can distinguish between human actions and actions of human: human actions are those actions that are done by human consciously, deliberately and in view of an end. Actions of human may not be wilfully, voluntarily, consciously and deliberately done but all the same they are done by human (e.g. sleeping, walking, etc.). It is the intention which makes the difference between human action and action of human. In ethics we deal only with human actions.

1.3 HISTORY OF ETHICS

Ethics is as old as humanity. The first ethical precepts were certainly passed down by word of mouth by parents and elders, but as societies learned to use the written word, they began to set

down their ethical beliefs. These records constitute the first historical evidence of the origins of ethics.

In as much as it is the study of human behaviour, we cannot really trace the history of ethics. However, as a systematic study of human behaviour, we can point out how ethics evolved as a discipline. It is not that we have first a straightforward history of moral concepts and then a separate and secondary history of philosophical comment. To set out to write the history of moral philosophy involves a careful selection from the past of what falls under the heading of moral philosophy as we now conceive it. We have to strike a balance between the danger of a dead antiquarianism, which enjoys the illusion that we can approach the past without preconceptions, and the other of believing that the whole point of the past was that it should culminate with us. However, we can observe a gradual development in the ethical thought from the beginning to our day.

In the Western Philosophy, the history of ethics can be traced back to the fifth century B.C with the appearance of Socrates. As a philosopher among the Greeks his mission was to awaken his fellow humans to the need for rational criticism of their beliefs and practices. It was the time when the philosophers began to search for reasons for established modes of conduct. Socrates, in demanding rational grounds for ethical judgements, brought attention to the problem of tracing the logical relationship between values and facts and thereby created ethical philosophy. Plato's theory of forms could be seen as the first attempt at defending moral realism and offering an objective ground for moral truths. From the *Republic* on through the later dialogues and epistles, Plato constructed a systematic view of nature, God, and human from which one derived one's ethical principles. His main goal in his ethical philosophy was to lead the way toward a vision of the Good. Aristotle differed from Plato in his method of inquiry and his conception of the role of ethical principles in human affairs. While Plato was the fountainhead of religious and idealistic ethics, Aristotle engendered the naturalistic tradition. Aristotle's ethical writings (i.e. *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics*) constitute the first systematic investigation into the foundations of ethics. Aristotle's account of the virtues could be seen as one of the first sustained inquiries in normative ethics. It was a clear mixture of Greco-Roman thought with Judaism and elements of other Middle Eastern religions.

The medieval period was dominated by the thoughts of Christian philosophers and theologians like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. The influence of Christianity dominated the ethical scenario. So much so that during this period philosophy and religion were nearly indistinguishable. The rise of Christian philosophy produced a new era of history of ethics. In St. Augustine, the most prominent philosopher of the early medieval period, ethics became a blend of the pursuit of earthly well-being with preparation of the soul for eternal salvation. The next towering figure of medieval philosophy is Thomas Aquinas. He brought about a true reconciliation between Aristotelian science and philosophy with Augustinian theology. Aquinas greatly succeeded in proving the compatibility of Aristotelian naturalism with Christian dogma and constructing a unified view of nature, human, and God.

The social and political changes that characterized the end of medieval period and the rise of modern age of industrial democracy gave rise to a new wave of thinking in the ethical field. The development of commerce and industry, the discovery of new regions of the world, the Reformation, the Copernican and Galilean revolutions in science, and the rise of strong secular

governments demanded new principles of individual conduct and social organization. Some of the modern philosophers who contributed to the great changes in ethical thinking were Francis Bacon, René Descartes, Thomas Hobbes, Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Benedict de Spinoza, John Locke, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill and Friedrich Nietzsche. Further developments in ethical thinking in the west came with Karl Marx and Sigmund Freud. Here we are not intending to give a detailed analysis of their contribution to ethics. However, the most influential ethical thought during this period were the Utilitarianism, dominated by British and French Philosophy (e.g. Locke, Hume, Bentham, Stuart Mill) and Idealistic ethics in Germany and Italy (e.g. Kant, Hegel, Nietzsche).

The contemporary ethical scenario is a further complex area of study. The contemporary European ethics in the broadest sense attempts to cover a generous range of philosophies running from phenomenology to theories of communicative action. The conditions of contemporary civilization forced philosophers to seek for a genuine ground for ethics and moral life. In much of the English speaking world G.E. Moore's *Principia Ethica* (1903) is taken to be the starting point of contemporary ethical theory. Others like Martin Buber, Gabriel Marcel, Emmanuel Levinas, Max Scheler, Franz Brentano and John Dewey too have made significant contributions to the ethical thinking in other parts of the world.

Check Your Progress I

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Define ethics.

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2) Briefly describe the development of ethics in ancient Greece.

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1.4 METHOD OF ETHICS

Ethics, as a philosophical discipline makes use of the methods used in philosophy. Thus in ethics, both the inductive method and deductive methods are used. Deduction is a process of gaining knowledge independently of experience through pure logical reasoning. Deductive reasoning begins with a universal or general truth and leads to knowledge of a particular instance

of it. The classical form of deductive reasoning is the syllogism in which a necessary conclusion is derived from two accepted premises: e.g All men are mortal, Ram is a man, and therefore, Ram is mortal. Induction is a process of arriving at knowledge through experience. Induction begins with the particular and moves to the universal, a generalization that accounts for other examples of the same category or class. For instance, if a number of ravens have been observed, all of which are black, and if no raven has been encountered that is not black, the inferences to the conclusion that the next observed raven will be black or to the general conclusion that all ravens are black, are inductive inferences.

However, in ethics the inductive method (particular to the universal) is generally preferred to the deductive (universal to the particular).

1.5 DIFFERENT APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF ETHICS

There are basically four different approaches to the study of ethics. Tom L. Beauchamp, in his book *Philosophical Ethics: An Introduction to Moral Philosophy* presents them with the following diagram:



The non-normative approaches examine morality without concern for making judgements as to what is morally right or wrong. They do not take any moral position regarding moral issues. The normative approaches instead make judgements as to what is morally right or wrong. They take a clear moral position regarding moral issues.

Among the two nonnormative approaches to ethics, *descriptive ethics* describe and sometimes try to explain the moral and ethical practices and beliefs of certain societies and cultures. This is what sociologists, anthropologists, and historians often do in their study and research. In their descriptions they do not make judgements about the morality of the practices and beliefs but simply describe the practices observed in the different groups or cultures. *Metaethics* focuses on the analysis of the meanings of the central terms used in ethical reasoning and decision-making. It attempts to answer questions of meaning.

1.6 DIVISION OF ETHICS

The whole study of ethics can be divided into General Ethics (nature of moral activity, norm of morality, foundation of morality, end of morality, etc) and Special Ethics (applies the principles of general ethics to the various actions of human activity).

However, when we consider the ethical theories, philosophers today usually divide them into three general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. Metaethics investigates the origin and meaning of ethical concepts. It studies where our ethical principles come from and what they mean. It tries to analyse the underlying principles of ethical values; Normative ethics tries to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. It is a more practical task. It is a search for an ideal litmus test of proper behaviour; Applied ethics involves examining specific controversial issues, such as abortion, infanticide, animal rights, environmental concerns, homosexuality, and so on. In applied ethics, using the conceptual tools of metaethics and normative ethics, one tries to resolve these controversial issues.

Often the lines of distinction between metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics are often blurry. For instance, the issue of abortion is an applied ethical topic in as much as it involves a specific type of controversial behaviour. But it is also an issue involving normative principles such as the right of self-rule and the right to life and an issue having metaethical issues such as, “where do rights come from?” and “what kind of beings have rights?”.

1.7 ETHICS AND OTHER SCIENCES

In our analysis of the definition and nature of ethics, we have seen that ethics as a science is concerned with an end or ideal or standard. Most sciences, instead, are concerned with certain uniformities of our experience – with the ways in which certain classes of objects (such as rocks or plants) are found to exist, or with the ways in which certain classes of events (such as phenomena of sound or electricity) are found to occur. These sciences have no direct reference to any end that is to be achieved or to any ideal by reference to which the facts are judged.

Ethics is distinguished from the natural sciences, inasmuch as it has a direct reference to an end that human persons desire to attain. Although ethics is sometimes regarded as a practical science, it is not a ‘practical science’ as medicine, engineering or architecture in as much as it is not directed towards the realization of a definite result. Ethics is often said to be the fruit of all the sciences since it ultimately perfects human person, by ordering all other sciences and all things else in respect to an ultimate end that is absolutely supreme.

| Other sciences | | Ethics |
|-------------------------------|---|--|
| Psychology | How a man behaves (a descriptive science) | How a man MUST behave (a normative science) |
| Anthropology | Nature of human beings and its activity | How man’s actions OUGHT to be |
| Social and political sciences | Deals with the organization of man’s social and political life | How man’s social and political life MUST or OUGHT TO BE organized in order to be moral |
| Economics | Concerned with <i>goods</i> , i.e. with those objects which are the means of satisfying any human want. | Deals with those ACTS which are the conditions of the attainment of the highest end of life. |

1.8 ETHICS AND RELIGION

Ethics has no necessary connection with any particular religion. However, it is sometimes argued that without God or religion, ethics would have no point; and therefore insofar as God or religion is in question, so is ethics. This is evidently unacceptable. Although belief in God or religion can be an added reason for our being moral, it is not necessary to relate it to God or to any religion. The fact that ethics exists in all human societies shows that ethics is a natural phenomenon that arises in the course of the evolution of social, intelligent, long-lived mammals who possess the capacity to recognize each other and to remember the past behaviour of others.

Critics of religion such as Marx and Nietzsche saw religion as a profound source of social conformity, as a means of maintaining the status quo and keeping people confined to their existing social and economic positions. Yet there is another face of religion, one which suggests that religion may be a profoundly liberating force in individual's lives and an important force for social change.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What are the methods used in ethics?

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2) Which are the main divisions of ethics?

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1.9 IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING ETHICS

Today, more than ever, the importance of ethics is felt at every sphere of human living. The situation in the present world is characterised by an increasing rate in crime, with no end to such increase in sight. Besides, the power of traditional religions to inspire moral conduct continues to decline. Terrorism, civil wars, industrial pollution, planned obsolescence, misleading advertising, deceptive labelling, crooked insurance adjusting, unfair wages, crime syndicates, illegal gambling, forced prostitution, high jacking, match-fixing... so many are the prevailing trends! Truly, there seems to be hardly a few areas in life remain untouched by growing demoralization! The question that one may ask in this precarious situation is: Are we being sucked into a moral vacuum? Is this our way to the end of ethics?

We can point out at least three reasons why we should study ethics. First, the study of moral philosophy or ethics can deepen our reflection on the ultimate questions of life. The study of ethics helps a person to look at his own life critically and to evaluate his actions/choices/decisions. It assists a person in knowing what he/she really is and what is best for him/her and what he/she has to do in order to attain it.

Second, the study of moral philosophy can help us to think better about morality. Moral philosophy can help us to clarify our moral positions when we make judgements. It improves our perspective, and makes it more reflective and better thought out. It can also improve our thinking about specific moral issues. In our every day life we are confronted with situations in which we have to decide what is the correct course of action and what is to be avoided. Whether we choose to act or to refrain from acting, we are in either case making a choice. Every decision or choice we make we do so for reasons. However, we should agree that some of these reasons are better than the others in judging the rightness of the decision or choice. However, there seems to be a common agreement that we should all strive to do the right thing, to do what is morally acceptable in a given situation or circumstance. However, the issue of disagreement is over the question of what exactly is the right thing to do.

Third, the study of moral philosophy can help us to sharpen our general thinking processes. It trains our mind to think logically and reasonably and to handle moral issues with greater clarity. Ethics becomes inevitable as by nature human being is a 'social' being, a being living in relationship with other fellow beings and with the nature around. All actions, whether one is aware of it or not, somehow or another affects the others. In order to make a decision/judgement one bases himself on a standard of right and wrong even though the measure may not be the same at all times.

Thus, ethical problems confront everybody. Nobody can really get through life without ethics, even if one may not be aware of the ethical principles. Consciously or unconsciously all of us are every day making moral decisions. Whether we are aware of it or not, the fact is that we do have ethical attitudes and are taking moral stances every day of our lives.

1.10 WHY BE MORAL?

Not few are the people who ask this question: Why should we be moral? Why should we take part in the moral institution of life? Why should we adopt a moral point of view?

In every human person there is a deep desire for good. Human being by nature tend to good – *summum bonum*. Each man/woman desires what is best for himself/herself. The ethical principles and moral practices help one to attain what is best. It helps a person to perfect himself/herself as a moral being. Morality has to do more with one's interior self than the practice of some customs or set rules. Viewed from this point, morality is a deep down desire in human person and is something to do with the very nature of human person. The rational nature of human person makes him/her aware of certain fundamental principles of logical and moral reasoning. This means that there is not only a subjective aspect to every human action but also an objective one that prompts human person to base himself/herself on certain common principles.

We also find that for the functioning of any society we need certain rules and regulations. The conditions of a satisfactory human life for people living in groups could hardly obtain otherwise (neither a “state of nature” nor a “totalitarian state”). The institutions which are designed to make life easier and better for humankind, cannot function without certain moral principles. However, here the question of individual freedom can also come in. How far the society can go on demanding? Should it not respect the freedom of the individual? Is morality made for man or man is made for morality?

Morality is a lot like nutrition. Most of us have never had a course in nutrition or even read much about it. Yet many of us do have some general knowledge of the field, of what we need to eat and what not. However, we also make mistakes about these things. Often thinking of the good a particular diet can do in the long run for our health, we may go for it although it may bring no immediate satisfaction. So too is our moral life. While nutrition focuses on our physical health, morality is concerned about our moral health. It seeks to help us determine what will nourish our moral life and what will poison it. It seeks to enhance our lives, to help us to live better lives. Morality aims to provide us with a common point of view from which we can come to agreement about what all of us ought to do. It tries to discover a more objective standpoint of evaluation than that of purely personal preference.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How is ethics related to religion?

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2) Why should we study ethics?

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1.11 LET US SUM UP

Ethics is the study of human behaviour. It studies human actions and judges them to be right or wrong. As a philosophical discipline, ethics is the study of the values and guidelines by which we live. In ethics we deal only with human actions, those actions done by a human person consciously, deliberately and in view of an end. In human history, the origin of ethics and moral consciousness cannot be easily traced back. It is the result of a long process of rational development and evolution.

Ethics makes use of the methods of induction and deduction. Among the different approaches to the study of ethics, the non-normative ethics (descriptive ethics and metaethics) which examine morality without concern for making judgements as to what is morally right or wrong and normative ethics (general normative ethics and applied ethics) which make judgements as to what is morally right or wrong are the most prominent ones. Although ethics can be regarded as a science it is distinguished from the natural sciences, inasmuch as it has a direct reference to an end that human person desire to attain. Ethics, however, is often said to be the fruit of all the sciences since it ultimately perfects human person, by ordering all other sciences and all things else in respect to an ultimate end that is absolutely free.

1.12 KEY WORDS

‘Ethics’ and ‘Morals’: Ethics is the theory of right and wrong conduct. Morals, its practice. While ethics involves the values that a person seeks to express in a certain situation, morals refers to the way one sets about achieving this. Ethics is concerned with the principles of human behaviour, morals with the application of these principles, in a particular situation.

‘Moral’, ‘Immoral’ and ‘Amoral’ Actions: An action is said to be moral when it is done deliberately to attain the ultimate happiness. A morally good action has to be a moral action and a human action. An action is moral only if it is done freely and in view of an end.

Immoral means ‘not observing a particular known moral rule’. Immoral actions are all those actions that are morally bad actions (eg. Incest, homicide, etc.). ‘Amoral’ or ‘non-moral’ means ‘not relevant to, or concerned with, morals’. We can note some of the non-moral actions:

- ✓ actions of inanimate objects or events (flood, famine, etc.). They are indifferent actions and are beyond the moral sphere.
- ✓ reflex actions: they are automatic and immediate (eg. breathing)
- ✓ accidental acts
- ✓ actions of children below the age of reason/ insane persons
- ✓ actions done under the spell of hypnosis

Habitual actions are moral actions as the habits are formed deliberately or acquired voluntarily. In ethics we are concerned with ‘immoral’ actions but not ‘amoral’ actions.

Human Act: A human act is an act done by a human person deliberately, willingly and freely in view of achieving an end. Morality is spoken of human beings and not of animals. An act to be a moral act it has to be performed by an individual with reason. Every human act is done in view of an end and is done willingly with full knowledge and full freedom. Ethics deals with human actions, which help or prevent a person from attaining an end.

End: End of human action can be different. For a believer in God the ultimate end could be the eternal happiness of man (God and the beatific vision). God is the highest end of man and God is involved in every action of man. Happiness consists in the knowledge and love of God. For a non believer the well-being of humanity could be the end. It could be also that an act done for its own sake.

Right and Wrong: Ethics is defined as the science of rightfulness or wrongfulness of conduct. What makes an action right or wrong? The word “right” derives from the Latin “rectus”, meaning ‘straight’ or ‘according to norm’. An action is morally right if it is in conformity with the moral law and morally wrong if it is not in conformity with the moral law.

Good and Bad: The word ‘good’ denotes the attitude of mind and will. An action is morally good if it helps one attain the ultimate end and morally bad if it does not fulfil the purpose. The term ‘good’ is also used to signify something which is itself taken as an end. Thus the *summum bonum*, or supreme good, means the supreme end at which we aim.

Voluntary and Involuntary Actions: Acts are voluntary if they proceed from an internal principle with knowledge of the purpose of the act. An act is free if it proceeds from a self-determining agent. Are all voluntary acts free? Most of the voluntary acts are free except the highest act by which man embraces his Supreme Good.

If knowledge or free choice is totally lacking, the act is involuntary. An involuntary act may be performed without reference to the purpose of the act. It may be done with knowledge against the choice of the will, as when a man emerging from an anaesthetic talks foolishly but is unable to control his words.

The former emphasizes the strength of emotion with which one is choosing and the latter emphasizes that the choice is free of emotional stress.

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1.14 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1) Ethics may be defined as the systematic study of human actions from the point of view of their rightfulness or wrongfulness, as means for the attainment of the ultimate happiness. It is the reflective study of what is good or bad in that part of human conduct for which man has some personal responsibility. As a philosophical discipline, ethics is the study of the values and guidelines by which we live. As moral philosophy, ethics is the philosophical thinking about morality, moral problems, and moral judgements.

2) Ethics, in the Western Philosophy developed mainly in Greece. Socrates, the great Greek philosopher, was the first one among the Greeks to awaken his fellow men to the need for rational criticism of their beliefs and practices. Plato, in his famous work *Republic* and in other later dialogues and epistles, constructed a systematic view of nature, God, and man from which he derived his ethical principles. Aristotle, the greatest of all Greek philosophers, contributed significantly to a systematic investigation of the foundations ethics through his ethical writings (i.e. *Eudemian Ethics*, the *Nicomachean Ethics*, and the *Politics*).

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Ethics, like any other philosophical discipline, makes use of both the inductive method and deductive method. Deduction is a process of gaining knowledge independently of experience through pure logical reasoning. It draws a particular conclusion from a universal or general truth. For example: All men are mortal, Ram is a man, and therefore, Ram is mortal. Induction, on the other hand, begins with the particular and moves to the universal. For example: Water at Chennai boils at 100⁰C. Water at Kochi boils at 100⁰C. Water at Mumbai boils at 100⁰C. Therefore water boils at 100⁰C.

2. The whole study of ethics can be divided into General Ethics and Special Ethics. However, considering the different ethical theories, philosophers divide it into three general subject areas: metaethics, normative ethics and applied ethics. Metaethics investigates the origin and meaning of ethical concepts. Normative ethics tries to arrive at moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct. Applied ethics involves examining specific controversial issues such as abortion, ecological problems, etc.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. Ethics is an independent science. It has no necessary connection with any particular religion. The universal acceptance of ethical norms suggests that ethics exists in all human societies and that it is a natural phenomenon that arises in the course of the evolution of human beings. However, it is to be observed that religion can be an added reason for our being moral. Rightly used, religion can be a liberating force in individual's lives and an important force for social change.

2. The relevance and need of ethics is felt more than ever in our society today. We can point out at least three reasons why we should study ethics. First, the study of moral philosophy or ethics can deepen our reflection on the ultimate questions of life. It helps a person to look critically at the most important questions concerning our existence here on earth. Second, the study of moral philosophy can help us to think better about morality. It can help us to clarify our moral positions when we make judgments. Third, the study of moral philosophy can help us to sharpen our general thinking processes. It trains our mind to think logically and reasonably and to handle moral issues with greater clarity.



UNIT 2

ETHICS IN GREEK PHILOSOPHY

Content

- 2.0. Objectives
- 2.1. Introduction
- 2.2. Pythagorean Ethics
- 2.3. Heraclitian Ethics
- 2.4. Democritian Ethics (*Eudaimonia*)
- 2.5. Protagorian Ethics
- 2.6. Thrasymachian Ethics
- 2.7. Socratic Ethics
- 2.8. Platonic Ethics
- 2.9. Aristotlean Ethics
- 2.10. Epicurean Ethics
- 2.11. Stoic Ethics
- 2.12. Let Us Sum Up
- 2.13. Key Words
- 2.14. Further Readings and References
- 2.15. Answers to Check Your Progress

2.0. OBJECTIVES

This is an attempt to give an account of the ethical teachings of ancient Greek philosophers from Thales to Stoicism. In this unit you are guided to reflect on:

- The moral principles which have their roots in the Supreme Cause of the universe.
- Right Reason becomes the norm of ethical judgment in the affairs of human.
- Principles are designed, according to Plato, to train human soul under the supervision of intellect for the full achievement of happiness in human's life.
- Human has to be virtuous and thereby finally attain happiness through contemplation proper to one's nature.
- A perfect society is also intended in the final end of the Greek ethics.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of Greek ethics was to develop certain principles which help man to lead a good life or happy life. The most important search and quest of the human being in every human epoch is to discover the final end of his activity. Confronted with a multitude of ends, he is unable to assess and make sure of what the ultimate end would consist. Thus there are some age old questions: What is good? What is the highest good? What is the meaning of Good? Is it related to the good life of man? What is a good life? Is it happy life? What is the end and aim of life? Who is man, what is his function, what does man act for, what is the ultimate end of a man's activity and, finally, who is the supreme infallible authority to judge the good life?

2.2. PYTHAGORIAN ETHICS

Pythagoras founded an association, the purpose of which is described as ethical, religious, and political. His ideal was to develop among his followers political virtues, to teach them to act for the good of the state, to subordinate them to the whole. Here the individual should learn to control oneself, to moderate his or her passions, to harmonise his or her soul; he or she should have respect for the authority, for the authority of his or her elders, his or her teachers and the state. As a result, the view has been held that the Pythagoreans were political communities. But they were not essentially political but religious or ethical.

Purification of Soul: The chief orientation of his teaching was to the religious-ascetic ideals which centred round purification and purity. Pythagoreans saw the human soul as the life spirit which endures after the death of its first body and may take its abode subsequently in another human or animal body. This theory of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls is ethically significant since it provides for the rewarding of good action and the punishment of evil in these subsequent reincarnations. That is why they undergo purification and soul training in their life.

Right Reasoning: This is the beginning of a very important approach to ethical problems, the view that 'good' means what is rational and intelligible. Thus, in the fourth century B.C., a later Pythagorean, Archytas of Tarentum, first enunciated the principle of "right reasoning" as the key to good behaviour: "Right reckoning, when discovered, checks civil strife and increases concord...(it is) the standard and deterrent of wrong doers". It is quite possible that Aristotelian and the medieval theories of right reason (*recta ratio*) as the norm of ethical judgement are directly indebted to Pythagorean intellectualism.

2.3. HERACLITIAN ETHICS

Heraclitean fragments suggest that there is an ever-present rational pattern (*logos*) in this Process or 'Becoming'. Heraclitus says: "To be ethical is to live a rational life, to obey the dictates of reason, which is the same for us all, the same for the whole world." Man is entrusting himself to his senses, and he lives as if he were epileptic.

Research on Heraclitus reveals that his moral views are of primary importance in his teaching. Morality means respect for law, self-discipline, control of the passions; to be moral is to govern oneself by rational principles. The following excerpts from his writings illustrate the lofty idealism of Heraclitus' ethics: "Character is a man's guardian divinity"; "It is hard to contend with passion; for whatever it desires to get it buys at the cost of the soul". "To me one man is ten thousand if he be the best".

The word '*logos*' of Heraclitus has a decisive philosophical meaning. The '*logos*' brings the contraries into harmony or it makes possible the "coexistence of contraries". '*Logos*' reveals itself, it thinks itself and it is. It is the universal law immanent in all things and binding all things into unity and determining the constant change in accordance with universal law. Man's reason is a moment in this universal Reason. Man, therefore, has to struggle to live according to the reign of unalterable law. Man's reason and consciousness, which are the fiery element. Without pure fire body is worthless.

2.4. DEMOCRITIAN ETHICS

Democritus stressed the soul as the locus of human well-being. His concept of *eudaimonia* includes both the notion of 'good existence' (*eu-esto*) and of 'good feeling' (*eu-thumie*). Pace Gosling and Taylor think that Democritus was the first Greek philosopher to produce a systematic ethical theory. The most important step towards systematisation was the transition from the vague ethical thinking that everybody wants to be happy or cheerful, or free from troubles. Democritus argues again, "Medical science heals diseases of the body but wisdom rids soul off passions." When one is free from passion he experiences happiness. The superiority of reason is taken into consideration in the ethical life. The end of all conduct of men is well-being of society and ultimately of man. Well-being means not only the intellectual satisfaction but also the pleasure of senses. It needs a little pain, and requires repetition and moderation of pleasure. The less you desire, the less you are disappointed. All virtues are valuable only if they help to cultivate happiness. Envy, jealousy and bitterness of mind bring friction and they will destroy everybody. The sense of duty must be the basis of doing the right thing; it should not be from the fear of punishment. We have to serve the state too, because if the state is in peace, all realm of state will grow; if the governance of the state is corrupted, then there will not be any order or law but only chaos.

2.5. PROTAGORIAN ETHICS

Protagoras, a Sophist, took a relativistic position on ethical judgements. His most famous teaching is that "man is the measure of all things". This idea would closely affiliate him with the common Greek respect for the judgement of rational beings. A thing becomes right or wrong always in relation to one's need. Actually, Protagoras did advocate the practical virtue of good judgement. It is also more probable that he meant that each individual man is the sole judge of what is true or right for himself. Sextus Empiricus interprets it: "He posits only what appears to each individual, and thus he introduces relativity." That means one is more normal or natural than the other: the vision of the normal eye is more reliable than of the jaundiced eye.

2.6. THRASYMACHIAN ETHICS

Thrasymachus is said to have taught that "Might is right". In the *Republic* Plato speaks of Thrasymachus as a thinker who claims that "just or right means nothing but what is to the interest of the stronger party". Plato himself criticises, that the honourable is one thing by nature and another by law, and that the principles of justice have no existence at all in nature, but that mankind is always disputing about them and altering them. They are told by them that the highest right is might.

2.7. SOCRATIC ETHICS

His teachings on moral and religious elements are philosophical insights. These insights are the fundamental principles which brightened his life. They are mainly concerned with good and

evil, conscience, the ethical person and moral virtues. Socrates clearly did think that all the moral virtues are rooted in practical wisdom or knowledge. The central teaching of Socratic ethics is "knowledge is virtue". He who knows, what good is, will do good. By this he wanted to tell that the right insight led to the right action. For Socrates, the moral conscience is not mere sentiment but it is a responsibility before God. Human life is not tragic; one should confront it with the spirit.

Socratic ethic is teaching that human is a moral being in general. This was a revolutionary thought against the belief of the aristocratic people who thought that morals are limited only to a privileged group. He believed and taught that doing good is the moral duty of all human beings and possible for all. Socrates was teaching two moral imperatives attributed to the Delphic Oracle: "Know Thyself" (*gnôthi seauton*), and "Avoid Excess" (*meden agan*). For Socrates the ultimate evil was the "**unexamined life**". He forced upon people for the recognition of their ignorance. At the end of the *Apology* Socrates told those jurors, who voted for his acquittal, of his confidence that death will not be an evil thing for him. He advised them, "to bear in mind this one truth: that no evil comes to a good man in life or in death". Socrates believed that there is life after death, which reflects in the life itself. A virtuous life here leads to happiness in the life after death. The proof for this is his death itself. This was done according to his faith in the immortality of soul. This faith is more religious than rational certainty. His life was a faith in the soul rather than a philosophy of the spirit. For him pleasure is below to the virtue.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain the Purification of Soul according to Pythagoras

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2) What is the central teaching of Socratic ethics?

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2.8. PLATONIC ETHICS

Plato sees human more in the soul. He affirms that "we are souls". He meant that Soul is human. Evil elements are not in human but in the body. The real evil for human is the body, because human is always trying to liberate oneself from the bondage of body. Only with liberation of soul from body, a person can be happy and his ethics is known as *eudaimonistic* ethics. Plato's

works on ethics are fundamentally 'eudaimonistic' i.e., about well-being or a happy life. He saw the good life for man in terms of a personal attainment of well-being. In this level man's reason would regulate and order all functions of the irrational appetites. Therefore the ethics of Plato is known as 'intellectualistic'. The wise man is the one who can do the right thing and knows the right thing. He believed that the learned and rationally developed soul is the good soul. For him therefore, wisdom is the greatest virtue.

The movement within each human toward the ideal personality is an original version of self-perfection ethics. The development of the basic virtues is a personal process, of course, and varies from one man to the next. Childress comments on this point: Platonic ethics is eudaimonistic in the sense that it is centred around the attainment of man's highest good, his true happiness, which involves the right cultivation of his soul and harmonious well-being of his life.

Human has to find happiness in intellectual exercise. Virtue does not depend upon the will, but on the practical intelligence, that understands the virtue and changes it into action. The realisation of virtue is more important than the education. If the virtue is realised only to the highly educated people then the ethical life is only for philosophers. Here the ethics of Plato becomes an ethics of aristocracy. The ordinary people get only true opinion or extrinsic knowledge through the public education of moral life. He also believed that the greatest happiness is in the contemplation of the highest 'Ideas'. Yet Plato, like most of the Greeks, was well aware of the social dimensions of human life and well-being. A good life needs association with other persons. Thus ethics grows as part of politics which treats how to deal in a state (*polis*).

Political Thought: In the book of *Republic* Plato gave the picture of an 'ideal state' which could be ruled by philosophers. The origin of state is natural. At a certain moment, a group of families can not live together and be self-sufficient. Economic needs brought division of labour and its administration. This is the functional requirement of the nature. Plato says, **"Every citizen must practise only one activity of the many regarding civil life; that activity to which his natural inclination is most disposed"**. Therefore, a sound state gets its life and its function goes well. Then there arises the need for defence and the government.

A good state depends upon the government. Here the rulers are ruling with reason in wisdom. In the fourth book of the *Republic* the citizens are divided into three classes just like the division of man. 1) The lowest class is productive and acquisitive. And its virtue is in particular temperance, but not set aside only for this class but also generally for the society as a whole because "the desire of the inferior multitude will be controlled by the desires and the wisdom of the superior few". 2) The middle class is spirited, competitive, and warlike, its distinctive virtue is courage. 3) The highest class is that of the rulers which is distinguished by its rationality and its special virtue is practical wisdom. The most capable member of the highest class will become philosophers and will be given complete political rule, since every good ruler is one who governs in virtue of knowledge of the truth. When all these three classes work well together, the city becomes virtuous and perfect. The special virtue of the highest class is justice. The goal of the state is general justice, while each of three classes follows their own virtue. In other words, we can tell that social morality or individual's morality is the purpose of the state

In Plato's 'ideal state' rulers and soldiers are not allowed family life or private property. They are suggested community life. This is a half type of communism. He confirmed that women could rule a country, because women have exactly the same powers of reasoning as men, provided that they get the same training. He said, a state that does not educate and train women is like a man who only trains his right hand. Plato had a good vision of women, considering the time he lived.

Division of Soul: According to Plato human's soul is divided into three parts. One part stands for the appetitive or concupiscent part of the soul (*to epithumetikon*) the second part is the spirited part (*thumos*); in fact these two parts represent two appetites in man: the desire for sensual satisfaction and aspiration for success and fame. The third part is reason (*logos, to logistikon*) the highest part of man's soul. All these three parts work together for happiness.

Virtues of the Soul: Each part of the soul has its special virtue. Practical wisdom (*phronêsis, sophia*) is the virtue of the rational part. Courage or manliness (*andreia*) perfects the spirited part. Temperance (*sôphrosunê*) is another virtue, which moderates desire. Finally, justice (*dikaiosunê*) as a virtue of individual man is that general condition of soul in which each part performs its proper function. The just man does what is right in his external actions as a citizen of a state; he does the right because his soul is internally well-ordered. To live well, with clear understanding, one must rise to a vision of the idea of the Good.

2.9. ARISTOTLEAN ETHICS

Aristotle attempts to explain ethics as a science, which gives meaning of highest good. All acts of man have some ends in view of the acts. Every end has again another end of higher quality. If it is so, there must be some super most good, for the sake of which every other good is to be hierarchically ordered. What is the highest good? The goodness of a thing consists in the realization of its specific nature. For man it is the realization of the life of reason, not sensitive life like animal or vegetative life like plants. Therefore, man must function as a human being. The realization of human being is in happiness or 'eudaimonia'. In order to realize this goal all other parts of soul must co-operate in this direction. The virtue of the sensitive part is the moral virtue. This moral virtue must be controlled by the reason, i.e., rational part. These moral virtues are such as justice, temperance, courage, liberality.

Principle of Mean: The virtue exists in between the excess and deficiency. The mean of virtue is not to be confused with mediocrity. It is not a safe way between two extremes. The virtuous mean is the most reasonable course of action to be taken in a given situation. Aristotle does not claim the universality of the principle of mean. This principle is not applicable in the things that are bad in themselves. For example: shamelessness, envy, adultery, theft and murder. They are bad in itself, not only because of their excess or deficiency, but because they are always wrong and never right.

The mean will be relative to each individual, but it should be measured by the proper reason of the right-minded man. The virtuous man is the measure of all things. He judges everything

correctly and he acts virtuously. The good man realizes his true self when he loves and acts according to the supreme part of his self. The virtuous man does not act for his selfishness, but he acts for his friend and his countrymen. He lays down his life for the other. The nobility of his character in the function is expressed clearly all through his life. He can also love a good man as his second self. He becomes a man of justice. Justice is the crown of all virtues, because it is in relation to others. Justice consisted in giving one's due. Justice considers all in a just way, whether he is a ruler or a servant. The mean position can be judged properly only by the virtuous man.

Pleasure and Happiness: The ultimate end of man's activity is the happiness. Life of happiness includes pleasure also. Pleasure is the necessary and immediate consequences of virtuous activity, but not the end of life. Pleasure is the completion of activity. Pleasure is the concomitant of action, but pleasure is not the effect of the act of reason. Hence it will not be the highest good.

Since rational part is the highest part, its activity will be the highest activity proper to man. The contemplative life is the highest life, the most continuous, the most pleasant, most self-sufficient, most intrinsically worthy way of life. This type of life will be a step higher than virtuous life; since virtuous life belongs to the sensitive part, which is under the control of rational part.

Function Argument: Aristotle says every being has a special function according to its nature. Here the nature of a thing consists in fulfilling its special function. He is of this opinion that human function is with an "activity of soul in accordance with virtue and if there are more than one virtue, then it will be accordance with the best and most perfect virtue. He thinks with the concept of good in a specialized realm, for example, the good of a flutist or of a sculptor, consists in fulfilling a certain function. A flutist becomes a good flutist by playing the flute well, not by playing cricket. The same law should be held true of human beings in general. If human person has a function to do, its goodness consists in doing that peculiar function perfectly well. Human function is not any activity of the soul that conforms to virtue, for eating is an activity that can conform to the virtue of temperance, but it is an activity of the lowest faculty of the soul, the nutritive faculty. Like that, the sensation can not be the peculiar function of the human, because animals do the same activity. Aristotle is seeking something which is very peculiar to human alone: certain life of the part of having reason. This should be the function of the human, the activity of reason, which is characteristically the human beings engage in.

The function argument can thus be explained: 1) every species has a unique essence, which is its function. 2) The good of each species is just doing well its function. 3) The essence of the human is activity in accordance with reason. Thus the good of the human is such activities. Thereby the by-product of such activity is happiness.

Teleological Argument: Aristotle is universally praised for inventing the concept of teleology. In *Physics* Aristotle declares that "nature is among the causes which act for the sake of something". 'For the sake of something' is a thing's purpose. This is the end or goal at which a thing aims. Aristotle is of this opinion that nature does nothing purposeless. The nature is not without

purpose. The natural processes, according to Aristotle, are ordered to the good ends. Among the good ends, there must be a single supreme good; this supreme good must be God.

Aristotle believes that man's ultimate aspiration is to contemplate and imitate the highest being, God. All other material beings except human person aspire to become human person, who is the best among the material beings. Human person has the character of reason which distinguishes human person from all other beings in the cosmos. So we understand there is a hierarchical order in the process of reaching the highest good. Therefore, there is a purposeful act of actualization from lower to higher.

In Aristotelian words, one might say that everything in the universe strives to actualize its potentialities or capacities. Growth leads to maturity or fullness of things. This tendency for growth is the hidden cause within the nature of that being. This completion of hidden potencies is the good at which everything aims. This purpose or teleology, therefore, rules Aristotelian ethics, although as we shall see, deontological elements, those pointing to the duties, are not absent from it. Moral obligation is only the consequence of man's good life. Therefore in *Physics* he says that there is purpose in the things which come to be and are by nature.

Contemplation: The whole purpose of virtue is to achieve happiness, but according to Aristotle happiness is two-fold. These two kinds of happiness are proportioned to man's nature, and obtainable by means of natural capacities. These two kinds of happiness are those to which the moral and the intellectual virtues are immediately ordered. Aristotle finishes his discussion indicating that contemplation, which is the peak point of happiness, is similar to God's activity of contemplation. We understand that Aristotle puts forward by this concept of a two-fold happiness two ideals for life: theoretical life and practical life. It is not possible that everybody can lead the contemplative life; still each one has the opportunity to lead a happy life that is a virtuous political life. Here, we find the greatness of Aristotelian ethics. Those, who cannot lead the highest happy life, will not be happy as they might have been, still they can lead the best kind of life in the fullness of moral virtuous life.

The Aristotelian contemplator is a man who has already acquired wisdom; and what he is contemplating is precisely this wisdom already present in his mind. By contemplation he brings his wisdom once again to the forefront of his mind. In this way contemplation is a quasi-aesthetic appreciation of wisdom and truth. The activity of God is also contemplation. So, if man can also do the activity which resembles the activity of God, he is doing a God-like activity. That means he is experiencing the life of God.

2.10. EPICUREAN ETHICS

As all other philosophies of this age, the main thrust of Epicureanism was the acquisition of happiness. He believed that the powerful objection to happiness was fear of death instructed by religion. He wanted to root out this fear from his followers and accordingly he formulated his philosophy by explaining the nature of the universe. Our happiness depends upon ourselves in this life. Man has two types of pains: physical pain and psychological distress. According to him the end of human existence is the health of the body and tranquility. Actually he meant

when he said, pleasure is “the absence of pain in the body and of trouble in the soul.” He did deliberately say that this was not the pleasure of prodigal or the pleasure of sensuality (*Letter to Menoecus*, 131-2).

The means of pleasure are the practice of the four virtues. They are prudence, temperance, fortitude and friendship. Prudence is for the calculation of pleasures. The next two virtues are instruments for pleasures; because they control the desire and lead to the continuation of pleasures. These virtues become evil, if they do not bring pleasures. The last virtue is to enjoy the communion of the people especially in the public. For him justice is not a virtue, because it is not harming others. This is in cohabiting in the name of giving and having which reduces itself into utilitarian fact. Animals also share this reality.

Epicurus is registered as one of the members of classical Greek ethicists. We see the special role of reason in his arguments for the attainment of happiness. He believed that pleasure is not intrinsically evil in itself (Principal Doctrines, 8). But he did not recommend its pursuit. Two reasons were given. 1) Pleasures are not capable enough to attain tranquility. 2) Physical pleasures do not avoid mental anxiety. Certain sensual activities produce more pain than pleasure. Tranquility of soul was attained through philosophical study and prudence. Human persons have different desires. He classifies these desires into three groups: some are natural and necessary; some are natural but not necessary; some are neither natural nor necessary (Principal Doctrines, 29). It is good to understand that the pleasure and tranquility, that Epicurus thought, were that each one of us should seek our own pleasure and tranquility. Therefore his ethical theory is egoistic one.

2.11. STOIC ETHICS

Stoic ethics has its own originality distinguished from Platonic, Aristotelian and Epicurean. The Stoics developed a system which is based on their anthropology of the “logos”, the presence of the “pneuma” in man. This is the qualified presence of the divine in man. In order to discover this divinity in man, one has to dedicate himself to the order of morals. The cosmos, for them, was a harmonious unity with a living and intelligent God. Man is the part of this universal order as a spark of divine fire. For Stoics, therefore, moral life is a discovery of “logos” and arrangement of life accordingly. There are four steps for the ethics of stoics. They are duty, virtue, good and happiness. Duty is the moral obligation that one perceives within oneself according to his nature. Mere duty is not the perfection of moral act; but right intention is also necessary. Right intention is the perfection of the morality and it is coming from the virtue. Virtuous man is better than the one who is mere duty oriented without good intention. Virtue transforms the duty to right intention. According to Stoics, virtue is the highest good and the highest happiness, because only a virtuous life can lead and experience a happy life. To live in such a way is to realize one’s self; and thereby to realize the will of the universe and therefore to serve the purpose of universal reason and to remain for the universal ends. The stoic ethics stands for a universal society of rational beings with the same rights and duties, because the fundamental principle is same in all and this is the will of God.

2.12. LET US SUM UP

In *Republic* of Plato, he speaks, “Each of us should lay aside all other learning, to study only how he may discover one who can give him the knowledge enabling him to distinguish the good life from the evil”. Greek ethics is enabling one to lead a happy life all through one’s life. As we know ethics is a normative science which makes judgments on the voluntary human conduct; we are supposed to make judgment on our own life. Socrates is of this opinion that the most evil in the life of human is an unexamined life. This is a code of conduct for human to make judgment on one’s own feelings, words and activities. Each living being is born with certain good potencies. As it goes through its life, all these potencies ought to be slowly actualized into its intended end. In this ongoing process there is a control of final cause. This end is not some goal outside human’s nature, but it is compatible with well being of human person and society. For Aristotle, human’s final end is in serving and contemplating God, because this is the most beautiful act a human can do in this life. This act of contemplation is the similar act that God himself does. Here God’s act and human’s act become similar but not same.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How do you explain the *eudaimonistic* Ethics of Plato?

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2) What is Teleological argument according to Aristotle?

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2.13. KEY WORDS

Right Reasoning: This is the beginning of a very important approach to ethical problems, the view that 'good' means what is rational and intelligible. Right reasoning is the key to good behaviour. It is the standard of good action and deterrent of wrong doers. It is quite possible that Aristotelian and the medieval theories of right reason (*recta ratio*) as the norm of ethical judgement are directly indebted to Pythagorean intellectualism.

Knowledge is Virtue: The central teaching of Socrates' ethics is "knowledge is virtue". He who knows, what good is, will do well. By this he wanted to tell that the right insight led to the right

action. A man of knowledge is a virtuous man. A man who has knowledge, can do right thing and avoid vicious thing.

Eudemonistic Ethics: Platonic ethics is *eudemonistic* in the sense that it is centred on the attainment of man's highest good, his true happiness, which involves the right cultivation of his soul and harmonious well-being of his life.

Principle of Mean: The virtue exists in between the excess and deficiency. The mean of virtue is not to be confused with mediocrity. It is not a safe way between two extremes. But the virtuous mean is the most reasonable course of action to be taken in a given situation. The mean will be relative to each individual, but it should be measured by the proper reason of the right-minded man.

Teleology: This is an end oriented science proposed by Aristotle. In *Physics* Aristotle declares that “nature is among the causes which act for the sake of something”. ‘For the sake of something’ is a thing’s purpose. This is the end or goal at which a thing aims.

Contemplation: Contemplation is an activity by which one’s wisdom is brought once again to the forefront of his mind. The Aristotelian contemplator is a man who has already acquired wisdom; and what he is contemplating is precisely this wisdom already present in his mind. In this way contemplation is a quasi-aesthetic appreciation of wisdom and truth. Aristotle finishes his discussion indicating that contemplation, which is the peak point of happiness, is similar to God's activity of contemplation.

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2.15 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. The chief orientation of his teaching was to the religious-ascetic ideals which centred round purification and purity. Pythagoreans saw the human soul as the life spirit which endures after the death of its first body and may take its abode subsequently in another human or animal body. This theory of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls is ethically significant since it provides

for the rewarding of good action and the punishment of evil in these subsequent reincarnations. That is why they undergo purification and soul training in their life.

2. The central teaching of Socrates' ethics is "knowledge is virtue". He who knows, what good is, will do good. By this he wanted to tell that the right insight led to the right action. For Socrates, the moral conscience is not mere sentiment but it is a responsibility before God. Human life is not tragic; one should confront it with the spirit.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Plato's works on ethics are fundamentally 'eudaimonistic' i.e., about well-being or a happy life. He saw the good life for man in terms of a personal attainment of well-being. In this level man's reason would regulate and order all functions of the irrational appetites. Therefore the ethics of Plato is known as 'intellectualistic'. The wise man is the one who can do the right thing and knows the right thing. He believed that the learned and rationally developed soul is the good soul. For him therefore, wisdom is the greatest virtue.

The movement within each man toward the ideal personality is an original version of self-perfection ethics. The development of the basic virtues is a personal process, of course, and varies from one man to the next. Childress comments on this point: Platonic ethics is eudaimonistic in the sense that it is centred around the attainment of man's highest good, his true happiness, which involves the right cultivation of his soul and harmonious well-being of his life. Human has to find happiness in intellectual exercise. Virtue does not depend upon the will, but on the practical intelligence, that understands the virtue and changes it into action. The realisation of virtue is more important than the education. If the virtue is realised only to the highly educated people then the ethical life is only for philosophers. Here the ethics of Plato becomes an ethics of aristocracy. The ordinary people get only true opinion or extrinsic knowledge through the public education of moral life. He also believed that the greatest happiness is in the contemplation of the highest 'Ideas'.

2. Aristotle is universally praised for inventing the concept of teleology. In *Physics* Aristotle declares that "nature is among the causes which act for the sake of something". 'For the sake of something' is a thing's purpose. This is the end or goal at which a thing aims. Aristotle is of this opinion that nature does nothing purposeless. The nature is not without purpose. The natural processes, according to Aristotle, are ordered to the good ends. Among the good ends, there must be a single supreme good; this supreme good must be God.

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growth is the hidden cause within the nature of that being. This completion of hidden potencies is the good at which everything aims. This purpose or teleology, therefore, rules Aristotelian ethics, although as we shall see, deontological elements, those pointing to the duties, are not absent from it. Moral obligation is only the consequence of man's good life. Therefore in *Physics* he says that there is purpose in the things which come to be and are by nature.



UNIT3

ETHICS IN MEDIEVAL WESTERN PHILOSOPHY

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
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- 3.2. Characteristics of Ethics in Medieval Philosophy
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- 3.4. Importance of Natural Reason in Ethics
- 3.5. Aquinas' View on Ethics
- 3.6. Nature of Virtue Ethics
- 3.7. Let Us Sum Up
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- 3.8. Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0. OBJECTIVES

Everyone is interested in ethics. We all have our own ideas about what is right and what is wrong and how we can tell the difference. Our young generation today faces a greater array of moral problems than was the case just a short twenty-five years ago. It is not surprising, as so many people believe that there is no moral standard left. Morality is dead, we are told by many, or else it is simply the views of the old folk revealing in their nostalgia.

We are all products of particular societies. We do not "make ourselves." We owe much of what we consider to be our 'identity' and 'personal opinions' to the community in which we live. But as soon as we are formed, most of us start to question the society that has made us, and do so in a way that seems unique to us. Ethics is complicated because our morality is an odd mixture of received tradition and personal opinion. There is quite a bit of ethical or moral phenomena all about us and we all indulge in quite a bit of such comment or exchange every day. We refer to certain actions "Good" and therefore laudable, to others as "bad" and therefore condemnable.

In order to form ourselves as moral beings, we are in need of studying the development of morality in history. Hence this unit aims at producing the ethics in medieval philosophy how it remains relevant today as well. Though this unit deals with the moral philosophy of medieval period in general, it concentrates on ethics in the philosophy of Augustine and Aquinas in particular.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Medieval philosophy is conventionally construed as the philosophy of Western Europe between the decline of classical pagan culture and the Renaissance. The originators of the notion of the Middle Ages were thinking primarily of the so called "Latin West," the area, roughly speaking, of Roman Catholicism. While it is true that this region was to some extent a unit, culturally separate from its neighbors, it is also true that medieval philosophy was decisively influenced by ideas from the Greek East, from the Jewish philosophical tradition, and from Islam. If one takes medieval philosophy to include the Patristic period then the area must be expanded to include, at

least during the early centuries, Greek-speaking eastern Europe, as well as North Africa and parts of Asia Minor.

The earliest post-classical origins of medieval philosophy lie in the patristic period of Christianity, in the writings of the Church fathers. These works were produced between the second and fifth centuries by religious teachers belonging to the Eastern and Western Churches. The aim of these theological authors was to interpret Judeo-Christian scriptures and traditions with the assistance of ideas derived from Greek and Roman philosophy. Although the Fathers were not themselves speculative thinkers, they introduced into their theistic ethics, notions of considerable importance which recur throughout medieval and Renaissance philosophy.

3.2. CHARACTERISTICS OF ETHICS IN MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

1. Medieval philosophy continued to be characterized by ethical and religious orientation. Its methods were at first those of Plotinus and later those of Aristotle. But it developed within faith as a means of throwing light on the truths and mysteries of faith. Thus, religion and philosophy fruitfully cooperated in the middle ages. Philosophy, as the handmaid of theology, made possible a rational understanding of faith. Faith, for its part, inspired Christian thinkers to develop new philosophical ideas, some of which became part of the philosophical heritage of the West. Thus philosophy and faith help people become moral beings.

2. Logic, dialectic and analysis were used to discover the truth – the principle of reasoned argumentation or *ratio* which is norm of morality.

3. The obligation to co-ordinate the insights of philosophy with theological teaching and revelation – the principle of *concordia* was very much felt. The last was the most important. Perhaps there was no other issue concerned medieval thinkers more than the relation of faith to reason and ethics.

4. Toward the end of the middle ages, this beneficial interplay of faith and reason started to break down. Philosophy began to be cultivated for its own sake, apart from, and even in contradiction to Christian religion. This divorce of reason from faith, made definitive in the 17th century by Francis Bacon and René Descartes, marked the birth of modern philosophy. Ethics too became independent of faith and philosophical intervention.

3.3. THE ETHICAL MERIT OF MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY

Apart from its own intrinsic and variety, the thought of medieval philosophers has a special lesson for people of India in this century to lead moral life. For, whether we endorse their views or not, these people succeeded in a goal that we are far from having realised. They found a pastoral and meaningful way of expressing the Christian message in the culture and the philosophy of their times. They made use of Neo-Platonism or Aristotelianism or Stoicism – taking care to correct, purify and modify concepts borrowed from the systems whenever they felt it necessary – and worked out an expression of the Good News in terminology and thought-patterns familiar to their contemporaries. They also made use of the social and political structures than current ones in formulating all these. This is what we are aiming at in today's India. And it would be useful to see how these people achieved this aim.

The first great period of Catholic philosophy was dominated by St. Augustine among the pagans. The second period culminates in St. Thomas Aquinas for whom and for his successors, Aristotle far outweighs Plato. Philosophy was concerned to defend the faith, and invoked reason to enable

it to argue with those who did not accept the validity of the Christian revelation. By this invocation of reason, the philosophers challenged criticism, not merely as theologians, but as inventors of systems designed to appeal to men of no matter what creed. In the long run, the appeal to reason was perhaps a mistake, but in the thirteenth century it seemed highly successful.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Mention some of the Ethical Characteristics of Medieval Philosophy

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2) Who are the dominant moral philosophers at the period of Medieval Philosophy?

3.4. IMPORTANCE OF NATURAL REASON IN ETHICS

The philosophy of the medieval period remained in close conjunction with Christian thought, particularly theology, and the chief philosophers of the period were churchmen, particularly who were teachers. Philosophers who strayed from the close relation were chided by their superiors. Greek philosophy ceased to be creative after Plotinus in the 3rd century AD. A century later Christian thinkers began to assimilate Neo-Platonism into Christian doctrine in order to give a rational interpretation of Christian faith. Thus, medieval philosophy was born of the confluence of Greek philosophy and Christianity. Plotinus' philosophy was already deeply religious, having come under the influence of Middle Eastern religion.

One of the Church fathers whose writings outline the idea of ethics is Clement of Alexandria (150-215). By the exercise of natural reason, he and some of the philosophers of antiquity had arrived at conclusions concerning the kind of life fitting for human beings which were coincident with parts of Christian moral teaching. This concurrence was later to become a theme in the defence of moral philosophy, and of the study of pagan writers, that scholastics would offer to the charge that their enquiries endangered faith. The particular discovery of Greek philosophy which interested the Fathers was that of practical reasoning (*ratio practica*) or right reason. Both Plato and Aristotle had argued that there is a faculty of rational judgement concerned with choosing the right way of acting. Excellence in the exercise of this power constitutes the intellectual virtue of practical wisdom – *prudentia* and conduct in accord with its deliverances is moral virtue.

The idea of an innate power of moral knowledge is open to at least two interpretations. On the first, human beings are endowed with a capacity for rational thought, and starting from certain premises, knowledge of which is not dependent on revelation, they can arrive at conclusions about right conduct. On the second interpretation, the relevant endowment is one of a faculty of

moral sense by which they can simply intuit what it is right or wrong to do. Borrowing from the vocabulary of later theories, it may be useful to describe these views as 'rationalist' and 'intuitionist' respectively.

ETHICS: SIN, VICE AND VIRTUE

For Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, there existed the problem of how we can ever do what we know we ought not to be doing. This is the problem of *akrasia*. From this ancient perspective, perhaps the most striking thing about Augustinian ethics is its easy acceptance of *akrasia*. In *Confessiones* II, Augustine tells of stealing pears as a boy of sixteen. He spends two chapters ruminating on what might have motivated his theft. It was not the pears themselves, he says, for he had better ones at home. He concludes that it was the flavour of sinning that motivated him.

In *De libero arbitrio*, Augustine admits that the question of why we do evil disturbed him greatly when he was young and moved him toward Manicheism. Once he accepted the idea of original sin, however, he found nothing paradoxical in saying of someone: 'He hates the thing itself because he knows that it is evil; and yet he does it because he is bent on doing it'.

Augustine was an extreme intentionalist in ethics. In *De sermone Domini in monte* (Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount), he identifies three necessary and sufficient conditions for committing a sin: receiving an evil suggestion, taking pleasure in the thought of performing the act suggested and consenting to perform the act. Thus in Augustine's view, whether one commits a sin is in no way dependent on whether the contemplated action is actually carried out. Even when the action is carried out, it is the intention (understood as suggestion, pleasure and consent), rather than the action itself, or its consequences, that is sinful.

Augustine also devoted two treatises to the topic of lying. In the first of these, *De mendacio* (On Lying), he first suggests that a person S lies in saying p if, and only if (1) p is false, (2) S believes that p is false and (3) S says p with the intention of deceiving someone. He then considers three cases: first, that of someone with a false belief who wants to deceive another by saying something that is, unknown to them, quite true; second, the case of someone who expects to be disbelieved and so knowingly says what is false in order to instil a true belief; and third, the case of someone who, also expecting to be disbelieved, knowingly speaks the truth in order to instil a falsehood.

Augustine seems not to know what to do about these problem cases. He contents himself with insisting that the conditions (1)-(3) are jointly sufficient, without taking a stand on whether each is singly necessary.

Discussing virtue and vice, Augustine contrasts those things that are desirable in themselves with those that are desirable for the sake of something else. He says that things of the first sort are to be enjoyed (fruit) whereas those of the second sort are to be used (utility). Vice, he adds, is wanting to use what is meant to be enjoyed or wanting to enjoy what is meant to be used.

Ambrose had already added the Pauline virtues of faith, hope and love to the classical virtues of temperance, courage, wisdom and justice. Augustine follows Ambrose in this, and he follows St Paul in assigning first importance to love; in fact, he offers an interpretation of each of the seven virtues that makes it an expression of the love of God. Thus temperance is love 'keeping itself whole and incorrupt for God'; fortitude, or courage, is love 'bearing everything readily for the sake of God', and so on. Virtue, he says, is nothing but the perfect love of God. In this way Augustine provides a Christian analogue to Plato's idea of the unity of the virtues.

ETHICS: 'OUGHT' AND 'CAN'

Augustine also attacked the Pelagians for their views on the avoidance of sin, focusing on the question of 'ought' and 'can'. (Pelagianism is a heretical theological position regarding grace and free will; it originated with the fifth-century British monk Pelagius (354-418 AD), who believed that every good could be got through prayer except virtue. He emphasized the primacy of human effort in spiritual salvation). Pelagius and his disciple Coelestius, had made the principle that 'ought' implies 'can' a central tenet of their religious and ethical teaching. As already noted, Augustine was the person primarily responsible for defining their teaching, Pelagianism, as a Christian heresy. In his treatise *De perfectione iusticia hominis* (On Man's Perfection in Righteousness), subtitled 'In opposition to those who assert that it is possible for one to become righteous by one's own strength alone', Augustine describes the chief thesis of Coelestius as the contention that if something is unavoidable, then it is not a sin; there is simply no such thing as an unavoidable sin. Augustine responds to Pelagius and his disciple by rejecting the simple disjunction that either something is not a sin or it can be avoided. 'Sin can be avoided', he writes, 'if our corrupted nature be healed by God's grace.' Thus in a way, Augustine agrees that 'ought' does imply 'can', but only with a crucial qualification. 'Ought' implies 'can with the gratuitous assistance of God', but it does not imply 'can without any outside help'.

Augustine's response to dreaming as a possible threat to knowledge claims fits together with his intentionalism in ethics and his anti-Pelagianism to produce an interesting problem as to whether one is morally responsible for the acts of one's dream self. He agonizes over this problem in *Confessiones*. Three ways of justifying a claim of no responsibility suggest themselves. I could say I am not responsible (1) because I am not my dream self, or (2) because what happens in a dream does not really happen, or (3) because I am powerless to avoid doing what my dream self does, and 'ought' implies 'can'.

Augustine's philosophical and theological commitments seem to undercut each of these three responses. Thus (1) is undercut, it seems, by his somewhat concessive response to scepticism. I can know that something tastes sweet to me, Augustine insists in *Contra academicos*, whether or not I am dreaming. It seems to be a consequence of this insistence that, if I am dreaming, I am my dream self. As for (2), it seems to be undercut by Augustine's strong intentionalism in ethics. Thus when I commit adultery in my dreams, even if no 'outward' adultery takes place, still I entertain the evil suggestion, take pleasure in the evil suggested and give consent; so there is wrongdoing. As for (3), as noted above, Augustine rejects the Pelagian insistence that 'ought' implies 'can'. or rather, he accepts it only with an important qualification. Although 'I ought to refrain from consenting to fornicate' does, in Augustine's view, entail that I can so refrain with the help of God's grace, it does not entail that I can refrain strictly on my own, that is, without any divine grace. Yet if I receive no grace and consent to fornicate, I sin, according to Augustine, and it is just for God to punish me.

ETHICS: ON KILLING

Although Augustine's thoughts on suicide are not particularly original, they have been extremely influential. His position became Christian orthodoxy, which in turn influenced decisively the legal thinking in predominantly Christian countries. Augustine's position is that, with certain specifiable exceptions (primarily, lawful executions and killings in battle by soldiers fighting just

wars, anyone who kills a human being, whether himself or anyone else, is guilty of murder, and murder is prohibited by divine commandment).

Augustine did not invent the idea that certain requirements must be satisfied if a war is to count as just. The theory of just warfare - both the conditions that must be satisfied if a war is to be entered into justly (*jus ad bellum*) as well as the requirements of justice in the waging of war - are already well developed by Cicero in his *On the Republic*. Nor was Augustine the first Christian thinker to develop a theory of just warfare; Ambrose had already done so.

Nevertheless, Augustine is usually considered the father of the modern theory of the just war. Such deference is appropriate in that it is in Augustine, more than in Cicero or Ambrose or anyone else in the ancient world, that later theorists have found their earliest inspiration.

Although Augustine accepts the commandment, 'Thou shalt not kill', he interprets it in such a way that not everyone who brings about the death of another can be properly said to kill. Thus, he writes in *De civitate Dei*, 'One who owes a duty of obedience to the giver of the command does not himself kill; he is an instrument, a sword in its user's hand.' Thus an executioner may bring about the death of a convict without killing, and so may a soldier end another's life without killing, especially when war is being waged 'on the authority of God'.

In general, Augustine takes over the Roman principles of just war as set forth by Cicero and adds his own emphasis on the intention with which the acts of war are performed. This following passage is characteristic:

What is the evil in war? Is it the death of some who will soon die in any case, that others may live in peaceful subjection? This is merely cowardly dislike, not any religious feeling. The real evils in war are love of violence, revengeful cruelty, fierce and implacable enmity, wild resistance, the lust of power, and such like; and it is generally to punish these things, when force is required to inflict the punishment, that, in obedience to God or some lawful authority, good men undertake wars.

Beyond such insistence that war should not be fought from love of violence, revengeful cruelty or lust for power, Augustine did not work out specific principles for the just conduct of war. Still, in making it plausible to many Christians that killing in war need not fall under the divine commandment not to kill; Augustine freed others to develop principles for what might be considered the just declaration of war, as well as the just conduct of war, once it has been justly entered into.

Check Your Progress II

1) What are three necessary and sufficient conditions that St. Augustine identifies for committing a sin?

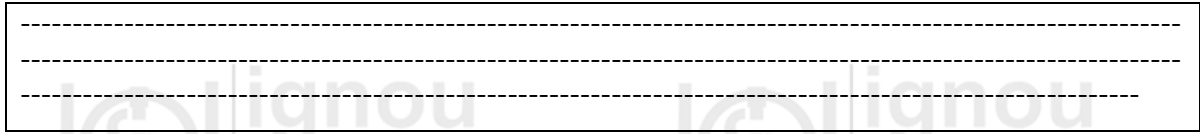
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2) How does St. Augustine define Ethics of 'Ought' and 'Can' by responding to Pelagius?

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3) Why is Augustine is considered the father of the modern theory of the just war?

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3.5. AQUINAS' VIEW ON ETHICS

Aquinas' moral theory is developed most extensively and systematically in the Second Part of *Summa theologiae*. Like almost all his predecessors, medieval and ancient, Aquinas sees ethics as having two principal topics: first, the ultimate goal of human existence, and second, how that goal is to be won, or lost.

Summa theologiae sometimes called the Treatise on Happiness, develops an argument to establish the existence and nature of a single ultimate end for all human action, or, more strictly, the kind of behaviour over which a person has 'control'. First, 'all actions that proceed from a power are caused by that power in accordance with the nature of its object. But the object of will is an end and a good', that is, an end perceived as good by the willer's intellect (*Summa theologiae* 1.1c). From this starting point Aquinas develops an argument designed to show that a human being necessarily (though not always consciously) seeks everything it seeks for its own ultimate end, happiness.

Aquinas argues that the often unrecognized genuine ultimate end for which human beings exist (their 'object') is God, perfect goodness personified; and perfect happiness, the ultimate end with which they may exist (their 'use' of that object), is the enjoyment of the end for which they exist. That enjoyment is fully achieved only in the beatific vision, which Aquinas conceives of as an activity. Since the beatific vision involves the contemplation of the ultimate (first) cause of everything, it is, whatever else it may be, also the perfection of all knowledge and understanding. Aquinas devotes just four questions of *Summa theologiae* to 'the goodness and badness of human acts in general'. Although considerations of rightness and wrongness occupy only a little more than ten per cent of the discussion in Questions 18-21, Aquinas nonetheless appears to think of rightness and wrongness as the practical, distinctively moral evaluations of actions. His emphasis on the broader notions of goodness and badness reveals the root of his moral evaluation of actions in his metaphysical identification of being and goodness.

What makes an action morally bad is its moving the agent not toward, but away from, the agent's ultimate goal. Such a deviation is patently irrational, and Aquinas' analysis of the moral badness of human action identifies it as fundamentally irrationality, since irrationality is an obstacle to the actualization of a human being's specifying potentialities, those that make rational the differentia of the human species. In this as in every other respect, Aquinas' ethics is reason-centred:

In connection with human acts the words 'good' and 'bad' are applied on the basis of a comparison to reason, because... a human being's good is existing in accordance with reason, while what is bad for a human being is whatever is contrary to reason. For what is good for anything is what goes together with it in keeping with its form, and what is bad for it is whatever is contrary to the order associated with its form. (*Summa theologiae* 18.5c)

It would be a mistake, however, to suppose that Aquinas takes moral evil to consist in intellectual error. Because of the very close relationship he sees between intellect and will, the irrationality of moral wrongdoing will be a function of will as well, not just of intellect. In Aquinas' view, the moral evaluation of a human action attaches primarily to the 'internal act', the volition from which the external act derives. Since 'will is inclined toward reason's good [the

good presented to will by intellect] by the very nature of the power of will', bad volition stems from defective deliberation (*Summa theologiae* 3). As intellect and will continually influence each other, so bad deliberation can also be an effect of bad volition. Moreover, practical intellect's mistakes in identifying the best available course of action may also have the passions of the sensory soul as sources.

Furthermore, 'because the good [presented by intellect] is varied in many ways, it is necessary that will be inclined through some habit toward some determinate good presented by reason so that will's determining activity may follow more promptly' (*Summa theologiae* 50.5, ad 3).

Habits of will are conditions necessary for our carrying out our volitions in particularly good or particularly bad ways, as regards both the 'executive' and the 'determining' aspects of volition; and the habits that play these crucial roles in Aquinas' moral theory are the virtues and the vices.

The four 'cardinal virtues' can be understood as habits of this sort. Reason's habit of good governance generally is prudence; reason's restraint of self-serving concupiscence is temperance; reason's persevering despite self-serving 'irascible' passions such as fear is courage; reason's governance of one's relations with others despite one's tendencies toward selfishness is justice.

Aquinas' normative ethics is based not on rules but on virtues; it is concerned with dispositions first and only then with actions. In addition to the moral virtues in all their various manifestations, Aquinas also recognizes intellectual virtues that, like the moral virtues, can be acquired by human effort. On the other hand, the supreme theological virtues of faith, hope and charity cannot be acquired but must be directly 'infused' by God.

Passions, virtues and vices are all intrinsic principles, or sources, of human acts. However, there are extrinsic principles as well, among which is law in all its varieties. Consequently, Aquinas moves on in *Summa theologiae* 90-108 to his *Treatise on Law*, a famous and original treatment of the subject. The best-known feature of the treatise is Aquinas' concept of natural law. Law in general is 'a kind of rational ordering for the common good, promulgated by the one who takes care of the community' (*Summa theologiae* 90.4c), and 'the precepts of natural law are to practical reasoning what the first principles of demonstrations are to theoretical reasoning.... All things to be done or to be avoided pertain to the precepts of natural law, which practical reasoning apprehends naturally as being human goods'. Human laws of all kinds derive, or should derive, from natural law, which might be construed as the naturally knowable rational principles underlying morality in general: 'From the precepts of natural law, as from general, indemonstrable principles, it is necessary that human reason proceed to making more particular arrangements... [which] are called human laws, provided that they pertain to the definition (*rationem*) of law already stated'.

As a consequence of this hierarchy of laws, Aquinas unhesitatingly rejects some kinds and some particular instances of human law, for example: 'A tyrannical law, since it is not in accord with reason, is not unconditionally a law but is, rather, a perversion of law'. Even natural law rests on the more fundamental 'eternal law', which Aquinas identifies as divine providence, 'the very nature of the governance of things on the part of God as ruler of the universe'.

3.6. THE NATURE OF VIRTUE ETHICS

In medieval philosophy, the phrase virtue theory or virtue ethics refers to ethical systems that focus primarily on what sort of person one should try to be. Thus, one of the aims of virtue theory is to offer an account of the sort of characteristics a virtuous person has. The ultimate aim of virtue theory is eudemonism (Gk *eudaimonia* happiness) which speaks the highest ethical goal as happiness and personal well-being. It is roughly meaning 'flourishing' or 'success.'

The word 'virtue' finds its origin in Latin *Virtus* and in Greek *Arête*. A virtue is a quality of character, a disposition to do what is right in a particular direction. A virtue is also a habit of action considering to the quality of character or dispositions. According to Aristotle, "Virtue is a permanent state of mind, formed with the concurrence of the will and based on an ideal of what is best in actual life, an ideal fixed by reason." In this way, virtue is an acquired quality. To achieve 'eudemonia' one must live by what can be considered virtues such as charity, stoicism (indifference to pleasure or pain), honesty, friendliness, fairness and so forth.

The methods of virtue ethics are in contrast to the dominant methods in ethical philosophy, which focus on action philosophy. For example, both Immanuel Kant and utilitarian systems try to provide guiding principles for actions that allow a person to decide how to behave in any given situation. Virtue theory, by contrast, focuses on what makes a good person, rather than what makes a good action. As such it is often associated with a teleological ethical system - one that seeks to define the proper *telos* (goal or end) of the human person.

Renewed interests in virtue theory arise from dissatisfaction with the way we do ethics today. Most discussions about contemporary ethics consider major controversial actions: abortion, nuclear war, gene therapy, etc. These discussions basically dominate contemporary ethics. Virtue ethicists have more extensive concerns. We believe that the real discussion of ethics is not primarily the question about what actions are morally permissible, but rather who should we become? In fact, virtue ethicists expand the question into three key related ones: Who are we? Who ought we to become? How are we to get there?

To answer the first question, we must focus on two major considerations. First, what standards are we to measure ourselves against? Second, how will we know whether we are measuring ourselves fairly? Regarding the first point, two of the most important works in ethics attempt to assist us by naming the basic virtues. In the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle gives us eleven different virtues that are necessary for citizens to engage. The different virtues are concerned with the regulation of non-rational desires (bravery, temperance and good temper), external goods (magnificence and magnanimity) and social situations (truthfulness and wit). Apart from these, happiness, friendship, generosity and practical wisdom are some of these. In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas takes from Plato, the four cardinal virtues and he adds with these the three theological virtues. He states that we can acquire the cardinal virtues through deliberately willed and enjoyed habitual right action; the theological virtues are gifts from God. These virtues help us to answer the question of self-understanding like are we just, prudent, temperate and courageous?

But how can we be sure that we are not simply deceiving ourselves regarding our self-understanding? Here, Aristotle suggests that we can know ourselves by considering how we act in spontaneous situations and we discover ourselves when we act in the unplanned world of ordinary life. We may believe that we are particularly brave or cowardly, but that assessment is only correct if it conforms to how we actually behave in the unanticipated, concrete situation. Self knowledge is key, critical and honest and not based on wishful thinking.

The second question, "Who ought we to become"? embodies a vision of the type of persons we ought to become. We use the virtues to set the personal goals that encourage ourselves to seek. St Thomas and others call this goal the "end". That is, the middle question sets the end that we should seek. That end is a type of person with the cardinal virtues. Setting this end means that the fundamental task of the moral life is to develop a vision and to strive to attain it. Inasmuch as that vision is who we ought to become, then, the key insight is that we should always aim to grow. As a person-oriented ethics, this insists that without growth, we cannot become moral.

Setting such an end describes then another way that virtue ethicists are different from other ethicists. Rather than first examining actions and asking whether we should perform them or not, virtue ethicists suggest that we ought to set ends for the type of people we believe we should become. Thus, to the extent that we are examining our lives and seeking ways of improving ourselves for the moral prosperity of our world, to that extent we are engaging virtue ethics.

Turning to the third question, in order to get there, we need to practice the cardinal virtues along with theological virtues. Modern virtue ethicists often claim Aristotle as an ancestor. Aristotle, however, was himself working through an agenda laid down by Plato and Socrates. Socrates asked the question at the heart of Greek ethics: ‘How should one live?’

3.7. LET US SUM UP

The ancient philosophical task was to show how living virtuously would be best for the virtuous person. Plato’s *Republic* attempts to answer the challenge that rational people will aim to get the most pleasure, honour and power for themselves. His argument is that justice, broadly construed, is to be identified with a rational ordering of one’s soul. Once one sees that one identifies oneself with one’s reason, one will realize that being just is in fact best for oneself. Aristotle continued the same project, aiming to show that human happiness consists in the exercise (not the mere possession of) the virtues. Ultimately, Aristotle’s method is similar to Plato’s. Much of *Nicomachean Ethics* is taken up with portraits of the virtuous man intended to attract one to a life such as his. For Aristotle, all of the ‘practical’ virtues will be possessed by the truly virtuous person, the man of ‘practical wisdom’. Medieval philosophy tries to make a distinction between ethics and morals or morality. Everyone, even the most uncivilized and uncultured, has its own morality or sum of prescriptions which govern their moral conduct. Nature had so provided that each man establishes for himself a code of moral concepts and principles which are applicable to the details of practical life, without the necessity of awaiting the conclusions of science. Ethics is the scientific or philosophical treatment of morality. Morality is the content and ethics is the study of the content.

Check Your Progress III

1) What is the genuine end Human Beings exist for?

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2) Explain the Normative Ethics of Aquinas?

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.....

3) What are the principal elements in Virtue Ethics?

3.8. KEY WORDS

Virtue: Virtue is moral excellence, a character trait or quality valued as being good.

Conscience: Conscience is an ability that distinguishes, influenced by objective moral norms, whether one's actions are right or wrong. It can lead to feelings of remorse or rectitude when one's actions disconform or conform to such norms.

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3.10. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Medieval philosophy is characterized by ethical orientation. Its methods were at first those of Plotinus and later those of Aristotle. But it developed within faith as a means of throwing light on the truths and mysteries of faith. Thus, religion and philosophy fruitfully cooperated in the middle ages. Philosophy, as the handmaid of theology, made possible a rational understanding of faith. Faith, for its part, inspired Christian thinkers to develop new philosophical ideas, some of which became part of the philosophical heritage of the West. Thus philosophy and faith help people become moral beings. Logic, dialectic and analysis were used to discover the truth – the principle of reasoned argumentation or *ratio* which is norm of morality. The obligation to co-ordinate the insights of philosophy with theological teaching and revelation – the principle of *concordia* was very much felt. The last was the most important. Perhaps there was no other issue concerned medieval thinkers more than the relation of faith to reason and ethics.

2. The first great period of Catholic philosophy was dominated by St. Augustine among the pagans. The second period culminates in St. Thomas Aquinas for whom and for his successors, Aristotle far outweighs Plato. Philosophy was concerned to defend the faith, and invoked reason to enable it to argue with those who did not accept the validity of the Christian revelation. By this invocation of reason, the philosophers challenged criticism, not merely as theologians, but as inventors of systems designed to appeal to men of no matter what creed. In the long run, the appeal to reason was perhaps a mistake, but in the thirteenth century it seemed highly successful.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Augustine was an extreme intentionalist in ethics. In *De sermone Domini in monte* (Commentary on the Lord's Sermon on the Mount), he identifies three necessary and sufficient conditions for committing a sin: receiving an evil suggestion, taking pleasure in the thought of performing the act suggested and consenting to perform the act. Thus in Augustine's view, whether one commits a sin is in no way dependent on whether the contemplated action is

actually carried out. Even when the action is carried out, it is the intention (understood as suggestion, pleasure and consent), rather than the action itself, or its consequences, that is sinful.

2. Augustine responds to Pelagius and his disciple by rejecting the simple disjunction that either something is not a sin or it can be avoided. 'Sin can be avoided', he writes, 'if our corrupted nature be healed by God's grace.' Thus in a way, Augustine agrees that 'ought' does imply 'can', but only with a crucial qualification. 'Ought' implies 'can with the gratuitous assistance of God', but it does not imply 'can without any outside help'. Augustine's response to dreaming as a possible threat to knowledge claims fits together with his intentionalism in ethics and his anti-Pelagianism to produce an interesting problem as to whether one is morally responsible for the acts of one's dream self. He agonizes over this problem in *Confessiones*. Three ways of justifying a claim of no responsibility suggest themselves. I could say I am not responsible (1) because I am not my dream self, or (2) because what happens in a dream does not really happen, or (3) because I am powerless to avoid doing what my dream self does, and 'ought' implies 'can'.

3. Augustine did not invent the idea that certain requirements must be satisfied if a war is to count as just. The theory of just warfare - both the conditions that must be satisfied if a war is to be entered into justly (*jus ad bellum*) as well as the requirements of justice in the waging of war - are already well developed by Cicero in his *On the Republic*. Nor was Augustine the first Christian thinker to develop a theory of just warfare; Ambrose had already done so. Nevertheless, Augustine is usually considered the father of the modern theory of the just war. Such deference is appropriate in that it is in Augustine, more than in Cicero or Ambrose or anyone else in the ancient world, that later theorists have found their earliest inspiration.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. Aquinas argues that the often unrecognized genuine ultimate end for which human beings exist (their 'object') is God, perfect goodness personified; and perfect happiness, the ultimate end with which they may exist (their 'use' of that object), is the enjoyment of the end for which they exist. That enjoyment is fully achieved only in the beatific vision, which Aquinas conceives of as an activity. Since the beatific vision involves the contemplation of the ultimate (first) cause of everything, it is, whatever else it may be, also the perfection of all knowledge and understanding. Aquinas devotes just four questions of *Summa theologiae* to 'the goodness and badness of human acts in general'. His emphasis on the broader notions of goodness and badness reveals the root of his moral evaluation of actions in his metaphysical identification of being and goodness.

2. Aquinas' normative ethics is based not on rules but on virtues; it is concerned with dispositions first and only then with actions. In addition to the moral virtues in all their various manifestations, Aquinas also recognizes intellectual virtues that, like the moral virtues, can be acquired by human effort. On the other hand, the supreme theological virtues of faith, hope and charity cannot be acquired but must be directly 'infused' by God.

3. Renewed interests in virtue theory arise from dissatisfaction with the way we do ethics today. Most discussions about contemporary ethics consider major controversial actions: abortion, nuclear war, gene therapy, etc. These discussions basically dominate contemporary ethics. Virtue ethicists have more extensive concerns. We believe that the real discussion of ethics is not

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UNIT 4

ETHICS IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Contents

- 4.0. Objectives
- 4.1. Introduction
- 4.2. Immanuel Kant
- 4.3. Jeremy Bentham
- 4.4. Let us Sum up
- 4.5. Key Words
- 4.6. Further Readings and References
- 4.7. Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to shed some light on the developments of Ethical thoughts in the modern period. Although we see many philosophers of this period formulating ethical theories of their own, all these theories fall in the groups of either consequentialist or nonconsequentialist views. In the ethical stand of Bentham and Kant we can decipher a strong representation of Consequentialism and non-Consequentialism respectively. In this Unit we shall therefore make an attempt to capture the spirit of Bentham and Kant with which they approached the issue of 'rightness' and wrongness of human actions. Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to understand the difference between Consequentialism and non Consequentialism.
- to present the Nonconsequentialism of Kant.
- to present the Consequentialism of Bentham.
- to arrive at the conclusion that we can be autonomous moral agents

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In the modern times, ethical theories were generally divided between consequentialist and nonconsequentialist or deontological ethics. Consequentialism says that we ought to do whatever maximizes good consequences. It doesn't matter what kind of thing we do. What matters is that we maximize good results. A popular theory of consequentialism is the hedonistic utilitarianism, according to which we should always do whatever maximizes the balance of pleasure over pain for everyone affected by our action. Nonconsequentialism says that some kinds of actions are wrong in themselves and not just wrong because they have bad consequences. In other words, human actions can be absolutely right or wrong regardless of the result, which follow from them. The former was spearheaded by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill and the latter to a great extent owes to Immanuel Kant. We shall here deal with Bentham and Kant and their ethical thoughts to unearth the undercurrents of Modern Ethics.

4.2. IMMANUEL KANT

Immanuel Kant (1724 – 1804), a German modern philosopher stands as a stalwart in the history of Western Philosophy. He is considered as the most important ethicist of modern times. Kant's ethical theory is mainly developed in three of his works. They are *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788) and the *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). Kant claims to propose a universal ethics, a set of ethical rules that is acceptable to everyone, everywhere and every time. He claims the characteristics of universality and objectivity for his system of morality. Kant firmly believes that "what I ought to do" is perfectly well known to every human person by virtue of reason. How does he demonstrate it? Let us see.

AUTONOMY OF WILL AS THE FOUNDATION OF MORALITY

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant makes a distinction between *phenomena* (things-as-they-appear) and *noumena* (things-in-themselves) which are the two modes of representation of the whole existing reality. The former can be called physical and the latter metaphysical realities. In the view of Kant, "metaphysics naturally exist...in all human beings, as soon as their reason has become ripe for speculation, there has always existed and will always continue to exist some kind of metaphysics." Making this distinction between physics and metaphysics was necessary for Kant for laying a strong and reasonable foundation for his moral philosophy. For, no morality, in the view of Kant, is possible if the human will were not free. Kant affirms, "it is the freedom of will which is a metaphysical reality that is the foundation of morality." He asks, "how can we say that one is morally wrong or right, if he/she were not free to act otherwise?" Thus, the concept of freedom or autonomy of will is fundamental to Kantian ethics. The will refers to a faculty, potency or force in man involved in decision making. An action can be moral if and only if its agent is free from all internal and external influences while deciding upon the course of it. The ability to be motivated by reason alone is called by Kant as the autonomy of the will. This free will is the seat of the moral principle, the *Categorical Imperative*, which has the characteristics of universality and objectivity. Hence, it is to the Categorical Imperative we shall now turn.

CATEGORICAL IMPERATIVE

Kant viewed human nature as a battlefield of unceasing struggle between desires (subjective) and reason (objective) wherein our desires have a stronger appeal than reason has; therefore, we find that acting rightly requires an effort that acting on feeling does not. Categorical Imperative is a term invented by Immanuel Kant to refer to a command that orders us to do something unconditionally – that is, regardless of what we want or what our aims and purposes are. According to Kant, we experience the principle of morality as *Categorical Imperative*. Kant's categorical imperative is *categorical* because it admits of no exceptions and is absolutely binding, inescapable. It is *imperative* because it gives instruction about how one ought to act and, thus, is a command.

The nature of categorical imperative is further expounded in comparison with hypothetical imperatives. For instance, "you should not kill yourself" is a categorical imperative and "you should not kill yourself because God will punish you" is a hypothetical imperative; the former is unconditioned, objective, and binding on everybody and the latter is conditioned, providing an extraneous reason only to the person who has the end mentioned in the antecedent. All of the

imperatives that Kant calls hypothetical, thus, depend for their force on some external source of authority – an agency by which they have been issued. In contrast to the hypothetical imperatives, categorical imperatives ensue from within by virtue of our reason.

Kant captures the cream of his ethics in the form of a supreme norm that “there is . . . [only] one categorical imperative, namely this: *Act on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law.*” This procedure of testing the morality by applying the categorical imperative in concrete consists always in finding out whether one can will his or her maxim (subjective) to become a universal law (objective) or not. That is to say, if what one does could be done by all rational beings, it is morally permissible and if not, it is not. So when I do something, I must make sure that I want everybody else to do the same if they are in the same situation. Only then will I be acting according to the moral law within. And this applies to all people in all societies always. I should do my moral duty because it is my moral duty and for no other reason. If I look for results, such as my own happiness or the betterment of others, then I am acting hypothetically.

NONCONSEQUENTIALISM OF KANT’S ETHICS

Kant as a deontologist maintains that human actions can be absolutely right or wrong regardless of the results, which follow from them. According to Kant, there is a fundamental connection between rationality and moral motivation. It is only duty from the motive of duty that can fetch moral worth. Only when an action done on the ground that it is right to do, it deserves moral worth. Any right action done out of fear, pleasure, self-interest or some other reasons, is not moral. For instance, a man does not accept bribe due to the fear of being caught by the anti-corruption squad. Such a person acts rightly but deserves no moral credit, according to Kant. Moreover, morality of an action does not lie in the personal interests. The will that complies with personal interests is called pathological by Kant in his *Lectures on Ethics*. Morality, in the view of Kant, concerns about actions that are categorically imperative required by reason alone, independent of motives or ends supplied by feeling or desire. Hence, in the Kantian perspective, we must act *out of a sense of duty* and actions done merely by inclination or self-interest are not moral.

Kant emphasizes that the moral worth should come from the volition that precedes our actions. It is not the means or the ends that are the cannons to decide whether an action is morally right or wrong but the volition or intention. Intention justifies means and ends, according to Kant! Ultimately, our faculty of willing is the law giver of all our moral actions. The more we become free in our acts, the more moral we become; the more we become free, the more we become close to the attainment of Good Will. Hence, the attainment of a Good Will must be the ideal and moral vocation of every rational being. Since it is unconditioned and absolute good in every possible content, it must be the highest good. Kant adduces throughout his ethical writings that only a free will or Good Will is capable of legislating moral laws.

GOOD WILL

A Good Will is not something, which becomes good in relation to something else but is good in itself. It is like the colours, say, red, blue, yellow, etc., which do not distil their quality of

redness, blueness, yellowness, etc., from anything either within or without but by their very nature. The quality of goodness is the ontological necessity of a Good Will. Kant, hence, begins the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* with this key statement: “Nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a Good Will.” A Good Will becomes good through willing, i.e., self-legislation without any constraint. A Good Will is unconditional, conditioning all other goods; everybody has Good Will, which can be corrupted by inclinations. A free will is equivalent to a Good Will, which is good without qualification. Kant calls upon every rational being to strive relentlessly for the promotion and accomplishment of the Good Will, i.e., the highest good.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is the difference between Consequentialism and Nonconsequentialism?

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2) Freedom of will is fundamental to Kantian Ethics. Explain

.....

3) What does Kant mean by the *Categorical Imperative* as the Principle of Morality?

.....

4) Explain the Nonconsequentialism of Kant’s *Categorical Imperative*

.....

4.3. JEREMY BENTHAM

Jeremy Bentham (1748 – 1832), an English philosopher and the chief expounder of Utilitarianism showed deep interest in legal and social reforms from very early age of his life. He wanted to make laws for the best interests of the whole community, not just for the convenience of the elite class as it was the case during his time. Bentham’s Utilitarian ethical thought is

presented mainly in his best known work, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1789). Bentham saw the world as torn between two great forces, the quest for pleasure and the avoidance of pain. From this, he intuited that it would be better to maximize the former and minimize the latter, and that all other considerations are irrelevant. Bentham's desire for social reforms to construct a society that would provide the *greatest happiness to the greatest number* was the starting point for the later Utilitarian philosophy.

PLEASURE: THE END OF HUMAN LIFE

Bentham wanted to purify legal and political institutions. Bentham began his attempt to do so with an analysis of language. According to Bentham, the meaning of language or any word depends on our experience. In other words, any word can be meaningful only if it refers to something that can be experienced. What is real is only whatever we can experience, either through external and internal sensations. The former is possible through sight, smell, sound, taste and touch. The latter is possible through the feelings of pain and pleasure. Anything we think or talk without any reference to experience is unreal. Applying the method of analysis of language on the principles of Ethics, he said, the whole of ethics seems to be evolving around two concepts, 'good' and 'obligation'. If we clarify them, we will see that moral language is really about 'pleasure' and 'pain'. We all want, whatever is good. But 'good' can mean only 'pleasure and absence of pain' and this is all that 'happiness' can mean as well. The fictional name 'obligation' can refer only to some act we are directed to do, under the condition that if we fail to do it we will suffer some pain. So pleasure and pain are the realities underlying both 'obligation' and 'good', and the pursuit of pleasure must thus be the core of morality. Basing on the above mentioned, Bentham formulates his moral principle which demands maximum pleasure and minimum pain for as many people as possible. In other words, it demands greatest happiness for the greatest number. He could see a motivational force to follow his ethical principle. Because everyone by nature seeks for happiness and the principle only emphasizes on maximizing it.

THE PRINCIPLE OF UTILITY

In his major work, *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, Bentham says that we are governed by the factors of pleasure and pain. All our thoughts, words and deeds are directed by them. What underlies the *Principle of Utility* is this basic nature of human beings. By the 'principle of utility' Bentham meant "the principle which approves or disapproves of every action whatsoever, according to the tendency which it appears to have to augment or diminish the happiness of the party whose interest is in question." The parties, whose interest in question may, of course, differ. If we are thinking of the individual agent as such, it is his/her greatest happiness which is referred to. If we are thinking of the community, it is the greater happiness of the greater possible number of the members of the community which is being referred to. Ethics is nothing else than the art of directing the actions of human beings so as to bring about the greatest possible happiness to all those are concerned with these actions. According to this principle an act is good or evil depending on its usefulness for producing pleasure or pain. In Bentham's philosophy, we can exchange the words 'good' and 'evil' for 'pleasure' and 'pain'. The goodness or wickedness of an action is to be judged by its consequences.

Bentham's utilitarianism is hedonistic. Hedonistic utilitarianism assumes that the rightness of an action depends entirely on the amount of pleasure it tends to produce and the amount of pain it tends to prevent. Bentham makes it clear that the principle of utility is to govern not only the acts of private individuals but those of governments as well. Thus governments and the individuals are charged with the duty of promoting happiness. No action is in itself good or evil. Things such as fame, fortune, education, and freedom may be good, but only to the extent that they produce pleasure or happiness. They are *instrumental* goods because they are useful for attaining the goals of happiness and pleasure. Happiness and pleasure are the only *intrinsic* goods—that is, the only things good in themselves.

HEDONISTIC CALCULUS

Utility is something measurable, thus quantitative, scientific and objective. In examining the consequences of our actions, we can determine the quantity of pain and pleasure produced by them and thereby determine which of the options open to us would bring about the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. What distinguishes Bentham's moral outlook is precisely its insistence on testing every act and every institution by the principle of utility, and its assurance that a quantitatively based answer to any moral question can always be attained. He tried to put the happiness theory on a quantitative or mathematical basis. According to Bentham, all people hope to achieve pleasure and avoid pain. Pleasure and pain, however, differ from each other and therefore have independent values. We have to estimate the amount of pleasure and the amount of pain to which the action seems to give rise and to weigh the one against the other, while deciding whether a given action is right or wrong. Bentham provides a hedonistic calculus for this purpose. His hedonistic calculus has seven categories of pleasure.

1. *Intensity*. How strong is the pleasure?
2. *Duration*. How long will the pleasure last?
3. *Certainty*. How sure are we that the pleasure will occur?
4. *Propinquity*. How soon will the pleasure occur?
5. *Fecundity*. How likely is it that this pleasure will produce another pleasure?
6. *Purity*. How free from pain is the pleasure?
7. *Extent*. How many people will experience the pleasure?

Bentham called the seven categories the *calculus of felicity* (pleasure). Through these categories, he believed we could calculate which course of action would produce the greatest amount of happiness, and therefore which one we ought morally to take.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) How does Bentham demonstrate that pursuit of pleasure is the Principle of Morality?

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2) Explain the 'Principle of Utility'

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3) What is the function of 'calculus of felicity' in the ethical theory of Bentham?

4. 4. LET US SUM UP

In the backdrop of a bipolar division of ethics into Consequentialism and Nonconsequentialism in the modern era, we have tried to understand the divergent positions of Kant and Bentham. For the consequentialists, on the one hand, "Respecting elders" is good because there are more pleasurable consequences in the act than there are painful consequences. For the deontologists or nonconsequentialists, on the other hand, the act is good because it is good in itself and ought to be done (duty). While Kant favoured Nonconsequentialism, Bentham opted for Consequentialism in their approach to the Principle of Morality. For Kant, *Ends alone do not justify means*. But for Bentham, *ends alone do justify means*.

Kant argues that morality of an act depends solely on the motive of that act irrespective of the consequences. The question we should now raise is that 'how can we do justice to ourselves as imperfectly rational beings bound within time and space in treating ourselves as beings only with rationality, capable of acting purely from the motive of duty'? Or 'how far one can act from the motive of duty alone'? For, people think or reflect differently and come to sundry conclusions. We do not reflect in a vacuum, apart from the culture we live in; on the contrary, the culture significantly modifies our moral sensibility. In this fashion, there may, hence, be no objectivity without certain elements of subjectivity. It is quite natural that we do not reach the objective truth without being, in some sense, influenced by the subjective impulses. In line with Kant's view, we do also assert that what follows our acts should not decide the worth of our acts. However, the question, "How is the individual subject motivated to follow the objectively conceived moral law?" is one that Kant, perhaps, answered fully neither to his own satisfaction nor to ours.

As a consequentialist, Bentham, holds that it is the consequences or ends of our actions that determine whether particular means to them are justified or not. This seems to lead to conclusions that are contrary to commonsense morality. For example, wouldn't it justify punishing an innocent person, a 'scapegoat', in order to prevent a great evil or promote a great good? Or could we not justify on utilitarian grounds the killing of some for the sake of the good of a greater number? The principle of utility justifies any action just so long as it has better consequence than other available actions. Therefore, cheating, stealing, lying, and breaking

promises may all seem to be justified depending on whether they maximize happiness in some particular case!

Moreover, calculation of the greatest amount of happiness is too complex. When we consider all of the variables concerning pleasure or happiness that are to be counted when trying to estimate the “greatest amount of pleasure or happiness,” the task of doing so looks extremely difficult. We must consider how many people will be affected by alternative actions, whether they will be pleased or pained by them, how pleased or pained they will be and for how long, and the likelihood that what we estimate will happen or not. It is seemingly intricate and impossible to strictly pursue this pleasure calculus before we make every moral judgment.

Bentham and Kant radically differ in their view. This is evidently clear. From a Kantian point of view, if the action would be good solely as a means to something else, the imperative is hypothetical; if the action is represented as good in itself and therefore as necessary, in virtue of its principle, then the imperative is categorical. In other words, Kant would indict the principle of utility of Bentham for being entirely based on hypothetical imperatives. All of the prescribed acts of utilitarianism are based on the means-to-an-end argument.

However, the difference of their principles accompanies an underlying commonality of belief, that it is the task of moral philosophy to show that there is a method that each person can use to arrive at justified moral decisions, and to show how we are motivated to act accordingly. They were arguing, in quiet different ways, that it is possible for humans to be autonomous moral agents.

4.5. KEY WORDS

Deontology: Deontology (from Gk *deon* = obligation, duty) is an approach to ethics that judges the morality of an action based on adherence to a rule or rules (rule based ethics, because rules bind you to your duty).

Consequentialism: Consequentialism holds that the rightness of an action is determined by its consequences.

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4. 7. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Consequentialism and non-Consequentialism are two opposite positions in Ethics. Consequentialism says that we ought to do whatever maximizes good consequences. It doesn't matter what kind of thing we do. What matters is that we maximize good results. A popular theory of Consequentialism is the hedonistic utilitarianism, according to which we should always do whatever maximizes the balance of pleasure over pain for everyone affected by our action. Nonconsequentialism says that some kinds of actions are wrong in themselves and not just wrong because they have bad consequences. In other words, human actions can be absolutely right or wrong regardless of the result, which follow from them
2. Kant was convinced that no system of morality could reasonably be either thought or spoken about without the presupposition of freedom of will. Because no one can be held responsible for what he/she does unless he/she is able to do otherwise. The will refers to a faculty, potency or force in a person involved in decision making. An action can be moral if and only if its agent is free from all internal and external influences while deciding upon the course of it. The ability to be motivated by reason alone is called by Kant as the autonomy of the will. This free will is the seat of the moral principle, the *Categorical Imperative*, which has the characteristics of universality and objectivity.
3. Kant means by Categorical Imperative, a command that orders us to do something unconditionally – that is, regardless of what we want or what our aims and purposes are. According to Kant, we experience the principle of morality as Categorical Imperative. Kant's categorical imperative is *categorical* because it admits of no exceptions and is absolutely binding, inescapable. It is *imperative* because it gives instruction about how one ought to act and, thus, is a command. Kant captures the cream of his ethics in the form of a supreme norm that there is only one categorical imperative, namely this: *Act on that maxim whereby you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law*. This procedure of testing the morality by applying the categorical imperative in concrete consists always in finding out whether one can will his or her maxim (subjective) to become a universal law (objective) or not. That is to say, if what one does could be done by all rational beings, it is morally permissible and if not, it is not.
4. Kant as a deontologist maintains that human actions can be absolutely right or wrong regardless of the results, which follow from them. According to Kant, there is a fundamental connection between rationality and moral motivation. It is only duty from the motive of duty that can fetch moral worth. Only when an action done on the ground that it is right to do, it

deserves moral worth. Any right action done out of fear, pleasure, self-interest or some other reasons, is not moral. Kant emphasizes that the moral worth should come from the volition that precedes our actions. It is not the means or the ends that are the canons to decide whether an action is morally right or wrong but the volition or intention.

Answers to Check your progress II

1. Bentham demonstrates that pursuit of pleasure is the core of morality by an analysis of language. According to Bentham, the meaning of language or any word depends on our experience. In other words, any word can be meaningful only if it refers to something that can be experienced. What is real is only whatever we can experience, either through external and internal sensations. The former is possible through sight, smell, sound, taste and touch. The latter is possible through the feelings of pain and pleasure. Anything we think or talk without any reference to experience is unreal. Applying the method of analysis of language on the principles of Ethics, he said, the whole of ethics seems to be evolving around two concepts, 'good' and 'obligation'. If we clarify them, we will see that moral language is really about 'pleasure' and 'pain'. We all want, whatever is good. But 'good' can mean only 'pleasure and absence of pain' and this is all that 'happiness' can mean as well. The fictional name 'obligation' can refer only to some act we are directed to do, under the condition that if we fail to do it we will suffer some pain. So pleasure and pain are the realities underlying both 'obligation' and 'good, and the pursuit of pleasure must thus be the core of morality.
2. The principle of utility, is the basic tenet of the Utilitarian theory of ethics which states that the greatest happiness of all those whose interest is in question ought to be the end of human actions. The parties, whose interest in question may, of course, differ. If we are thinking of the individual agent as such, it is his/her greatest happiness which is referred to. If we are thinking of the community, it is the greater happiness of the greater possible number of the members of the community which is being referred to. Ethics is nothing else than the art of directing the actions of human beings so as to bring about the greatest possible happiness to all those are concerned with these actions. According to this principle an act is good or evil depending on its usefulness for producing pleasure or pain.
3. Hedonistic calculus is the criteria by which we can measure the quantity of pleasure involved in a human action. Bentham says that in examining the consequences of our actions, we can determine the quantity of pain and pleasure produced by them and thereby determine which of the options open to us would bring about the greatest balance of pleasure over pain. He tried to put the happiness theory on a quantitative or mathematical basis. We have to estimate the amount of pleasure and the amount of pain to which the action seems to give rise and to weigh the one against the other, while deciding whether a given action is right or wrong. Bentham provides a hedonistic calculus for this purpose. His method of calculation involves seven categories of pleasure such as intensity, duration, extent, propinquity, fecundity, purity and certainty. Through these categories, he believed we could calculate which course of action would produce the greatest amount of happiness, and therefore which one we ought morally to take.

UNIT 5 ETHICS IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

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5.0. OBJECTIVES

An overview of history of western ethics (which is a branch of philosophy), called “Moral Philosophy” as well, gives us an idea that there are at least five important epochs in the philosophical enterprise regarding moral matters. “Contemporary Western Ethics” is the fifth epoch; the objective of this paper is:

- to bring out the characteristic features of contemporary ethics

5.1. INTRODUCTION

First, there is early and rich *Greek Ethics* marked by Pre- Socratic, Socratic, Platonic, Aristotelian and Sophistic original thinking and writings. Furthered by some equally influential writings of some Hellenistic and Roman ethicists, the Cynic and the Cyrenaics and the Stoics in the main. And then after Epicurus’ Cyrenaicism, Plotinus was responsible for what we now call, “Neo-Platonism.” Contemporary ethics owes much to these early and rich ethical reflections, about which we shall come to know later on in the discussion.

Nothings less do we owe to the *Medical Moral* philosophy, especially to the ethical thinking and writings of some remarkably eloquent Christian ethicists like Augustine, Aquinas, Duns Scotus and William of Ockham. This paved way to what we may call, the third epoch, the Early Modern ethical epoch, growing particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries influenced by religious Reformation, and the scientific revolution of Copernicus and Galileo, Francis Bacon, Erasmus, Luther and Calvin, However the real modern turn came with the radical writings of Thomas Hobbes (1588 – 1679) and the Cambridge Platonists like, Cudworth, Cumberland, Malebranche. No less forceful were the views of Spinoza (1632 – 1677), Locke (1632 – 1704). Huge impact was made by the moral sense theories of Shaftesbury (1671 – 1713), Hume (1711 – 1776), Reid (1710 – 1796) and Richard Price (1723 – 1791). Then we reach the *Enlightenment* era in ethical thought, with the French and the German enlightenment, contributed tremendously

by Voltaire, Rousseau and Immanuel Kant. It was with Kant (1724 – 1804) that the signs of a *Modern Ethics* were visible, which is more or less the fourth epoch. The Nineteenth century ethics grew mainly owing to the works of the utilitarian, Bentham and Mill. Though another idealistic turn was marked by the writings of Fichte, Hegel and the radical ethicists like, Marx, and Nietzsche. However, idealists Schopenhauer and theistic existentialist Kierkegaard were no less souls. Gradually as times' tide progressed closer to the twentieth century with a new idealist and intuitionist call of some British ethicists like T.H. Green, Bernard Bosanquet, F. H. Bradley and Henry Sidgwick, do we really come to what we call The basic question is then, what are the distinctive features that mark "Contemporary Western Ethics"? We can enlist the following problems which were raised particularly after Sidgwick, i.e. after 1900:

What exactly should be done in moral philosophy?

What if any is the need for ethical monolithic norms?

Why should logico – linguistic concerns take precedence in moral philosophy?

Why should we not revive Aristotelian tradition of virtues and values?

Why should we show any practical interest in ethics?

5.2. DEFINITION

Contemporary ethical enterprise is an attempt to justify *de novo* that ethics as a branch of philosophy should have at least four important tasks, namely, the normative, the meta-ethical, the virtue ethical and the practical tasks.

5.3. NORMATIVE ETHICS: A NEW LOOK

Contemporary western ethics takes a fresh look at normative ethics because at the outset, a number of challenges in our times in ethics are against the old and repetitive normative ethics. It is old in the sense of its much abused style of inquiries and repetitive in the sense of moving in a circle of monolithic thinking, not really giving us anything new. For instance, the entire story of moral philosophy from the Greek to the modern times, has been the story of either teleological or deontological norms, each trying its best to show that one norm is *necessary and sufficient* basis for moral evaluation of human and institutional decisions and actions that are voluntary. Either we need to abide by a definite "purpose" or "teleos" while deciding and acting, that is, taking it as the one end of life or the only moral ideal; or, we need to abide by what is stated to be our "duty", and not purpose, which is merely accidental and external to what we decide and do. In this sense, the calls are: either our actions have external worth or they have an intrinsic worth. If our actions were extrinsically valuable, the deontologists (the latter view), argues that they are bereft of moral worth because only worthwhile thing is what is our "purpose". On the other hand, we need to respect what we do for its own sake or for its intrinsic worth. The teleologists (the former view), argues that bereft of purpose, all our intended actions are morally lackadaisical because doing our drab duties for their sake is to forget that calling 'duty' its own purpose is circular and vague. It is in these ways we moved through the ages, sometime inventing one norm as superior to other, for instance, we were either stuck to egoism, egotism, altruism, consequentialism, welfarism eudemonism, and later to pragmatism, existentialism, and so on. Or we were stuck to Kantian deontology or later to its various revisions, the act and the rule forms of deontology proposed by Carritt, Ross and others. Hence, the era preceding contemporary

normative ethics, is monolithic, the main line of justification being, and there is one norm or a *summum bonum* of our moral life.

There were immediate sceptical questions in contemporary ethics (as expressed above), because we gradually came to know that though teleological and deontological norms have half-truths, they were not needed as monolithic life goals or as exclusive standards for a wide range moral evaluations. The scepticism followed two ways: One way was more radical than the other. Some sceptics called for *normative relativism* and rejected any practical application of a norm or more norms in our real life. The other milder sceptics called for the same 'relativism' though not rejecting normative application if it followed an acceptable methodology for application. The first view was a contemporary attempt at establishing "normative ethical relativism", the main tone of which is to do away with "one norm" theories of the old ethics, though obliquely recognized the fragmented values of normative theories provided one keeps in mind that relative worth of these norms depend on several factors, social, economic, cultural, political and so on, and if one does not forget the truism that with time, our mindset changes. Interestingly, a number of contemporary ethicists of the Vienna Circle, such as R Carnap, A. J. Ayer, M. Schlik and Wittgenstein, called for "normative neutralism" and "pluralism" was unanimous about rejecting "normative application". These sceptical thinkers of the *logical positivist gharana*, toeing the positivist line of the sciences thought that philosophers *qua* philosophers should remain "normatively neutral" in so far as their task to the heart is language clarification of ethics, for the same reason philosophers should not apply ethical norms.

With this extreme non-normative stance in contemporary ethics, some other contributors in this field felt that though relativity of norms is a proven thesis, it is too hard to accept that philosophers as philosophers we need only to take logico-linguistic interest, and that normative interest along its application are non-philosophical. A numbers of contemporary writers taking logico-linguistic concern in ethics seriously thought that it is meaningful to inquire into the relative value of norms because it needed logic for their relative worth. Ethicist like W. K. Frankena and R. B. Brandt, for instance, despite deep logico-linguistic interests, inquired respectively into the possibility of a fresh set of norms is like *Beneficence* and *Political and Institutional norms*, which was reminder to a fresh look at breaking the barrier of thought raised owing to fact-value dichotomy. With this, in contemporary ethics, a number of norms, social, political, metaphysical were advocated, and their relative values assessed given the logic that were available to their supporters. This is also a reminder of breaking of ice that crystallized owing to our fateful fact-value debate. Needless to say that despite such interest meta-ethical interest of justification of norms was not sacrificed. Another interesting, turn to be noticed is that ethical application was not an unphilosophical affair for most of these thinkers. They were not neutral to application possibilities of norms in question in our real life. This brings ethics closer to life or a serious inquiry into the ways in which what should be done in life. Many conscious thinkers revived a type of "casuistic" method made famous in medieval Christian ethics. We shall come to it later on.

Check Your Progress I

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit:

1. What is the contemporary approach to normative monism?

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2. What is normative scepticism?

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3. What is contemporary normative relativism?

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5.4. META-ETHICS OR SECOND ORDER ETHICS

We have noticed that despite a long history of normative or first order ethics, contemporary ethics felt an urgency to lay more stress on meta-ethics or second order ethics. The “first order ethics” is so called for it was not only historically prior inquiry, rather it inquired into what was thought primary in ethics, that is, assessment of moral worth of our intended actions. The second order ethics is then, not secondary, rather, considered what lay beyond the first order of inquiry. And what lay beyond the first order inquiry is the whole gamut of “ethical language”, most evidently normative or evaluative in character, though, language containing elements of values, virtues and institutional decisions and actions were equally important. However, in contemporary ethics there have been animated debates whether a number of utterances to be found in the ethical parlance are truly "ethical" in nature. "Good", for instance, is an umbrella term, covering descriptive (factual) as well as evaluative (moral) functions and meanings, which needs to be clearly demarcated. "My car is good" and "Honesty is good" do not bear the same evaluative tone because the former is evaluation of an object based on its descriptions of mechanical properties, which could be observed and experimented, whereas the latter evaluates a virtue of humans, which cannot be observed and experimentally proved or disproved, and for that matter, does not need such justification at all. So the justification in favour of calling “car” a “good” is different from calling “honesty” a “good”. Hence, moral utterances need to be differentiated for a proper logico-linguistic analysis of truth and meaning from factual utterances, which is expected of meta-ethics.” However, as said before, there is a lot of debate regarding this is/ought question. One conclusion with which it is not difficult to agree is that *logically speaking*, that is, based on strict logical or formal rules; it is difficult to derive a fact from a value statement without an intervening factual statement, as well as to derive a value statement from a factual statement without an intervening value statement. Moreover, it is difficult to derive a fact from value or vice versa based on an assumed truth or predilection or blank presupposition.

But the stiffer debate is how to identify “a factual statement purely so called” and “a value statement purely so called”. There are evidences of statements appearing to be purely factual but

in essence, 'value-laden'. Hence, a number of so called facts related assertions are found to blur the boundary of fact value. This is why socio-political and legal assertions are value-laden, and many positivistic assertions are carriers of value. This is why there is little hesitation in imagining political ideals and ideologies as bases for moral judgments. And this is why normative pluralism transcends the old theories. Interestingly, contemporary ethics does not hesitate to evaluate the moral worth of the corporate and the government decisions and functions though they are not an individual's intention and action. We have moved from the thought that moral judgment is true of a human being on earth. Group morality is equally important. Hence, the private and the public, the individual and the collective intentions, decisions and actions are our objects of moral judgement.

However, the Is/Ought duality debate appears at another point for meta-ethical inquiry, again related to normative inquiry. As was said before, norms beg justification for they are not our predilections. However, we justify a moral norm logically based on facts; there is a fallacy of deducing a value from a fact. In the similar fashion, meta-ethicists of contemporary times like G.E. Moore, argued that if clarification of meaning of moral language is so important, one cannot without a blatant "naturalistic fallacy" *logically define* moral terms like "good", "bad", "right", "wrong" and many more. The reason is that any logical definition falls back on defining by equivalent natural or factual or metaphysical terms, which cannot be the case. How can an ethical term which is a simple, non-natural, undefinable concept be equivalent in import to complex, natural, definable concept? Any confusion like this is again confusing a value for a fact. This, Moore learnt from Plato (also Socrates), that "justice" is naturalistically undefinable (cf. *The Republic*). Hence, neither can we logically define moral terms, nor can we logically justify moral premise based on factual premise.

Although contemporary ethicists started a logical inquiry into ethical language and justification in this way, they were quickly challenged. This is the liberal spirit of contemporary ethics, which moved miles away from the feudal, obstinate and orthodox linear thinking of the old medieval and even modern ethics. Thinkers like W. K. Frankena, R. C. Cross and A. D. Woozley argued that "naturalistic fallacy" as a *definist fallacy* if a moral term has been "logically defined". However, in a number of normative and value related discussions, moral terms are not logically defined at all because no one has ruled out the possibility of their *non-logical definitions* or *explanations* for clarification of meaning. Hence, there are hardly noticeable naturalistic fallacies in ethics; the fallacy is nevertheless, a reminder to minds tending to move to this fallacy. Similarly, proving and justifications are different. If we cannot logically prove several ethical conclusions or a majority of moral theories, no one has really prevented us from justifying them *non-logically*, such as "persuasively" and "heuristically".

Further, meta-ethicists consider moral language as such for their truth and meaning. In contemporary ethics we care for clear criteria for truth and meaning of moral assertions. This was by far not systematically dealt in earlier ethics, though no way it has suddenly popped up owing to fertile imagination of some contemporary genius like Ayer or Moore or Wittgenstein. Contemporary ethicists followed two major lines with regards to justification and meaning of ethical language, where 'ethical language' has been more or less taken as the language pertaining to ethics or the one that clearly deals with moral values and value judgments. The cognitivists including the *naturalists*, *non – naturalists* and *metaphysical moralists* justify the

truth of moral assertions based on the “cognition” of what has been asserted by means of either sense experience (*naturalists*) or intuitive experience (*non-naturalists*) or by means of spiritual/metaphysical experience (*metaphysical moralists*). The cognitivists are divided partly because they debated over the basis of justification. The naturalists for justification translate all ethical assertions to factual assertions without any distortion in meaning, and hold that like all factual assertions, ethical statements are to be justified based on observation and experiment of facts. Hence, “X is good” is true because “good” is translatable to what one ‘desires’, “wishes”, “likes”, “approves” and so on, thus *describing* the speaker’s psychological state of affairs or *describing* one’s feeling and emotions about “X”, which is evidently true as a matter of fact. This theory is a “descriptive theory of meaning” supported by Hume, Westermarck, utilitarians, Russell, Perry and other naturalists in contemporary ethics.

We can now consider the ‘metaphysical’ position. The only difference with the naturalists is that unlike naturalists, metaphysical moralists translate moral assertions to “metaphysical/spiritual assertions” for justification and meaning. This is another “descriptive” theory, though the description offered is not in nature, and therefore, not sense experienced. Nevertheless, the justification owes to our queer spiritual disposition to know distinctly and clearly the truth of moral assertions as we know all religious assertion to be true. In this sense, “X is good” amounts to “X is what is loved by God”, which is true in so far as we have this unique experience not really intuitively but through our “spiritual experiential disposition”. In our times Barth, Brunner, Muirhead are among important ethicists who take this line.

G. E. Moore on the other hand criticizes both views in *Principia Ethica* because the naturalistic theory confuses ethical statements as descriptive statements. On the other hand, the ethical statements are *non-natural* statements because they do not describe any object or state of affairs whether natural or metaphysical. Hence, ethical assertions can be justified for truth and meaning based on direct cognition enabled by our intuitive disposition. They are thus “intuitive assertions”, not really describing anything. Rather, they reveal what comes to us as distinct ideas. But what this queer “faculty” really is, one is not sure. Is it a rational faculty or a non-rational faculty? And what is the source for the universality of the established truth?

Looking at the several problems that both the naturalists and the intuitionists face, the *non-cognitivists* in the contemporary times pointed out a major truth which we were unaware of. The point is when we find ethical assertions, they are not combination of letters, and they are spoken and/or written words used meaningfully by a speaker to a hearer. If we miss this speaker– hearer situation in moral language, we miss the functional aspect of the said language and any language for that matter is not inert, it is dynamic, it serves human purpose. If this be true, it is useless to harp on what language describes or how we can intuit truth. It is more important to know what purpose moral or any language serves. Coming to this, contemporary emotivists like A.J. Ayer said that moral assertions do not have a truth value as factual statements have because they are pseudo-statement or rather, pseudo – factual assertions. Moral statements are neither about the world nor about describing our feelings and emotions, nor are they intuitive non-natural truths. Moral assertions are “expressive”, that is, they *express our emotions*. Moral statements are thus emotively meaningful, and that truth is a plain matter of finding display of our emotions in real life moral discourses. However, Ayer said that such emotive statements are not about real moral agreements or disagreements because emotions do not beg for logical or rational justifications.

This was opposed by C. L. Stevenson, a later emotivist, who thought that moral assertions are real life agreements and disagreements about matters pertaining to moral intentions and actions, and we can, and should provide some justifications or arguments at least in the favour of what is expressed. Though, emotive expressions are not subject of rational arguments. But we can provide *psychological arguments* or *persuasive arguments* to justify what has been asserted. This is so because moral assertions are in the main *emotive* exhortations, and *descriptive* of the properties of something about which emotions are expressed. Moreover, we need to persuade the disagreeing person to see the truth that for the evident properties or worth, such and such thing is of moral worth.

This was further rejected by R. M. Hare on three major counts: First, he said that moral assertions far from being emotive exhortations and non-rational, are *prescriptive assertions* for they “prescribe” what we “ought” to do or what should be a moral course in life. Hence, “X is good” is not a mere emotive outburst; it is prescription to someone to follow a moral course in life. Second, Hare is of the opinion that moral assertions are *universalizable*, and therefore, not isolated relative truths depending on one’s state of mind or what one expresses. Finally, such moral assertions demand *rational justification* and not persuasion or any psychological justification. Nevertheless, in contemporary times meta-ethics progressed further with a number of thinkers like P. H. Nowell- Smith and the adherents of Ryle – Wittgenstein – Austin tradition in linguistic philosophy. Hare was particularly charged for coming so close and forget what the “use theory” and the other “functionalist” theories advocated about meaning and justification of moral language. In fact, the use of moral words in moral contexts that gives us a gamut of moral statement is not one, there is no fixity as the theory goes – it is rather multifunctional or “janus headed” (Nowell- Smith). This rules out any monistic tendency, whether emotivist or prescriptivist in finding out its meaning. Though this approach finds a number of supporters in metaethics, we have in contemporary times *the good- reasons approach* of S. Toulmin, Kurt Baier, Kai Nielson and many others, who thought that the best representation of the later Wittgenstein theory was to find out “good reasons” in favour of ethical assertions, and to do so is to be reminded of the description, connotative, performative, and other uses of ethical utterances. Without trying to bridge the gap of the moral and the non-moral assertions (because they are so evidently distinct), these thinkers banked on the several performances moral language is capable of to unravel its meaning. But the point is, whether normative and/or meta-ethical inquiries were sufficient for a moral philosophy. This takes us to questions regarding ethical values and virtues, and practical application of ethics.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit:

1. What is the position of the ethical naturalists?

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2. What do the emotivists argue?

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3. What are contemporary post- emotivist positions in meta- ethics?

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5.5. VIRTUE ETHICS: THE ARISTOTELIAN REVIVAL

In a seminal essay Ms. G. E. M. Anscombe inquired whether modern moral philosophy needs a shake up for being too overloaded with theoretical churning. Put in another way, some contemporary thinkers worried of theory-ladenness of ethics and wanted to get rid of it to inquire whether ethics was all good to read and no good to live a virtuous life. Is it not out of way to imagine that moral philosophy, if it pertains to moral matters, be engrossed in language analysis and not in the values and virtues that humans should possess so that a good life is lived on earth? This is exactly the most troubling question for an ethicist called Aristotle, whose revival was badly needed in moral philosophy, thought Anscombe. Thus the Aristotelian revival came with “virtue or value based ethics”, or simply, “virtue ethics”. This was looked upon by many as “anti-theoreticism” and “anti-normativism” or moving away from theory to consider, “being good”. What exactly are the dispositions cultivating which amounts to “being good”? There may be many, most importantly, the *traits of character* and the *traits of duty*. “Deontic traits” and “aretaic traits or virtues” are most important for “being good”. Such moral men if infested our world will cause moral cleansing of the already burdened world of vices due to human follies. Hence, it is needless asking what ideals or rules should we follow. It is more important to find out what values should we cultivate. In contemporary ethics, there are other classifications of virtue ethics, the most important ones are: *Agent focussed*, *Agent based*, *Agent prior* virtue ethics. The first concentrates on a moral agent and asks for the inculcation of *virtues most needed*, whether deontic or aretaic or both (cf. Swanton). The second concentrates more on *human beings as such* and inquires about the core of life which demands inculcation of virtues that are essential to it (cf. James Martineau). Whereas the last one concentrates more on the inculcation of such virtues which are most needed for humans for their holistic well being (cf. Rosalind Hursthouse). However in our times there is a debate whether virtue ethics can be sensible without theoretical concerns (both normative and meta-ethical). First, we must know the meaning of “virtue” and “value” and their types. Second, anti-theoretic stance itself needs a logical justification (which is a meta-ethical problem). Then we need to know that calling virtue by a name, demands on what basis we call it by that name. If I call “honesty” a virtue, we need to ask: On what basis is “honesty” a virtue? Thus we speak of a norm for calling “honesty” a virtue. Now, if we say that “self-fulfilment” is basic to call “honesty” a virtue, and then we need to ask, without being honest first of all, how self-fulfilment is realizable? This takes us to the

contemporary debate to conceive of a virtue ethics with normative and meta-ethical theoreticism — it is thus “return to theory”.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit:

1. Why is virtue ethics referred to Aristotelian revival?

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2. What are the contemporary classifications of virtue?

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3. What is contemporary reply to anti-theoreticism?

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5.6. PRACTICAL ETHICS: FORGOTTEN PAST UNEARTHED

It is strange thinks many contemporary ethicists to try and discover what is right below our nose. If it is true that virtues are extremely important in ethical discussion, can application of ethics be far behind? The point has been already raised by us when Anscombe asked obliquely whether ethics is so glorious without doing something worthwhile. The simple answer should be in the negative, think many ethicists, who do not support application of ethics or practice of ethics. The problems are, what should be applied in ethics and how? The remarkable feature of contemporary ethics is not that it stresses on ethical application but answers what is applied and how. Again this is a revival of Greek ethics of the Aristotelian trend in particular but much different from the methodology of “golden mean” or Socratic dialogue or the sophist mechanics. It is different from the casuistry of the medieval Christian fathers. The first point is that either standard *ethical theories* (deontology and teleology) should be *applied by ethicists*, or, *ethical experience and knowledge* of sane, grown up individuals need to be applied wherein professional philosophers take a lead or any other competent party, does so in a *theory neutral* way. The first model for ethical application, a mistaken one, it is relatively older among contemporary application models. It is nothing but relic of old mechanics, sophistry and casuistry. We can call it a ‘theory guided’ and ‘Chauvinistic’ model for ethical application, which has to give up its cause for a number of mistakes noted by Caplan, James Brown, David Callahan and others. They call it “Sophistic”, “artificial”, “casuistic and chauvinist” because ethicists assume the role of all powerful ethical angels by virtue of ethical wisdom that they have (much like Plato’s Philosopher Kings), to consider value-laden practical problems of urgency and work in isolation as experts pulling out right tools for mending mechanical defects, and then prescribing moral

dictates or do's and don'ts, which problem ridden ethics-less ordinary people should follow. This is what Sophists did (sophistry) or what casuists did (Casuistry) in isolation, and what in our times Bradley, Sidgwick, and many others nourished. Even anti-practical ethicists like the positivists and later Wittgenstein thought that practical ethics is an ethical abuse just because it is sophistry and/or casuistry.

Contemporary ethicists, a number of them, argue against such “mechanics of duty” of artificiality in ethical application, which is “chauvinistic” because ethics bosses apply norms from the top. Rather, there is a “bottom down” approach or a model for application that rightly answers what needs to be applied, and how. It is argued that for ethical application we need moral debates amounting to a moral closure leading to formulation of relatively valuable set of decision making cues regarding value-laden practical problems of social urgency. The moral debates should be initiated and moderated by any interested party who is well versed in the practical problem in consideration and its aspects of value. Ethicists, whether professional philosophers or others who are trained in this field, are a better choice for some reasons: First, they can select moral debates fairly well; second, they can construct people friendly non-structuralist questions for debate; third, they can remain theoretically non-bossing while debates go on, and finally, they are best placed to analyse moral debates, find out the closure points and contribute academically to let us know which moral theory of theories were in interplay in debates and which gained prominence in a closure. This is a non-theory laden approach, which nevertheless, is not blind to academic interest of post-corroboration analysis of moral debates. The model is best referred to as “intersubjective corroboration”. The theory/anti-theory debate is taken care of as practical ethics is not application of moral theories, rather application of “common moral experience and knowledge” for moral resolutions. Nevertheless, post-corroboration analysis of dialogues reveals normative dynamics, which is a return to theory.

In contemporary western ethics application of the moral experiences of professionals of different fields for moral crises resolution has gained prominence, which is called “professional ethics”. It covers a broad field, ecological, biological, medical, educational, economic, business, management, administration, as well as social, political and legal fields. It covers mass media, communication and many other fields like sports. The reason is that in different professional fields, with the passage of time, a number of value-crises crops up. The professionals are worried to settle them following a moral methodology. We thus have environmental ethics, bioethics and much such ethical discussion in our times.

Check Your Progress IV

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answer with those provided at the end of the unit:
1. What practical ethics is not?

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2. What is intersubjective corroboration?

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3. What is professional ethics?

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5.7. LET US SUM UP

It is encouraging to note that contemporary ethics possesses dynamicity, it does not cling any more to one or two standard functions. Since 1900 ethics has been changing. We now discuss about the use of “empirical ethics” as well, which is partly empirical field work based study of moral opinions followed up by empirical data, which are further analysed for several moral conclusions. Further, there is a feminist turn in ethics and ethics of care. Ethics in contemporary epoch is thus coming closer to social scientific vocation and is set to be the most rapidly growing interdisciplinary aspect of philosophy. Ethics is no more the same cafeteria philosophy of norms and the language churning by intellectual.

5.8. KEY WORDS

Normative or First order ethics: Deals with one or more standard or standards for the evaluation of the moral worth of intended human as well as institutional actions. Also evaluates individual and collective dispositions, virtues and values. First order is indicative of both historical priority of the discourse as well as the primacy of the same.

Meta-ethics or second order ethics: Deals with one or more justification or justifications which might be strictly logical as well as non- logical in nature in favour of normative theories. It also deals the truth and meaning of ethical terms such as good, right, just and many more. It is second order with regard to the follow up analysis of first order inquiry though completely transcending it in terms of linguistic and logical inquiries.

Virtue ethics: The ancient Greek and particularly Aristotle’s interest in basic human virtues that is expected of man qua man or by virtue of being a human. In contemporary ethics, its revival is a thorough analysis of meaning, nature, kinds and importance of virtues in humans, and ways they might be inculcated.

Practical ethics: The nature of practical ethics depends on what is practiced in ethics and how. In contemporary ethics it is a bottom down method to resolve value-laden practical problems in the world we live in. The method is intersubjective corroboration in which problems are resolved through collective moral debates followed by moral consensus, decision making rules and post-corroboration analysis of moral debates to unravel the role and relative value of normative theories.

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5.10. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Normative ethical monism support verity of a particular ethical norm like deontology or teleology while rejecting the usefulness of a number of norms.
2. Normative ethical scepticism does not support the verity of any absolute ethical norm either because normative standards are never eternal, they depend on many changing circumstance or because ethicist have nothing to do with norms, they should take analytic task more seriously.
3. Normative ethical relativism justifies that any ethical norm is not sacred as the value of each of these norm are dependent on several circumstances such as social, economic, political and so on. Hence, there is no objectively valuable standard of morality; morality is relative in our societies.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Ethical naturalism holds that ethical assertions for their meaning and truth should be translated to natural assertions such as the psychological description of our feelings, emotions because only in that way we come to know empirically what has been really meant by the asserter.
2. Ethical emotivism argues that ethical assertions do not describe anything, and are meaningful; they are rather, expressions of the favourable and unfavourable emotions of the asserter.
3. Ethical prescriptivism and the good reasons approach are the major post- emotive theories. Prescriptivists argue that ethical assertions are prescriptions about a way of moral life. The good reasons approach argues that for understanding the meaning and truth of moral assertions, we should look at the several good reasons that we have for their meaningful use in moral contexts. Hence, the multiple performatives of ethical assertions clarify their meaning.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. Virtue ethics is referred to as "Aristotelian revival" because this ethical trend made a strong come back after it was discovered that basic human virtues were essential for following a moral goal, which was stressed by Aristotle and his predecessors. However, it was Aristotle who considered at length a number of cardinal and other virtues for inculcation in humans.

2. Contemporary ethicists classify virtue ethics in terms of primacy of virtues, whether that is aretaic or deontic. Further, keeping moral agents in mind, we have agent focussed, agent based and agent prior virtue ethics.

3. Some contemporary critics of virtue ethics hold that it is illogical to call virtue ethics anti-normative or anti- theoretic because without reference to a particular norm it is impossible to call something a virtue. Similarly, it is useless to have norms without having a basic virtue to pursue them.

Answers to Check Your Progress IV

1. Practical ethics is not artificial application of one or more normative theories as absolutely true by the ethicists, and others are merely left to follow them. It is also not casuistic application of theistic ethics by the moralists. Hence, it is not “from the up” or chauvinism of ethicists and moralists.

2. Inter-subjective corroboration is a ‘bottom down’ model for the application of ethics which speaks of resolution of ethical problems by collective application of our moral experience and moral knowledge through moral dialogues and subsequent corroboration of our views.

3. Professional ethics is consideration of several theoretical problems of justification, conceptual analysis and methodological issues in the resolution of a number of value- laden moral problems that professionals face in social life.



BLOCK-2 INTRODUCTION

The present Block, “Perspectives in Ethics: Indian,” presents a compelling, systematic explication of the moral philosophical content of history of Indian philosophy in contrast to the generally held view that Indian philosophers were scarcely interested in ethics. This block makes a case for the positive place of ethics in the history of Indian philosophy by drawing upon recent work in meta-ethics, and by providing a thorough analysis of the meaning of moral concepts and philosophy itself. Indian philosophy shines with distinct perspectives in ethics that find their likeness in the writings of the Western philosophers, despite the great dissimilarities in their specific approaches and varying methods. The present block with 4 units makes a brief survey of important ethical perspectives in Indian philosophy.

Unit 1, “Ethics in Ancient Philosophy,” explains that the beginnings of ethical reflections in India can be traced back to the ancient body of oral literature called Veda. This was compiled and divided into Rg-Veda, Sama Veda, Yajur-Veda, and Atharva-Veda. Apart from hymns to nature-gods and recipes for rituals each Veda contained moral reflections which were later collected into Upanishads. In addition to these texts, Tiruvalluvar’s Thirukkural contains in nutshell much of the ethical wisdom of the ancients.

Unit 2, “Ethics in Medieval Philosophy,” aims at understanding the ethical teachings of Medieval Indian philosophy found mostly in the literature of the period that reflect the social, economic and political conditions of the respective time. A sweeping change in ethical life over a period of time is not only a historical impact governed by time principle but also a geographical impact governed by region based customs and practices.

Unit 3, “Ethics in Modern Philosophy,” exposes you to ethics in modern Indian philosophy. In this unit you understand that ethical and religious concepts were very much influenced by the radical reformation movements of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They tried to reinterpret the traditional values in the light of modern and western thinking.

Unit 4 is on “Ethics in Contemporary Philosophy.” Among those who deserve mention for their original contributions to contemporary Indian philosophy in general and ethics in particular are Sri Aurobindo, Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore, Sir Muhammed Iqbal, K.C. Bhattacharyya, and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. Of these, Sri Aurobindo was first a political activist and then a yogin, Tagore and Iqbal poets, Gandhi a political and social leader, and only Radhakrishnan and Bhattacharyya university professors.

The present Block makes a case for the positive place of ethics in the history of Indian philosophy. The beginnings of ethical reflections in India can be traced back to the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Thirukkural, and the literature that followed. The ethical concepts were also very much influenced by the radical reformation movements of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and the thoughts of the contemporary Indian thinkers.

UNIT 1

ETHICS IN ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Contents

- 1.0. Objectives
- 1.1. Introduction
- 1.2. Vedas
- 1.3. Upanishads
- 1.4. Jainism
- 1.5. Buddhism
- 1.6. Let Us Sum Up
- 1.7. Key Words
- 1.8. Further Readings and References
- 1.9. Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0. OBJECTIVES

Ethics is a code of conduct or a set of belief which distinguishes between 'good and bad' behaviour in a descriptive use, which is arbitrary and subjective created by philosophers, religion or individual conscience. Ethics examines the general character or habit of mankind which involves description or history of human in a particular society of different period. This can be noticed and studied as one goes along the ancient history of Indian philosophies – Vedas, Upanishads, Jainism and Buddhism. In this unit you are expected to understand:

- Ethical teachings of the Vedas
- 'Truth' and self-realization' in the Upanishads
- Non-violence and its significance in Jainism
- Attainment of enlightenment in Buddhism

1.1. INTRODUCTION

In India, at the beginning, there was no distinction between religion and philosophy. The main aim of philosophy was a quest for values. That being the reason, Indian philosophy maintained a close relationship with religion. Added to it, the intellectual curiosity and wondrous ambition to realize the highest values of life was the reason for the philosophical search. The life had to be lived with moral principle. That was a must and could not 'stay put' in the moral realm of claims but must go beyond to the higher region of divisionless, inspiring experience from which morality derives its sanctions and values. So, Philosophers worked with both 'trans-logical' and 'super-moral'. Philosophy understood that wealth (artha) and pleasure (kama) were not opposite of righteousness (dharma).

1.2. VEDAS

The religion, philosophy, ritualistic practices, civic conduct and even social relationship are guided by certain codes which are known as Smritis, and they are based on the sacred sanction of the Vedic authority. The Vedas differentiate the fruit attained by Karma and Jnana, two factors in the spiritual progress of the man. Karma is connected to the world immediately above the one where men live. Jnana is connected to world farther away, an abode of Gods.

Jnana is considered as mysterious knowledge. It is said that Indra taught this knowledge to Dadhyac. In Vedas the rishis evolve a highly complicated system of philosophy and highlight the value of Jnana as a means to attain highest abode (heaven) after death. Through Jnana the soul gets into the state of bliss. But the bliss state is not permanent as the soul sooner or later changes its abode. "Indian doctrine of transmigration and Karma, the consequence of the way one led their life affected the next stage: had a humble beginning in the primitive way but even at this early period, contained an ethical content and had attained some degree of elaboration," wrote A. L. Basham in his book, "The Wonder that was India".

The Vedic rishis do not consider this world as an evil one. There is no indication that man must strive for a salvation. The rishis sang in elaboration the glory of the next world after death. But that does not mean they fought shy of this world. This world is a good world, with blessing of the Gods; it is a sort of sojourn. This world is a place for virtuous people, a stepping stone to aim to the higher one. There is no pessimism either on religion or in its philosophy.

There is no conflicting discussions regarding the past, present or future actions. There is no conflict between Dharma, Artha and Kama. Man's life is looked as harmonious. The entire life of a man has a single objective to be good.

Vedic people lived close to the nature. They looked at nature in awe and devotion and experienced the divinity of nature. They composed greatest Vedic mantras. And each chanting ended with a request for blessing.

In the Rv X.34 book, hymn on "Gambler" is highly illuminating. The gambler is unhappy about his gambling and regrets for losing the love of his family and being in debt. But he can not resist the sound of the dice and goes to the gambling house. Hymn advises how to live a virtuous life –
"Play not with dice; ply thy tillage; rejoice in thy property,
thinking much of it; there are thy cattle.
O gambler, there thy wife,
this Savitr here, the noble, reveals to me" (13)

The Veda hymns on sacrificial is a part of exchange: in the sense the worshippers gladden the deities to receive rewards for the offering. The attitude of the worshipper is not the one of the extreme modesty or deep emotion instead one of the relationship of a friend, but with full reverence towards the maker of the universe. The purpose is of analogous in character to the end in view.

1.3. UPANISHADS

Upanishads are both religion and philosophy. As a religion it discovers the truth of the inner world and understands the significance of the divinity of life. As a philosophy, it synthesizes the science of inner world with outer world bring about the unification of understanding of total reality and the effect on the human life and character, depth of faith and vision along with breath of outlook and sympathy.

Understanding of the Brahman is the center theme of the Upanishads. It is the "Truth of truth". "As the spider moves along the thread, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this 'Self' come forth all breaths, all world, all divinities, all beings. Its secret meaning is the truth, of truth. Vital breaths are the truth and their truth is **It (Self)**." (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II, 1.20) Both Brhadaranyaka and Maitri highlight that all knowledge and wisdom are the breath of the eternal Brahman. All the ethical knowledge from the Vedas, Upanishads, ancient lore, science verses, legendary stories, aphorism, explanations and commentary came out from the great reality "mahad – bhutam" from Brahman. They came out as easily and effortlessly as the breath. This alone is "Satasya satyam iti" (Maitri Upanishad VI. 32), the truth of the truth, empirical existence is the truth; the underlying truth of the Self.

Upanishads claim the salvation is by knowledge or realization rather than by faith and work. The ethics is basically pragmatic. All human emotions are the part of Brahman but in relative term only. The seeker realizes the 'truth' that the good which takes him to Brahman and bad is the reverse of it.

"There are three branches of duty, sacrifice, study and charity - Austerity, indeed, is the first. The second is the pursuit of sacred wisdom, dwelling in the house of the teacher. Absolutely controlling his body in the house of the teacher is the third. All these attain to the worlds of the virtuous. He who stands firm in Brahman attains life eternal." (Chandogya Upanishad II, 23. 1)

The difference between the good and the bad is discussed in Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, "He who knows (the mystery of Brahman) become calm, restrained, satisfied, patient and confident and he sees himself in the (great) self, sees all things as self ... evil does not overcome him but he overcomes the evil Free from the evil, free from decay, free from hatred, free from thirst, he becomes a (true) Brahman" (IV – 4- 23)

The realization of Brahman is possible for all set of people. Many kings realized the Self. A servant's son Satyakama could get a teacher as his intention was pure and honest.

"I don't know my family, sir" Satyakama answered when asked about his family," I asked my mother and she said that she had me in the youth, when she used to travel about a lot as a servant She said that as she was Jabala and I was Satyakama, I was to give my name as Satyakama Jabala."

"Nobody but a true Brahmana would be so honest, " the teacher said, " go and fetch me fuel, my friend and I will initiate you for you have not swerved from the truth." (Chandogya Upanishad IV, 4)

Upanishads do not take away the previous belief of rites and rituals but substitute them to meditation and introspection. In Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, the Ashvamedha sacrifice, horse is

meditated as a symbol of universe, “The head is the dawn, whose eyes is the Sun ... whose back is the heaven (1. 1. 1.)

The common sacrificial fire is visualized as extraordinary fires beginning from heaven which has, “The Sun as a fuel, solar rays as its smoke, the moon as its cinder ...” (Chanadogya Upanishad V. 4.1.) the purpose of such visualization is to gradually withdraw the seeker’s mind from the external things and direct it to inward, to be contemplative, so that he may get rid of his dependency on the objective world. The principle is to mould a man to perfection. Take him from ignorance to wisdom to comprehend the ‘Ultimate Truth’ of life.

“The fundamental object of spiritual life has always been same, although emphasis has been laid upon different approaches and disciplines. And it must be so, for the approach to ‘Truth’ must suit the psychic make – up of a being and unless there is the capacity and patience to continue the search up to the end” has written Mahadranatha Sircar in his essay on “Mystical Approach in the Upanishads”.

In the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad, Prajapati, the Guru taught his disciples – God, Man and Demon. After the completion of the education; while leaving the Guru, all the three asked for the last spiritual advice. The Guru said one sound “Da”. When inquired what they understood by the sound, God, Man and Demon gave three different interpretations, according to their psychic. God responded that it was Damyata (be self - controlled), Man understood it as Datta, (give), Demon analyzed it as Dayadhvam (be merciful)

The process of attaining wisdom is a difficult one. The one whose mind is filled with material care and desire, one who is given himself up to pleasure can not peruse in the path of knowledge. But, one who lives a virtuous life can understand the ‘Self’.

“.....

“Now, what do you see?”

“Nothing, Sir.”

“My son,” the father said, “what you do not perceive is the essence, and in the essence the mighty banyan tree exists. Believe me, my son, in that essence is the self of all that is. That is the ‘Truth’, that is the ‘Self’. And you are that Self, Svetaketu.” (Chandogya Upanishad VI. 12)

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How did Vedic philosophy depict ‘Ethics’?

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2) What are ‘Truth’ and ‘Brahman’ in the Upanishads?

1.4. JAINISM

“The Jain claims a great antiquity for their religion”, writes Hiralal Jain, “their earliest prophet was Rsbhadeva, who is mentioned even in the Vishnu and Bhagavata Puranas as belonging to the remote past.” Jainism even thought existed at the time of Vedas but followed non – violence as one of its strong principle as against animal sacrifice followed by Vedic people. Jainism teaches strict self discipline as a path of salvation. Mahavira the 24th Tirthankara, admitted all aspirants irrespective of caste and gender and started a system of peaceful proselytization. Because of him his followers are spread across the whole country.

The whole of Jainism ethics revolve around Ahimsa and Karma. Saman Suttam of Jinendra Varni preaches, “Nothing which breaths, which exists, which lives or which has essence or potential of life, should be destroyed or ruled over, or subjugated, or harmed, or denied of its essence or potential.

In support to the truth, I ask you a question – “Is sorrow or pain desirable to you?” if you say “Yes it is”, it would be a lie. If you say, “No, it is not,” you will be expressing the truth. Just as sorrow or pain is not desirable to you, so it is to all which breathe, exist, live or have any essence of life. To you and all, it is undesirable, and painful, and repugnant.”

Jainism is a quest on self – effort in progress the soul on the spiritual ladder to divine consciousness. When the soul shed downs its karmic bonds completely, it attains divine consciousness. Moksha marga (path of salvation) is the main objective of a Jain. To attain the salvation one must have Samyak darshan (right faith), Samyak Jnana (right knowledge) and samyak charitra (right conduct). These are Ratnatraya (the three jewels). The three jewels are the combination of Bhakti marga of Bhagavata, Jnana marga of Vedanta and Karma marga of Mimamsakas. Jainism preaches that Bhakti, Jnana and Karma co – exist in a person. They work like a medicine to cure a sick mind– faith in its efficacy, knowledge by its use and actual taking of the medicine, right conduct. One’s main objective in life is to release one self from the suffering soul in the web of universal samsaric misery.

Jains follow the “Jina” (conqueror). Jinas are spiritually advanced human beings who have rediscovered the Dharma.

There are Ethical principles for a householder and stricter rules for a sanyasin, monks. But both adherently had to follow Ahimsa. The path of righteousness or Dharma is the combination of Ratnatrya and Ahimsa. Dharma is incomplete if any one is wanting.

There are fundamental five vows for both householder and monks–

He shall not do violence to other living beings - Ahimsa

He shall speak the truth – Satya.

He shall not commit theft – Asteya.

He shall not commit adultery - Brahmacharya.

He shall not greed for the worldly possession - Aparigraha.

1. Ahimsa is non – violence. To understand Non – violence, one must know, what is violence? Injuring and hurting other living creatures is violence. Jainism emphasizes on equality to all life, whether the creatures are big or small. So, Killing a big or a small living being is violence, hurting others physically or in speech is violence. Intentionally insulting and make others suffer emotionally is violence. Opposite of violence is non – violence. A householder can not lead a life without violence. Therefore, one is recommended to discharge his worldly responsibilities with the minimum injuries to others. But killing animals for eating is strictly prohibited. No one should kill for gain.

2. What is Truth, satya? Truth is to say what one has seen or heard. Truth is justice. One should not hesitate to tell the truth even when his/her life is in danger. But at the same time; if the truth results in bring harm to others in such case the truth should be withheld in the interest of the others. There is a Sanskrit Subhasita – “Satyam bruyath, priyam bruyath, na bruyath satyam apriyam”, (say the truth, say what is pleasing to hear but do not say injurious truth).

3. The third one is; do not **steal, asteya**. Stealing has various dimensions such as – a. stealing others property,
b. direct others to steal,
c. receiving stolen property
d. cheating in measure,
e. retain things with a motto ‘finders keepers’.

4. The fourth one is not to commit **adultery, brahmacharya**. A married person must not look at women with an evil intention. Treat opposite sex with respect.

5. The fifth and last one is not to **amass wealth greedily, aparigraha**. Each householder needs money to have a decent life. But ambitious accumulation of wealth without satisfaction, leads to great karmic action, resulting in suffering and unhappiness. To lessen the karmic and samsaric bandage, one must have limited necessity and be content.

Jainism does not believe in an Omnipotent Supreme Being, Creator or Manager (karaka) but believes in Universe, governed by natural laws. Jainism warns the householders not to have superstitious ignorance, mudas – loka muda, deva muda and pasandi muda. It is advised not to perform rites and rituals to please Gods to attain their blessings. To achieve salvation through righteousness Jainism advocates to give up eight arrogances–

possession of intelligence,
temple worship,
noble family,
caste,
physical and mental strength,
magical power,
tapas and yoga,

beauty of one's person. Giving up arrogance lightens and purifies the mind and heart. Makes one humble and pure. Leads to the path of divine consciousness.

Among all the living beings, Jainism values human life as a gift and a rare opportunity to reach enlightenment.

There are two types of monks, monks in white dress – Swathambaras and monks without cloth – Digambaras. Ethical codes for the monks are stricter and harder. Monks can not stay in one place for a long period of time. The body and mind are trained to endure the nature – cold, heat, rain, storm, hunger, thirst, mosquito bites, and such. By their aesthetic and virtuous life, purifying mind and body they attain Jina hood.

1.5. BUDDHISM

Buddhism like other Indian Philosophies hold the view that 'Samsara' and Avidya' (ignorance) are the two that one need to escape from. The 'Kama' (desire) is the root cause of bandage. The moment "Mara" the evil leaves, one will be enlightened. Ethics of Buddhism is traditionally based on what Buddhist saw as the enlightened perspective of the Buddha or other enlightened souls. So, the scholars look at the Buddhist scriptures and make use of the anthropological evidences from the traditional Buddhist societies.

The ethical principles are at various degrees depending on the individual capability, there are no hard and fast rules. There are rules for a layman, and to those who wants to practice strictly and to a monk and nun.

For the layman it is simple 'Panca Silani' five precepts. The English translation to the Pali text is

"I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking the life.

I undertake the training rule to abstain from taking what is not given

I undertake the training to abstain from sexual misconduct

I undertake the training to abstain from false speech.

I undertake the training rule to abstain from fermented drink that causes heedlessness."

The main precept are non – violence and non – injury. To a certain extent Buddhism and Jainism propound similar view regarding non – violence. About killing and punishing others physically it is said in chapter 10 of Darmapada, "Everyone fears punishment; everyone fears death, just like you do. Therefore do not kill or cause to kill. Everyone fears punishment; everyone loves life, as you do. Therefore do not kill or cause to kill." In the same text in chapter

26, it states, “Him I call Brahmin who has put aside weapons and renounced violence towards all creatures. He neither kills nor helps others to kill.”

From the Panca sila sutra it is ‘Eight precepts’. This has the first five precepts of the previous one, – restrain from – killing, stealing, un – chastity, lying and taking intoxicants. And there are three more Sutras for a stricter discipline. The translation from the Pali -

I undertake the training rule to abstain from eating at the wrong time.

I undertake the training rule to abstain from singing, dancing, playing music and garlands.

I undertake the training rule to abstain from luxurious places for sitting or sleeping and over indulging in sleep.

The precept for the monks and the nuns varies from ten to sixteen. The main feature is not to accept money and to indulge in physical comfort.

To be focused in total self – realization, there are three golden rules to be followed

Taking refuge in Buddha.

Taking refuge in Dharma.

Taking refuge in Sanga.

To be free from samsara, avidya and dukkha, it is not enough if one knows the principals of Buddhism but understand the essentials of life. **Wisdom, (Prajna) Ethical conduct (Sila) and the Concentration (Samadi)** are the three essentials. Wisdom ‘prajna’ comes from Right view it leads to the right intention. The right view and intentions guides to Ethical conduct, sila, - the right speech, right action, right livelihood and right effort. The next stage is Concentration, samadi, one pointed focus in ‘self – activity’ to have right mindfulness and right concentration. When wisdom, ethics and concentration becomes the way of life; one gains right knowledge and release from Dukkha and Mara; there by attain enlightenment. This is called as “Noble Eight Fold Path’.

The Crusade of ‘noble eight fold path’ starts with Right View. Right view can also mean – right perspective, right understanding. The right way is to look at life and society as they really are. Comprehend the meaning and the purpose of existence. To know the various forms of Dukkha - sickness, aging, death other emotions like greed, unhappiness, hatred and delusion. Comprehend the cause of physical and mental suffering. The ‘right view’ is explained in detail in the “Sammaditthi Sutta”. The aim and objective are to check one’s confusion and clear the mind by overcoming the delusion of suffering. Right view gives scope to move away from clinging to dogmatic belief and to be more flexible, open minded.

Right view is achieved in two levels one is to understand the cause of sorrow and judge things rationally so that one leads a peaceful life in samsara that is ‘**view with taints**’ followed by laymen. Another one is to understand the cause and effect of human existence of birth, aging, disease, suffering and strong disturbing emotions like greed, hatred. And make an attempt to release one self completely from these and face the present with total present awareness with right mindfulness and be open, quiet and alert. All the judgment and interpretations are suspended or if occur then just registered and dropped, be calm and collective, such view

ultimately take the seeker to the enlightenment to be free from bondage and to be filled with love, that is '**view without taints**' a path way of the monastic.

One can never overlook the three truths of life:

Karma: each action (by way of body, speech and mind) leads to karmic result that is reaction. Karmic result depends on good actions and negative actions. Once the action is over the result of the action is permanent and can't be reversed. So, one has to have complete consciousness of one's action to reduce negative karma.

The three characteristics: everything that arises changes (impermanence). Mental, body phenomena and suffering are impermanent.

Suffering: 'The four noble truths' says, "Birth, aging, sickness, death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, grief, distress and despair are suffering. Not being able to obtain what one wants is also suffering. The arising of craving is the proximate cause of the arising of suffering and the cessation of craving is the proximate cause of the cessation of the suffering. The quality of ignorance is the root cause of the arising of suffering, and the elimination of the quality is the root cause of the cessation of suffering. The way leading to the cessation of suffering is the noble eightfold path."

Gay Watson in his essay, "Buddha Meets Western Science" writes: "Buddhism has always been concerned about feelings, emotions, sensations and cognition. The Buddha points both to cognitive and emotional causes of suffering. The emotional cause is desire and its negative opposite, aversion. The cognitive cause is ignorance of the way things truly occur, or of three marks of existence: that all things are unsatisfactory, impermanent and without essential self."

Buddhism gives importance to a '**Skilled Mind**'. The 'Mind' plays an important role in building up of one's self awareness. An experienced and competent mind avoids actions that are likely to cause suffering. The consequence of an action, Karma depends on the intention more than action itself. Buddhism emphasizes; anguish such as anxiety, remorse, guilt etc, should be avoided in order to cultivate calm and peaceful mind.

One needs regular practice of 'Pnaca sila' - no killing, stealing, lying, sexual misconduct and intoxicants, in day to day life. If one is to break any one of them, one should be aware of the mistake and examine how such a breach may be avoided in the future.

The 'Golden Rule' of Buddhism is empathy. Kindness, compassion, understanding and respecting people for what they are. These qualities must be the way of life under all circumstances, at all time, at all places.

1.6. LET US SUM UP

Ethics is such that there are no sharply defined boundary lines drawn between it and other branches of inquiry. No one can inquire the nature of virtue or values without examining the nature of the system of social relationship. From the time immemorial, the scholars, philosopher of the ancient civilization to the present time have tried to understand the Ethics with their intuitiveness and wisdom.

The Vedic Aryans saw the answer in sacrifice, rites and rituals. They worshipped the Nature with sacrifice. They strongly believed that if the nature is furious then it has the power to destroy living mortals. To please the unknown forceful energy they offered oblation. They composed most beautiful mantras in praise of the Universe. As Max – Muller says, “Nay, They (the Vedas) contain, by the side of simple, natural, childish thoughts, many ideas which to us sound decidedly modern.”

The Vedas cover human behaviour, virtue and negative qualities– faith, devotion, beauty, love, passion, greed, jealous, wars, tilling of the land, magic, a complete scenario of human life, inner conflict and commotion. But the bottom line is to attain heaven after death and to be reborn with fortune; one has to lead virtuous present life.

From Vedic period to the Upanishads the shift change from prolong rituals to seeking knowledge through self-realization by understanding the outer universe with inner self. A seeker finds a harmonic relationship between the outside worlds with that of inner self. It is the seeker who has to seek out the inner Brahman. Understand the truth is the ultimate goal of the life.

Jainism and Buddhism do not talk of Creator or Divine power. The emphasis is on conduct. The virtue of one’s behavior will redeem a person from life. That is enlightenment. Both teach simple to complex discipline – the basic principles being – no killing, no lying, no stealing, no adultery and no greediness.

“The doctrine of Karma, elaborated in Upanishads time and adopted by Buddhism and Jainism, was also part and parcel of Hinduism.” wrote A.L. Basham, “The belief of Karma does not necessarily involve fatalism.our present condition is inevitable, but only because of the Karma accruing from our past deeds. We can not escape the law of Karma any more than we can escape the law of gravity or the passage of time, but by judgment and forethought we can utilize the law of Karma to our advantage.”

In the early dialogue of Plato’s “The Protagoras”, Socrates ask Protagoras, why it is not easy to find teachers of Virtue as it is to find in swordsmanship, riding or any other arts. Protagoras answers that there are no special teachers of virtue, because virtue is taught by the whole community, (Republic 492 b). Socrates believed that by encouraging scholars and the lay man to tune attention from the outer world to inner self, the ‘self – knowledge’ can be achieved. Socrates correlates knowledge with ‘Virtue’ and equates virtue with ‘happiness’.

An old seer has said that human body is the combination of four persons – the first one is the physical body, ‘**Sharirra Purusha**’, the second is the meter person, **Chandas Purusha**, meter is the synonym for speech, a meter is a must for a poetry and the speech is a must for a living person, the third one is person of Veda, **Veda Purusha**, the person with true knowledge attaining a divine knowledge, the last one is great person, **Maha Purusha** a great personage with a great soul. Balanced combination of all the four persons in a living human makes a person a perfect man, man of virtue.

Aristotle says that there are **three natural states of man** – vegetable (physical), animal (emotional) and rational (mental). Physical nature is maintained by exercise and care, emotional by instinct and urges and mental through human reason and developed potential. Rational development is the most important as it is self – awareness and uniquely human. Modesty needs to be encouraged and very important. Courage is moderation between cowardliness and recklessness. Aim and objective of man is to lead simple life governed by virtue. Aristotle further says to practice Virtue is difficult; the right action, right thinking, right motive to do at the right time, to the proper extent to the correct fashion for the right reason.

All the four Disciplines discussed above have ‘Ethics’ as the soul of their preaching. All the four disciplines believed in Karma, rebirth, truth, virtue, kindness, charity, mercy. The essence is the same but the presentation is different.

“If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed some of its choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered over the greatest problem of life, and found solutions of some of them which well deserve the attention even of those who have studied Plato and Kant, I should point to India. And if I were to ask myself from what literature we who have nurtured almost exclusively on the thoughts of Greek and Romans, and the Semitic race, the Jewish may draw the corrective which is most wanted in order to make our inner life more perfect, more comprehensive, more Universal, in fact more truly human a life ... again I should point to India.”
Max – Muller

Check Your Progress II

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are the vows for a householder in Jainism?

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2) What is the difference between ‘View with taints’ and ‘View without taints’ in Buddhism?

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1.7. KEY WORDS

Meta-ethics: Meta-ethics deals with theoretical meaning and refers to the moral propositions and explains how truth values are determined.

Normative Ethics: Normative ethics determines practical means of determining a moral course of action.

Applied Ethics: Applied ethics points out how the moral outcome can be achieved in a specific situation.

Descriptive Ethics: Descriptive ethics describes the way in which the moral values are believed by people. It contrasts with prescriptive or normative *ethics*.

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1.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. The Veda differentiates the fruit attained by Karma and Jnana. Karma and Jnana are recognized as two different factors in the spiritual progress of the man. Karma is connected to the world immediately above the one where man lives. Jana is still higher and farther away. It is the abode of Gods.

In Vedas the rishis evolve a highly complicated system of philosophy and highlights value for Jnana as a means to attain highest abode (heaven) after death. It is preached that through Jnana the soul can get into the state of bliss. The Vedas do talk about bad man and bad deeds, but the emphasis is the rewards that a virtuous man receives after death, greater glory and higher world.

2. Understanding of the Brahman is the center theme of the Upanishads. It is the “Truth of truth’.” “As the spider moves along the thread, as small sparks come forth from the fire, even so from this Self come forth all breaths, all world, all divinities, all beings. Its sacred meaning is the truth, of truth. Vital breath is the truth and their truth is **It** (Self).” (Brhadaranyaka Upanishad II.2.20) Both Brhadaranyaka and Maitri highlight that all knowledge and wisdom are the breath of the eternal Brahman. All the ethical knowledge from the Vedas, Upanishads, ancient lore, science verses, legendary stories, aphorism, explanations and commentary came out from the great reality “mahad – bhutam” from Brahman. They came out as easily and effortlessly as the breath.

This alone is “Satasya satyam iti” (Maitri Upanishad VI. 32), the truth of the truth, empirical existence is the truth; the underlying truth of the Self.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. There are fundamental five very important vows for a householder –

He shall not do violence to other living beings - **Ahimsa**

He shall speak the truth – **Satya.**

He shall not commit theft – **Asteya.**

He shall not commit adultery - **Brahmacarya.**

He shall not greed for the worldly possession – **Aparigraha**

2. Right view is achieved in two levels one is to understand the cause of sorrow and judge things rationally so that one leads a peaceful life in samsara that is ‘**view with taints**’ followed by laymen.

Another one is to understand the cause and effect of human existence of birth, aging, disease, suffering and strong disturbing emotions like greed, hatred. And make an attempt to release one self completely with these, face the present with total present awareness with right mindfulness, and be open, quiet and alert. All the judgment and interpretations are suspended or if occur then just registered and dropped. be calm and collective, such view ultimately take the seeker to the enlightenment to be free from bondage and filled with love, that is ‘**view without taints**’ is a path way of the monastic.

UNIT 2: ETHICS IN MEDIEVAL INDIA

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
 - 2.1 Introduction
 - 2.2 Ethics in Epics
 - 2.3 Ethics in Gita
 - 2.4 Religious and Philosophical Ethics
 - 2.5 Social and Political Ethics
 - 2.6 Ethics through Aesthetics
 - 2.7 Let Us Sum Up
 - 2.8 Key Words
 - 2.9 Further Readings and References
 - 2.10 Answers to Check Your Progress
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2.0. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this Unit is — understanding the evolvement of Ethical life in Medieval India. The different religious and philosophical systems of India commonly stress on the need and importance of leading an ethical life. The value system is both ‘general’ and ‘specific’ in nature. The development of vast literature continuing with an invariable general perspective and revamping the moral values varying specifically, serves as the mirror to peep into the cultural ethos of Medieval India, which in turn reflects the Ethical life of people in general. In this unit, we shall attempt to survey the Ethics or Moral philosophy embedded in various literature that reflect the social, economic, political and other conditions of the respective time. A sweeping change in ethical life over a period of time is not only a historical impact governed by time principle but also a geographical impact governed by region based customs and practices. Keeping aside the historical and geographical content at bay, we shall embark upon ethical life sketched in various literatures, in what we assign as, in the Medieval Indian context.

Thus by the end of this Unit you should be able:

- to differentiate the development of Moral philosophy from the Vedic Age
 - to relate to the Ethical life in Medieval India
 - to appreciate the general and specific value systems based on various factors
 - to see the relevance of morality in current scenario
 - to imbibe the ‘general’ ethical life for creating a harmonious global world
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2.1. INTRODUCTION

The social structure of medieval India was, by and large, governed by the law of Vedic scriptures that has transformed its teachings through secondary sources like Dharmasastras, Puranas, Itihasas, and other minor literature. The time immemorial classification of social strata based on varna (class) and ashrama (stages of life) was widely prevalent and discharging one’s duty based on such a classification was considered to be *dharma* (righteous living). Dharma, as

the word indicates, is said to be the sustainer of the universe in a symphonic harmony. A harmonious living was set as a presupposition for the function of a value system in the society. In our glimpse into the literature of medieval India, we shall find the basis of morality as the striking chord for inner growth and universal peace. At a different plane, there was an emphasis on the observance of the samanya dharma (general ethics) irrespective of any societal classification and a reiteration of visesa dharma (specific duties) so as to cater to the accountability in the peaceful co-existence of every being.

2.2. ETHICS IN EPICS

The two great epics or the historical record, as it were, are the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Both these immortal works, time and again, remind the humanity of the moral order in a social structure. Here, the social condition encompasses the political, economical, cultural, and the natural order.

Ramayana, through its immortal characters, reveal the sense of dharma in various shades. Of the many dialogues in Valmiki's Ramayana, one striking dialogue between Rama and Sita estimates the concept of dharma without compromise. Sita speaks when Rama resolves to vanquish the demons in the forest on the request of the sages. She says, desire produces three qualities – untruth, abduction of another woman and anger towards an alien. Of the three, Rama cannot entertain the first two qualities, but in this case, Rama seems to fall a prey to the third quality, which Sita considers as adharma. She defines dharma as the essence of the universe and feels that Rama's resolve to vanquish the demons who are not enemies of Rama is unfair. Here, we see the rights exercised by Sita in voicing out her view-point on Rama's action and condemning it as adharma, requesting him for an explanation for such a move. Rama answers that he has promised to help the sages who have taken shelter in him and hence resolved to demolish the demons. He goes to the extent of saying, that he is ready to abandon Sita and Lakshmana in order to keep up his promise. Here, Rama evokes his sense of duty as a ksatriya (warrior class), that is to protect those who have taken refuge in him. This episode reveals the right exercised by Sita and Rama's binding duty, thereby drawing our attention to not only rights but also duty as the two sides of the same coin. The freedom of expression of one's opinion is again revealed through the episode where Dasaratha calls for an open-house discussion declaring the next heir-apparent. When the ministers, well-wishers and people assembled expressed happiness on Dasaratha retiring to coronate Rama. But Dasaratha questioned the assembly if it has exercised its will in favouring such a decision. This is an ascertainment of the opinion put forth. We find an open-house discussion in the court of Ravana too. The value of free expression lessened the gulf between any two relationships.

The Mahabharata pictorially depicts a telling tale of each of its characters, which is worth reflecting upon by every individual. Vyasa shows that dharma and adharma cannot be categorically compartmentalised in white and black. The characters in Mahabharata portray 'grey' areas of dharma and adharma, in varying heights in different stages of life. This epic through its narration of the story of over six generations, unfolds the changing value system of the society. Each character symbolises an evolved understanding of dharma and the consequence of every character gives an insight into the assimilation of the code of ethics. One of the highlights in Mahabharata is the episode where a Yaksha questions Yudhishtira as, 'what is the greatest wonder in this world?', Yudhishtira replies, 'Seeing death everyday one continues to think one is immortal, is the greatest wonder in this world?'. The perception of mortality of the

body serves as the key to inculcate morality. Mahabharata declares, dharma as the code of life that will sustain and maintain a harmonious living. It presents a simple dictum “whatever is not conducive to social welfare, and what you are likely to be ashamed of doing, never do it”. Thus, the two epics is a living tradition that on and off reminds the value of a moral living to obtain peace.

2.3. ETHICS IN GITA

Bhagavad Gita, the famous dialogue between Krishna and Arjuna in the middle of the Kurukshetra battle, popularly considered as a sacred text of moral code, is a liberating text. As even Arjuna surrenders to Krishna, pleading for removal of his confusion and inability to decide in this crucial moment, Krishna begins by instructing on the imperishable nature of Self. Self-knowledge is presented as the means to salvation. The pre-requisite for self-enquiry is shown as an ethical life that is mentioned as Karma Yoga.

Krishna says, it is impossible for one to remain actionless even for a moment. Since a person is by nature forced to act, Krishna says, let this action be channelised and well-directed. Karma yoga is explicated as proper action (karma) and proper attitude (yoga). Action is said to be three-fold based on the gunas, sattva, rajas and tamas. The action is to be oriented based on the sattva guna, where the benefits of one’s act reach more number of beings, which serves as the cause for spiritual upliftment. The attitude is the ability to accept the consequence of action as the grace of God.

The importance of karma yoga is highlighted and is presented in four different layers. Firstly, karma yoga is to be performed as a commandment of the scripture. It involves an element of fear and is said to be the initial stage of action. Secondly, the sense of gratitude in the form of worship of God out of love (and not out of fear) is seen as karma yoga. Thirdly, karma yoga is performed as a means to refine the mind and lastly karma is seen as the very dharma, performance of which, maintains the cosmic harmony of the universe.

Concept of Svadharma: A society prospers when dharma is followed fearlessly. One consumes the world, and it is important to reciprocate, says Krishna, else such a one is considered a thief. Dharma, in nut-shell is, ‘take and give’. Svadharma or one’s own duty is to be done for the sake of well-being of the society and the code of righteous living is determined by time and the people who are seen as the role model of the society. Whatever is done by a famous figure becomes the standard of living of current times. So Krishna says, Arjuna is a famous warrior known for his commitment to dharma, and swerving away from his dharma in the time of crisis will be cited as an example for violation of dharma by the commoner. Krishna shows the impact where if one violates dharma, the entire society will sheepishly follow such unhealthy ‘models’ leading to a sociological disruption. This further creates confusion with regard to each one’s duty resulting in a chaos.

Arjuna questions ‘what is the cause of unrighteous living when one wants to lead a moral life?’. Krishna replies, it is the ignorance of the fundamental understanding of the difference between the role of dharma and adharma in a given time. This non-understanding is expressed in the form of two forces, ‘want’ and ‘anger’. Want, says Krishna, is a ‘Great Consumer’ that never satiates; it eats away the mind to materialism. The non-fulfilment or contrary fulfilment of one’s want is expressed as anger. Krishna warns, one who is subject to anger can never follow dharma.

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| Check Your Progress I |
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Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Bring out the concept of dharma in Ramayana and Mahabharata.

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2) How is Karma Yoga presented in Bhagavad Gita?

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2.4. RELIGIOUS AND PHILOSOPHICAL ETHICS

Religious Ethics: The bhakti movement can be considered almost a reform period when value structure seem to crumble. An intense devotion to Almighty instantly developed as a widespread movement arousing unity in nook and corner of the country. Religion gives scope for expression of devotion and a devout helplessly take to a disciplined life, since a 'clean' life is said to be the path towards the Lord. The different incarnations were eulogised as an event of resurrection of justice and goodness. A situation of chaos in the societal structure, lop-sided development of rich and poor, superstitious belief system etc, were uprooted by the living legends who led simple life and won the grace of God. The devotees boosted the morale of the commoner in finding a meaning in leading an ethical life. Religion propagated purity at physical, verbal and mental level. The physical expression of devotion was popularised through rituals, festivals and pilgrimages where people of different strata and walks of life come together. The verbal expression includes study of one's own scripture and the mental mode is practice of meditation. Thus, refinement at three levels paved the path for moral standards. Religion facilitated in symbolic representations of the omniscient, it included personification of abstract qualities like faith (shraddha), anger (manyu), intellect (dhi), patience (dhrti) etc. The virtues like humility, non-injury, purity, dispassion etc were identified with devotion. The religious consciousness, thus, presupposed an ethical living. The ritualistic practices were simplified and compromised to suit the changing times. The religious reformers created a break-through by bringing about a sense of oneness of varied practices in the length and breadth of the country. Religion could sufficiently succeed since the value system was universally accepted that has to be indispensably adhered to and this moral scheme was utilised by the devotees to bring about a moral discipline. The value structure in various tones is embedded in the Puranic literatures.

A need for development of dispassion was considered as a pathway to spiritual achievement, and hence we find many religious and philosophical schools eulogising dispassion towards ephemeral world and its relation. Many works were specifically devoted to highlight the quality of 'dispassion' and one such work is 'Vairagya Shatakam' of Bhartrhari. He addresses the desire in mind in a nostalgic mood and says, 'O desire! I travelled distant lands which turned fruitless, giving up family, relatives, and my country I sought greener pastures in the bargain I

gave up my customs and practices, ate all kinds of food like a crow losing my self-respect, still you O desire! is not satisfied'. The insatiable desire is presented as that which rejuvenates in its youthful lustre but the physical body is wrinkled with grey hair and feeble limbs. Bhartrhari says, even when the life is cheerful there is a constant fear of its coming to an end. Every sense pleasure has an intrinsic defect which is the cause of fear. He says,

'If one is born in an illustrious family there is the fear to maintain family reputation. If one amasses wealth there is the fear of Tax norms. One who is conscious of self-respect has the fear of insult. If one is strong there is fear of enemies. If attached to physical beauty there is fear of old age. If a scholar, there is fear of debaters. If virtuous, one is afraid of criticism and if attached to body there is fear of death'.

Bhartrhari exclaims that detachment is the only way by which one can understand fearlessness. He presents the world as a pair of opposites: birth and death, youth and old age, contentment and temptation, poise and passion, virtuous and jealousy etc. This is described in the Bhagavad Gita as dvandas or pairs of opposites and the attempt is to maintain a balance in either case and avoid extreme reactions in instances of favourable or unfavourable circumstances.

Philosophical Ethics: The classical orthodox and heterodox philosophical systems laid down values or ethics as the pre-requisite condition or the very means to liberation. Kapila of Sankhya school presents bondage as misery caused by three-fold factors, adhyatma (oneself), adhibhuta (others) and adhidaiva (natural forces). Liberation is overcoming the miseries from these three-fold factors. The attitude towards these three aspects itself calls for an ethical discipline, which is seen as a means to liberation.

The eight-limbed theory of Patanjali's Yoga system is well-known. Yoga emphasises the discipline of mind, since, for Patanjali thoughts are cause of bondage. Thoughts create impressions in the mind which in turn is the cause of rise of thoughts. This vicious circle can be eliminated in two methods, that is practice and dispassion. Practice of effort is to be repeated for development of concentration of mind and dispassion is to be attained by detaching oneself from sensual pleasures. The refined mind then has to be directed towards God. Patanjali's discipline at physical, verbal and mental level aims at an ethical life.

Gautama in his Nyaya sutras explains dharma which is expressed in two ways, verbal and mental. The verbal expression is speaking the truth that is beneficial and pleasing and recitation of one's own scriptures and the mental expression is compassion, bereft of enviousness and faith. The contrary of these is said to be adharma. Nyaya's liberation is knowledge by removing the adharmic effects which calls for a moral life.

In the Vaisheshika system of Kanada, dharma is presented as the source of attainment of prosperity and liberation. Jaimini in his Dharmasutra refines this definition by stating that the source of dharma is vedic injunction which is the cause of prosperity and liberation. The performance of action as enjoined, for Jaimini, is dharma which not only is conducive to maintain cosmic, social balance but also is the means for liberation.

The Vedanta sutra of Badarayana explicates four-fold qualities as a pre-requisite for self-enquiry. This value structure serves two-fold purpose, one to develop a moral standard and other to lead to spirituality. The first quality is discrimination of ephemeral and eternal entities, everything other than the self is perishable being an effect and self being devoid of doership is eternal. The second quality is dispassion for the results in this world and the other worlds. The

third is a six-fold discipline that includes mastery of mind, mastery of sense organs, performance of one's ordained action, forbearance, faith, and concentration and lastly the quality is desire for liberation. Thus, ethics is a presupposition for entry into any philosophical system.

The heterodox schools equally played an important role in development of moral standards. The materialistic Carvaka proclaimed that body is the soul and pleasure is the ultimate end of life. This can be taken as the starting point, since any thinking person can ascertain by direct experience that pleasure do not last and one have to cope with rising problems. Buddhism and Jainism ingeniously designed the course of life and held high the value system. In the middle path of Buddha, he advocates the right vision, right resolve and right conduct which resonates morality. Jaina ethics define dharma as the obedience to safe guard against karma disrupting the soul. The dharma includes forgiveness, simplicity, cleanliness, celibacy etc. Thus, the development of the philosophical schools enhanced the value structure and emphasised its importance for overall development.

2.5. SOCIAL AND POLITICAL ETHICS

The Social Ethics of medieval India reflects in the famous Manusmriti of Manu, who is considered as an extreme moralist. Manu in his code of law, kept in mind the social condition and reveals his awareness of the diminishing value system in each *yuga*. He recommends the highest value to be upheld in the kaliyuga as 'charity'. The common conduct to be upheld by the first three varnas is charity, study of scriptures and performance of rituals. While the specific responsibility of brahmana is propagation and preservation of wisdom, the ksatriya is responsible for protection of people. Manu specifies, that the ksatriya should keep away from over-indulgence of sensual pleasures. The duty to protect the animal kingdom and engage oneself in trade and commerce is the key area of vaisyas, while the sudra varna is to assist the other three varnas. The specific duty of sudra mentioned is charity and freedom from jealousy. Practice of one's specified duties with utmost care, Manu feels, will result in a poised living condition. He explicates the importance of five great sacrifices, viz, study and propagation of scriptures (brahma-yajna), worship of ancestors (pitr-yajna), worship of gods (deva-yajna), service to mankind (manushya-yajna) and caring the animal and plant kingdom (bhuta-yajna). He defines 'dharma' as wisdom, good conduct and tranquil mind. Even though, the duties and responsibilities are enjoined based on a particular feature, Manu favours the idea that one should take to an action that pleases the mind. Manu seems to warn one who takes to unrighteous path (adharma) that such a person will find no peace while living. Through the concept of transmigration of soul, Manu shows that soul is the carrier of results of action that has to be experienced in different births. He says, in death of the body, no person or relation will follow but only one's conduct. This seems to be an incentive provided to attract all to lead a righteous life while living.

Over a period of time, many other works exclusively highlighting the changing moral life were written for the laity and one such work known as 'Nitishatakam' by Bhartrhari is popular. It encapsulates the value system in poetic language, wherein the consequence of association with good ones and bad ones is based on the law of association. He says, a good company removes sluggishness in thought, motivates to speak truth, elevates self-respect and pleases the mind, whereas a bad association is condemned in the manner that it should be given up as even one abandons a snake. An unrighteous life led out of lack of knowledge is also condemned. He says,

that the fire can be quenched with water, the bright sun can be avoided by using an umbrella, elephant with rut can be controlled with a goad, disease can be removed by medicine but there is no medicine for a foolish person who refuses to lead a virtuous life.

The Political Ethics resonates in the Arthashastra of Chanakya that is considered as the Dharmasastra addressing the rulers and transgression of law was seen as a punishable crime. Arthashastra emphasises three-fold duties of a ruler, that is, protection of the state from external aggression (raksha), maintenance of law and order within the state (palana) and safe-guarding the welfare of the people (yogaksema). Chanakya recognises the four stages of life as relevant for the maintenance of the social and political order of a nation. In the work 'Chanakya Neeti', Chanakya highlights the importance of education. He censures an uneducated person as a scentless flower. He has a high regard for wisdom and states no land is alien for a man of learning. For him, knowledge yields fruits in all seasons, it protects and rewards one in distant lands and is the greatest secret treasure. Chanakya maintains that the highest bliss is attained through knowledge and one should never be content with knowledge gained. He defines dharma as the eternal principle unlike wealth, prosperity, life and youth. Chanakya cautions not to be too simple and straight forward, he says, in the forest the smooth, straight trees are felled whereas the crooked ones stand unharmed.

2.6. ETHICS THROUGH AESTHETICS

A less focussed area in the ethical tradition is the contribution of Aesthetics in augmenting the moral standard of the society. The creative expression of any art form reflects the many facets including the moral condition of a said society in a particular time and place. In the Indian tradition of ethical development, Aesthetics has played a vital role which can be traced to the earliest extant available so far, that is, the Natyashastra of Bharata. Bharata, categorised as the 'Father of Indian Dramaturgy' was himself a moralist who expounds in his Natyashastra that the very 'Natyashastra' emerged in order to re-establish the diminishing value system. People were overpowered by anger, jealousy, etc and have forgotten their own duty to be performed, as a reminder Natyashastra was developed. Natyashastra was meant to reach out to all sections of the society and present the dharma structure with audio-visual effect. The Natyashastra commented upon by various scholars include Abhinavagupta a Pratyabhijna philosopher who heightens the performing art to a spiritual journey. Later, Aestheticians who penned dramas etc, enlightened the morals poetically. In fact, the Buddhacharita of Asvaghosha is said to have created a wide impact on the value of peace that 'shanta' as a separate 'rasa' emerged. Artistic expression calls for a high acumen of knowledge and skill that includes a disciplined life. It is considered that the quality of art work is directly proportional to one's disciplined life. We have instance of the transformation of the young Gandhi to take the resolve of truth and non-violence based on his viewing of the enactment of the life of Harishchandra. Thus, visual presentation has an impact on young minds. We see literature galore in the medieval India that reflects the moral life through its rich literature catering to all kinds of people. Its relevance and refinement lies in the present generation who dictate the quality of life now.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is the role of religion and philosophy in developing moral disciplines?

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2) Bring out the impact of social and political ethics. What is the role of aesthetics in moral life.

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2.7. LET US SUM UP

We have had a brief survey of the development of ethics in medieval India. In this unit, we have focussed on the study of ethical discipline as found in the available literature dating to medieval period. Literature is said to be the mirror of the society and hence we derived value system from different literatures beginning from the two great epics, Ramayana and Mahabharata. Set in different time period, the varied literature reveals the changing value structure thereby indicating the changing life standard. This is inevitable and assimilation of this helps us in leading a peaceful life. We find the common thread throughout the different times is want for a harmonious living and every attempt in different guises is bringing about peace and co-ordination. The disruption of peace can be at any level, but individuals who make the society are the key factor. Hence, we find the literature covered in this unit, focus on general and specific disciplines for every individual. Duty performed will naturally result in gaining rights. The reverse of this is a dangerous bargain. However, exploitation is demolished by reformative movements time and again. There seems to be a cyclic process. A balance of religious, philosophical, social, political condition through its defined ethics may seem an ideal situation, but is a necessity that is reminded in aesthetic culture. We have seen the role of ethics in each of these fields and their contribution for a better mankind, which is the need for this hour. It is said that whenever ordinary men of the world were in doubt regarding dharma and adharma, they should decide the issue by closely observing the dharmic deeds of the elders in their area or by consulting them on specific issues. Each one of us should serve as the referent point of righteousness of our times.

2.8. KEY WORDS

Dharmashastra – treatises on defining dharma based on changing times

Purana – treatises dealing with various sciences and religious disciplines

Itihasa – historical record, refers to Ramayana and Mahabharata

Varna – the classification of society based on intrinsic inclination

Ashrama – the classification of society based on the stage of life

Samanya dharma – the general duties, universally accepted like truth, non-violence.

Visesa dharma – the specific duties, governed by particular time, place and custom.

Rasa – the sentiment experienced through dramatic presentation.

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2.10. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1. Ramayana, through its immortal characters, reveal the sense of dharma in various shades. Of the many dialogues in Valmiki's Ramayana, one striking dialogue between Rama and Sita estimates the concept of dharma without compromise. This episode reveals the right exercised by Sita and Rama's binding duty, thereby drawing our attention to not only rights but also duty as the two sides of a same coin. The freedom of expression of one's opinion is again revealed through the episode where Dasaratha calls for an open-house discussion declaring the next heir-apparent. In the Mahabharata the characters portray 'grey' areas of dharma and adharma, in varying heights in different stages of life. This epic through its narration of the story of over six generations, unfolds the changing value system of the society.

2. The importance of karma yoga is highlighted and is presented in four different layers. Firstly, karma yoga is to be performed as a commandment of the scripture. It involves an element of fear and is said to be the initial stage of action. Secondly, the sense of gratitude in the form of worship of God out of love (and not out of fear) is seen as karma yoga. Thirdly, karma yoga is performed as a means to refine the mind and lastly karma is seen as the very dharma, performance of which, maintains the cosmic harmony of the universe.

Check Your Progress II

1. Religious Ethics: The bhakti movement can be considered almost a reform period when value structure seem to crumble. An intense devotion to Almighty instantly developed as a widespread movement arousing unity in nook and corner of the country. Religion gives scope for expression of devotion and a devout helplessly take to a disciplined life, since a 'clean' life is said to be the path towards the Lord. Religion propagated purity at physical, verbal and mental level. Religion facilitated in symbolic representations of the omniscient, it included personification of abstract qualities like faith (shraddha), anger (manyu), intellect (dhi), patience (dhrti) etc. The virtues like humility, non-injury, purity, dispassion etc were identified with devotion.

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UNIT 3

ETHICS IN MODERN PHILOSOPHY

Contents

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3.2. Ethical Teachings of Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Brahma Samaj

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3.7. Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0. OBJECTIVES

In this unit, you are exposed to Ethics in modern Indian Philosophy. Ethical and religious concepts were very much influenced by the radical reformation movements of nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They try to reinterpret the traditional values in the light of modern and western thinking.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

Most Hindus today still adhere to traditional teachings and practice passed down via the four main communities. What has been termed "modern Hinduism" has grown largely out of a number of quite radical reform movements of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These movements had a relatively small number of followers and by no means replaced or superseded the major traditional forms of Hinduism. Some specific reform movements, like the Brahma Samaj, Arya Samaj and the Ramakrishna Mission, still continue to be influential.

The reform movements largely emerged from the growing contact that Hindu thinkers had with Western thought, culture and religion. Below are the three most important reform movements and their ethical outlook.

3.2. ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF RAJA RAM MOHAN ROY AND THE BRAHMA SAMAJ

Raja Ram Mohan Roy's lifelong endeavor was to recreate human brotherhood and unity on a religious basis, by rediscovering the harmony and unity of all religious strivings of mankind. In this regard he can rightly be considered the last link in the long chain of religious teachers

of India – a chain unbroken from the days of Kabir and Nanak to his own. His desire to combine the best of both East and the West led him to advocate the introduction of the western system of education for Indian students. Like other contemporary Indian thinkers, he also pleaded for the scientific basis of education. But his deep study of ancient Hindu culture despite his love for scientific education did not make him appreciate materialism of the west.

During the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, Hindu religion in India came under the complete domination of the corrupt priestly class. To maintain their supremacy, the Brahmin priests were interested in keeping people ignorant, and fed them with false hope of rewarding after life. They commercialized religion by introducing costly ceremonies and offerings to the images of gods. As a result of these efforts by the vested interests the real spirit of Hinduism was clouded. Many social evils such as child-marriage, Sati, degradation of women and division of Hindu society into endless castes and sub-castes weakened the whole Hindu society. The degraded social system and artificial compartmentalization resulted in mutual hatred and discontent. It was the time when India began to pass through the age of general resentment, reaction and opposition to the existing religious and social values. It was also the time when India saw the new light of renaissance, reformation, enlightenment and reconstruction. The religious movements like the Brahma samaj, was an earnest effort to recast Hindu religion into a new form in order to meet the requirements of the new society.

The fundamental principles of the Brahma Samaj, founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in 1828 are:

1. There is only one God, who is the creator, and the savior of this world. He is spirit, infinite in power, wisdom, love, justice and holiness, omnipresent, eternal and blissful.
2. The human soul is immortal and capable of infinite progress, and is responsible to God for its doings.
3. Man's happiness in this and the next world consists in worshipping God in spirit and in truth.
4. Loving God, holding communion with Him, and carrying out His will in all the concerns of life, constitute true worship.
5. No created object is to be worshipped as God, and God alone is to be considered as infallible.

To this, Raja Ram Mohan Roy added "The true way of serving God is to do good to man." Since no one person is considered to be infallible, the Brahmos hold all the great religious leaders of the world in respect, and believe that truth is to be gleaned from all the scriptures of the world. To that extent, the Brahma religion is truly eclectic. Universalist in nature, it is "dogmatically undogmatic".

Faced with the superstitious beliefs and rituals of popular Hinduism on the one hand and seeing distinctly on the other, the truth contained in Islam and Christianity as well as in the Upanishads the Raja found a layman's solution to the complicated problem. He seized the theistic elements common to the three faiths and declared them to be at once the original truths of Hinduism. In so doing he believed, he was restoring the Hindu faith to its original purity. As a humanist he

thought that mankind could be united if the basic elements of the major religions like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity were brought home to the people.

Raja wanted to provide a rational basis for religion condemning all irrationalities. In this sense he had the honor of bringing about revival of Hinduism. His efforts in the direction can be treated in three parts, namely, his conception of religion, his attack on the existing form of religion, and founding of the Brahmo Samaj for realizing his ideals. He found that religious conflicts were based on ignorance. In his first appeal to the Christian public he said, "May God render religion destructive of differences and dislikes between man and man, and conducive to the peace and union of mankind". In India, the land of many religions, he not only tried to reconstruct the faith of his forefathers but tried to purify Islam and Christianity with a sublime conception of the universal in all human beings.

Apart from the spiritual aspect he was well interested in the social and ethical aspects of religion. He did not believe in the existing formalistic religion of the Hindus and introduced his conception of ideal and inspirational religion based on strict monotheism and humanism. In this contest Dr Iqbal says "For him the practical expression of such faith must always be in ethical conduct, in dedication for the good of the society. The devotion he claims, which is most acceptable to the creator consists in promoting union of human hearts, with mutual love and affection for all one's fellow beings, without distinction of caste or creed, race or colour".

His attack on orthodox Hindu customs not due to any narrow sectarian bias but guided by his desire to reform Hinduism of all the rubbish of superstition and priestcraft created during centuries of ignorance. He declared that in its purity Hinduism could not be different from other religions. Against polytheism he said that there was one God for all religions and humanity. In his conception of religion Raja was motivated by national and socio-ethical considerations. He believed that religion must inculcate knowledge, love of God and sympathy for his own fellowmen. It must inculcate human feelings and soften the general attitude. He wanted everyone to assess the rational character of religious doctrines and reject those which contrast the rational test.

He always emphasized that all human problems must be solved in human ways. The social problems in India were only due to inhuman practices. He condemned religious sanctity attached with social evils. Following are the areas of reformation.

Removing the Caste System

The caste system has been a part of Hindu society for hundreds of years. It's inherent divisive nature and social injustices were abhorrent to the early Brahmos. Therefore an important reform that the early Brahmos campaigned for was the removal of the caste system.

Many of the early Brahmos came from the Brahmin caste, who wore a sacred thread around their body to signify their caste superiority. From the 1850's onwards the renunciation of the sacred thread came to symbolise this break with tradition. The equality of all men was fundamental to the Brahmo movement, and to them it did not matter what caste or indeed religion someone was born into.

Sati and Child Marriage

The attractive programme of the Samaj won the support of a large number of educated people in Bengal and outside. It fought against the social evils like child marriage, sati and selling of female children and all other inhuman practices which heaped suffering on women in the name of religious sanctity. In spite of an organised opposition from the Dharma Sabha, Brahmos came out successful in getting the law passed in 1829 against the sati practice, they were thankful to God and British Government, whose protecting arm has rescued our weaker sex from cruel murder, under the cloak of religion. It fought against the continuation of evil practices which subjected women to miseries, degradation and inferiority.

Widow Marriage

Despite Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's campaign that led to the legalisation of widow remarriage (1856) in India, Hindu society had many reservations on this issue. The Brahmos campaigned against such pre-judices. To reinforce their commitment to this many young men of the Brahma movement made a positive point of marrying widows.

Saving of Upper Caste Unmarried Women

It wasn't just the lower castes who suffered in the caste system. Despite their caste status, the girls from the upper caste families suffered because of their position. If a suitable bridegroom could not be found for such a girl in their caste, their options were limited, as marriage to lower caste men was not permitted. These girls often found themselves being married off to very old men who were already married several times over. Or worse still, sometimes these girls would be poisoned to death. Again the Brahmos campaigned against such unjust practices and saved the lives of many such girls.

Women's Education and Status

Traditionally education had been primarily for the men. However during the 1860's and the 1870's the attitude of the Brahmos started to change. Education was encouraged among the Brahma women. At the same time their equal status in society was emphasised by allowing women to pray with men at the prayer halls. In 1881 the Brahma Samaj at Barishal (Bengal) appointed the first woman Brahma preacher (Manorama Mazumdar).

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are the five fundamental principles of Brahma Samaj?

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2) Write a note on *sati* and child marriage.

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3.3. ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF SWAMI DAYANANDA SARASVATI AND THE ARYA SAMAJ

Despite his revulsion for many features of popular Hinduism, Dayananda Saraswati stressed the need for unity and friendship among all Hindus for the sake of well being of the whole country. He was a radical but he was also willing to compromise on certain issues. To instantiate, although he himself didn't believe in any food taboos he maintained them in the public sphere for in their absence they would be cut off from Hindu society and lose the chance of influencing its masses.

Similarly; he adopted the cause of cow protection to unite the sectarian Hindu outfits to come under one platform and struggle for a common cause. It is noteworthy that Dayananda pertinently advocated the cause for cow protection (*gau raksha*) not on the orthodox premise of cow being vestige to 84,000 divinities or cow as mother but due to its economic utility. A dead cow could feed only a dozen but a living cow could feed a thousand. Also, the dung of the cow was a valuable source of manure. His reasons for cow protection clearly rested on economic, ecological and probably political criterion; but not on theological or emotive ones. That the economic argument was foremost in his mind is evident from the fact that he takes great pains to show that *go-medha*, the sacrifice of kine, refers most of the time to bulls, whose economic value is less than that of cows. And when the texts unmistakably refer to a female animal, then a barren cow is meant.

Other instances of his pragmatism include his adoption of sanyas to run away from home; his prompt closure of his failing schools and his study under the blind Virajnanda to learn grammar.

However, it would be a grave mistake to conclude that Dayananda had any elements of opportunism in him. Dayananda sincerely subscribed to his ontological view in the infallibility of the Vedas, and them being the source of all knowledge as an axiomatic truth. The claim of the opponents of the Arya Samaj that the Swami admitted to one, Bholanath Sarabhai that he didn't himself believe in the infallibility of the Vedas, but held on to them for the sake of tactics; they

being the rallying points of all Hindus according to Jordens lacks any convincing proof. Dayananda accepted the Vedas as his rock of firm foundation, he took it for the guiding view of his life and he regarded it as the work of eternal truth.

An Ethics Based on Vedic literature

Although virtually all the six systems of Hindu philosophy pay lip service to the Vedas [especially the samhitas] as being the repository of the greatest spiritual and metaphysical truths; yet in practice the samhita portion [especially the rig Veda] have been viewed only as closed manuscripts; commentaries or bhasyas on them have been very few and far between. Sayana had written the last great bhasya on the Rig Veda in the 13th century. But interest in the Vedas revived in the 19th century due to the pioneering work of the German Indologists like Max Muller and Griffith.

Dayananda wrote his bhasya chiefly out of the old national albeit dormant instinct in Vedic superiority; a move to counter the misconceptions of these current orientalist commentaries which he claimed were inferior to his work, since the latter was based on original commentators like Yaska. Also a bhasya would allow the Arya Samaj members to have a definite and reliable reference for all their literary queries on Vedic interpretation. Dayananda briefly concluded that the Vedas literally contained all the wisdom of god; and hence was universal in nature. He repudiated the idea of Vedas carrying any historical references since the Vedas to him antedated all history. His second, assumption was Vedas proclaiming a pure monotheism unlike the popular view of modern indologists (then and now) that the Vedas proclaimed a henotheistic mode of devotion.

Dayananda had a rudimentary knowledge of science and technology but this didn't stop him from asserting that the Vedas contained all scientific truth in them. Also, he reasoned that there was nothing in the Vedas which could remotely offend morality.

Although, Dayananda's bhasya spanning thousand of pages is not taken seriously in Vedic studies and considered outdated; the fact remains relatively unknown that it did win the approval of few of his later contemporaries whose works are considered at least intellectually far superior to his. For instance, Sri Aurobindo, arguably the most original thinker of modern India concludes *"in the matter of Vedic interpretation I am convinced that whatever may be the final complete interpretation, Dayananda will be honored as the first discoverer of the right clues....He has found the keys of the doors that time had closed and rent asunder the seals of the imprisoned foundations"*

Last but not the least; the bhasya constitutes the very first effort and a massive one at that in bringing the Vedas out of the sanctuary of Brahmanical dominance into the open and make them accessible to all Hindus; irrespective of caste and creed. Jordens believes this to be the strongest argument in him being called "The Luther of India"

An Ethics Supporting Hindu Nationalism

Dayananda is one of the chief figures of Indian nationalism who began his career as a British loyalist. In fact, the first edition of the *Satyartha Prakasha* carries a tract describing the merits of the British rule which unlike that of the decadent, intolerant Mughals was rational and scientific in its scope and expression. When Dayananda had to face the ire of the orthodox Hindus who resented his literal iconoclasm; he had famously remarked that *“If you expel the English, then, no later than tomorrow, you and I and everyone who rises against idol-worship, will have our throats cut like mere sheep”*.

Yet, in a remarkable transformation; Dayananda emerged as one of the paramount figures of North Indian Hindu Nationalism in Modern India. Some of his conceptualizations like a mythical golden age of the Aryans where Vedic wisdom ruled the length and breadth of not only India, but the world; where people of all classes lived in happiness and comfort; where women were respected and educated universally; where crime, poverty and adultery were unknown remain till date some core ideas of the ultra-orthodox elements of Hindu Nationalism. The origin of this tendency in Dayananda had a multifocal origin, one of whose epicenters must have been in Punjab where he was repeatedly confronted with the missionaries. He criticized the Christians in his second *Satyartha Prakasha* [and to an ordinary 19th century India; Christian and British were synonymous] as being usurpers who descended on the property of foreigners. They were so biased that when a black man is killed by a white man, they acquit the murderers in court. Since their God enjoins animal sacrifices *“why should they not fill their belly with beef”* They have taken delight in war; for war is their guru mantra. Dayananda’s criticism of Christ for declaring war on humanity, in declaring his mission to make war between brother and brother, mother and son is denounced in the most unapologetic terms. While all this may seem to be a harsh judgment; the Swami was only paying back the missionaries in the same coin who had used even more extravagant arguments in their attacks on Hinduism.

Dayananda attempts to unite Hindus cutting across sectarian and caste lines is another feature of his ingenious attempt in constructing the idea of Hindu nationalism. We have already noted how Dayananda had considerably toned down his attack on popular Hinduism; his tolerance for food taboos and certain other dogmas for which he cared little are an outcome of the same for he realized that dissent would lead to a forced divorce from the Hindu community which would mean inability to further influence the ignorant Hindu masses. The protect cow movement was also more of an attempt to unite Hindus under the garb of an issue to which all had a natural sympathetic and emotive attitude. He had regretted deeply; the divide in the Hindu community which had prevented them from exerting sufficient pressure in compelling the government to enact a cow protection act.

Dayananda’s Hindu nationalism was essentially rationalistic; it was not a blind espousal of all things hoary and of yore but instead an attempt to seize a vital thing out of the past and throw it into the stream of modern life, for it is the most important means of renovation and new-creation. He knew too well that the Hindu religion was the lifeblood of the nation; it was unquestionably its very identity.

Views and Visions

Dayananda was an extrovert; a fiery determined man who had only a singular passion in the rise of a great Arya nation. His spirituality was practical and betrayed no signs of that unfortunate tendency of ascetic voyeurism. A spontaneous power and decisiveness is stamped everywhere on his work. As Sri Aurobindo writes *“what an act of grandiose intellectual courage to lay upon this scripture (Veda) defaced by ignorant comment and oblivion of its spirit, degraded by misunderstanding to the level of an ancient document of barbarism and to perceive in its real worth as a scripture which conceals in itself the deep and energetic spirit of the forefathers who made this country and nation.”*

He was a man of principle; and he refused to compromise on them howsoever great the peril. Neither threats of loss of influence, of ostracism, of the demise of friendship, even of danger to his life, nor promises of wealth, success in reform work could dislodge the Swami from his stand. However, it is also true that he lacked in him the ability to appreciate any shades of grey; to him all things were defined in black or white.

While his rationalism paved the way for initiating several reforms; this radical rationalism also failed him as a theologian to decipher the crucial relationship between myth and symbol. His totalitarian rejection of the Bhagavatam, Puranas and Brahmanas is a mistake, a limitation, the nadir of his genius. Even if his claim of infallibility of the Vedas tends to seem exaggerated there is no reason to dismiss his belief in Vedas being repository of scientific truths. Sri Aurobindo reminds us that great facts of science were not unknown to ancient civilizations, and while it would be premature to affirm Dayananda’s contentions there is still nothing fantastic in Dayananda’s idea....He would even add his own conviction that Veda contains other truths of a science that modern world doesn’t at all possess, and in that case Dayananda had rather understated than overstated the depth and range of the Vedic wisdom.

The Arya Samaj couldn’t revivify itself through the vicissitudes of time; it has lost its potency as a reforming organization by being rooted in time; it has failed to take note and learn from its founder who constantly adapted, harnessed, and remoulded, if not modified his ideas with time.

Nevertheless, Dayananda will go down in Indian History as the most significant and radical reformer of modern India. His humanism, courage, intellect and vision will remain an epic tale for centuries to come.

Check Your Progress II

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Why was Dayanand Saraswati called ‘Luther of India’?

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3.4 LET US SUM UP

Modern Indian Ethics was developed in the context of the British Rule. The ethical thinkers in this era gave relevant meaning to traditional ethical outlook in dialogue with the Western ethics. These interpreted traditional Indian ethics in terms of prevalent significance.

3.5. KEY WORDS

Pragmatism: Pragmatism is a philosophical movement teaching that a proposition is true if it works satisfactorily. The meaning of a proposition is to be found in the practical consequences of accepting it; unpractical ideas are to be rejected.

Sati: Sati is a practice among some Hindu communities in which a recently widowed woman would immolate herself on her husband's funeral pyre. This practice is now outlawed in modern India.

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3.7. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. There is only one God, who is the creator, and the savior of this world. He is spirit, infinite in power, wisdom, love, justice and holiness, omnipresent, eternal and blissful.

-The human soul is immortal and capable of infinite progress, and is responsible to God for its doings.

-Man's happiness in this and the next world consists in worshipping God in spirit and in truth.

-Loving God, holding communion with Him, and carrying out His will in all the concerns of life, constitute true worship.

-No created object is to be worshipped as God, and God alone is to be considered as infallible.

2. The attractive programme of the Samaj won the support of a large number of educated people in Bengal and outside. It fought against the social evils like child marriage, sati and selling of female children and all other inhuman practices which heaped suffering on women in the name of religious sanctity. In spite of an organised opposition from the Dharma Sabha, Brahmos came out successful in getting the law passed in 1829 against the sati practice, they were thankful to God and British Government, whose protecting arm has rescued our weaker sex from cruel murder, under the cloak of religion. It fought against the continuation of evil practices which subjected women to miseries, degradation and inferiority.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Although, Dayananda's bhasya spanning thousand of pages is not taken seriously in Vedic studies and considered outdated; the fact remains relatively unknown that it did win the approval of few of his later contemporaries whose works are considered at least intellectually far superior to his. Last but not the least; the bhasya constitutes the very first effort and a massive one at that in bringing the Vedas out of the sanctuary of Brahmanical dominance into the open and make them accessible to all Hindus; irrespective of caste and creed. Jordens believes this to be the strongest argument in him being called "The Luther of India."

2. Vivekananda believed in the possibility of Universal Religion. Religions of the world vary in important details. They differ from the point of view of mythology, rituals, social values, and philosophic traditions. Yet Vivekananda says, "The religions of the world are not contradictory and antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion". He continues; "Religion is one because like blood and breath, it belongs to the very life of man". The essence of all religion is the same and that is God-realisation. A religion of love, peace and harmony is a universal religion, according to Swami Vivekananda.

UNIT 4

ETHICS IN CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY

Contents

4.0. Objectives

4.1. Introduction

4.2. Ethics of Swami Vivekananda

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4.4. Ethics of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan

4.5. Ethics of Amartya Sen

4.6. Let Us Sum Up

4.7. Key Words

4.8. Further Readings and References

4.9. Answers to Check Your Progress

4.0. OBJECTIVES

Contemporary Indian Philosophy is a response to the realization of a need to reconcile the forces of tradition with those of modernity. It's ethics emphasizes the ultimacy of moral values; yet it demonstrates that the roots of moral values lie in conditions that are essentially existential. In this study you are expected to understand the main ethical teachings of the most prominent ethicists, such as:

- Ethical teachings of Swami Vivekananda
- Ethical teachings of Mahatma Gandhi
- Ethical teachings of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan
- Ethical teachings of Amartya Sen

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Besides the cultural matrix and religious patrimony of India, the contemporary Indian thinkers were very much influenced by empiricistic, utilitarian, agnostic, humanistic and analytic ethics in the West, especially of the thoughts of John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, Herbert Spencer, Tolstoy and Wittgenstein. These Western-oriented ideas served to generate a secular and rational ethics and stimulated social and religious movements. Among those who deserve our special

mention for their original contributions to ethical thinking are Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Amartya Sen (currently at Harvard).

4.2. ETHICS OF SWAMI VIEVKANADA

Swami Vivekananda was the pioneer of the rationalist movement in modern India, in the spheres of Ethics and religion. He may be regarded as the dynamic counterpart of Ramakrishna Pramahansa. He tried to read Sankara's Advaita into Ramakrishna's teaching. He tried to give an intelligent, concrete and scientific account of practical Vedanta. According to him the central point of Vedanta is that of unity in variety, not that of barren unity. The universal soul is encased in the living Prakrti. Finite is the real form of the absolute. He does not reject the universe outright as something illusory. His philosophy is more or less the synthesis of the philosophy of Shankara and the humanism of Buddha and Ramanuja. He liberated the Vedantic ideas and ideals from the caves, forests and made them available to the common man. Therefore his Vedanta is called *Practical Vedanta*. The practical teachings of Vivekananda are full of activism and humanism.

His philosophy may be summarised thus all is Brahman; the *jiva* is none other than Siva; every creature is God himself in particular mode of name and form. According to him the manifestation of Brahman is not the same everywhere. The moon and the star, the lowest worm and the highest man are lower and higher forms of manifestations. From the stand point of the Absolute Brahman, nothing else is. From the stand point of the world of Māya, everything is real. All human beings are potentially divine and perfect. Vivekananda did not accept a totally impersonal and indeterminate Brahman as a reasonable concept of metaphysics.

From a very long time, knowledge of Vedanta was confined to caves and forests. But Vedanta truths have to be practiced in the midst of family and social life. Vivekananda tried his best to restore Advaita to its original purity. In other words he attempted to give a concrete shape to Advaita Vedanta by applying it to life. He never tired of saying that the Vedanta of books must be translated into practice. Vedanta truths should never remain in theory. The following are the characteristics of Practical Vedanta according to Vivekananda.

Universality: Vedanta is a universal religion. Its three schools, namely, Advaita, Visistadvaita and Dvaita are three stages in the spiritual growth of man. They are not contradictory of one another but supplementary. According to Vivekananda Advaita is the complete truth and Visistadvaita and Dvaita are partial truths. The progress is from lower truths to higher truth. One can reach the highest truth only after passing through the other two stages. The Absolute can be reached only through the medium of the names and forms. Again Vedanta is universal in the sense that its truths apply to the whole of mankind in general. It is the same current that flows through every human being. And that is spirit. Vedanta is universal in the sense that it is rooted in the idea of the oneness of all, in the idea of unbroken continuity of existence.

Impersonality: Vedanta depends upon no persons or incarnations. Its eternal principles depend upon its own foundations. Hence it alone is the universal religion. Vedanta alone is based on principles, whereas all other religions are based on the lives of their founders. Christianity, Islam and even Buddhism would lose their authority in the eyes of their followers, if Christ Mohamed

and Buddha are proved to be not historical figures. It is truth that matters in Vedanta, not the personalities.

Rationality: Vedanta is in complete agreement with the methods and results of modern science. Its conclusions are preeminently rational, being deduced from widespread religious experience. For example the grand Vedantic idea of the spiritual oneness of the whole universe. According to science all things in the universe are waves. Vedanta has discovered that there is but one soul throughout the universe and that all being are only Configurations of that one Reality. From this oneness the solidarity of the universe can be deduced. Vivekananda firmly believes in this oneness of humanity. Vivekananda says that it is the spiritual oneness of Vedanta that serves as a firm ground of all ethical teaching. "Love your neighbors as yourself", one loves another, because one sees one's own self in the other. The application of Vedantic truth to political and social life, results in the spiritualisation of democracy, socialism, liberty, equality and fraternity.

According to him Vedanta is thoroughly rational and scientific. Vedanta does not discard reason in favor of faith. It recognizes intuition or inspiration as a higher faculty than reason. But the truth derived from intuition have to be explained and systematized by reason.

Catholicity: According to Swami Vivekananda action, devotion, meditation, knowledge all have their due place in the scheme of religious life. Its conception of the four yogas give a complete chart religious life. Guidance is here given to all kinds of aspirants in all stages of growth. Hinduism is often compared to a mansion in which rooms are available to all classes of men, from the lowest peasant to the highest mystic.

Optimism: Optimism (Hopefulness) is the life breath of Vedanta. Vedanta is a religion of strength and hope, not a religion of weakness and despair. It teaches unshakable optimism. It alone makes men strong and self-reliant. It insists upon the inherent divinity of the human soul under all circumstances. It gives hope of infinite progress to every man. It accords man a sense of Sacredness and dignity unknown to other religions. It teaches that man is essentially divine. Hence his salvation must come from within. Vivekananda says "Vedanta is a strength-giving-religion and man making education". The people of India are incurably religious. They are not ignorantly religious but intelligently religious.

Humanism: Humanism is the dominant note of Vivekananda's practical Vedanta. The masses should be our Gods. Service to man is service to God. We should perceive Siva in every Jīva. We should serve not Narayana in the temple but Lamē-Narayana, blind-Narayana, hungry Narayana and have not Narayana. Vivekananda says, "first food then Brahman. It is sin to teach Vedanta to the poor". The poor and the hungry should be fed first. He again says, "I am not interested in my own moksha. I shall not have it till each one gets it". Ignorance and illiteracy are the greatest stumbling blocks in the path of progress. Every educated youth should contribute his mite towards the eradication of ignorance and illiteracy. His supreme task was to work for the religious regeneration of the land through renunciation and service. He urged his countrymen to dedicate themselves to the service of starving and oppressed millions. We may say that Vivekananda's whole life was one prolonged cry for the uplift of the toiling millions of his beloved country. He was a great humanist.

Swami Vivekananda was a man of Religion. His concern was with spiritual truth not with physical, dogmatic or scientific discoveries. For him religion is a matter of experience and not a system of dogmas. Thus he clearly illustrates the attitude of the East and the West towards spirit. The western idea is that man is a body and has a soul. According to the East man is a soul and has a body.

Religion is the main stay of India. It has been flowing in India for thousands of years. Religion in India has entered the very blood of the people. It has permeated the whole atmosphere. It has become one with the bodily constituents of Indian people. It is to be further supported and lived and in any case, religion is not to be opposed or to be pushed to the background. Vivekananda stands for the necessity of religion.

He distinguishes true religion and institutional religion. According to him true religion is personal religion. “ It is well to be born in a church, but it is terrible to die there”, says Vivekananda. A pilgrim for God-realisation is born in a religion, but he goes out of it and transcends the external forms of religion, when he is evolved in spirit. The dogmas, rituals, images and sacraments initiate a man and make him God-conscious. But God-realisation is possible only when he transcends the limits of his own finite religion, and experience the mystic vision of God.

Again personal religion consists in rendering service to the humanity. The best form of religion is to see Shiva represented in living men and especially in the poor. It consists in serving a lame Narayana, a blind Narayana and so on. “Here take this and go away” is the sense of charity in the European society. This had a bad effect alike on the giver and the receiver. But according to Vivekananda, in the religion of service, ‘the receiver is greater than the giver’, because for the time being the receiver was God himself.

Religion is the highest expression of love and devotion, beauty and sublimity. Freedom is the key note of spiritual life. Religion consists solely in inner spiritual urges. Wherever religion is estranged or cut off from its vital spring, spiritualism, it is generated in to dry formalism or a routine affairs of life.

Religion does not consist in subscribing to a particular creed or faith but in spiritual realisation. What counts in spiritual life is neither blind faith nor intellectual understanding but in being and becoming. This moulding of life and character, is spiritual transformation and that is the essence of religion.

Religion or spiritualism according to Vivekananda does not signify running away from hazards of life battle and taking recourse in other worldliness. It does not mean running away into mountain caves or monastery cells to practice renunciation. It consists in cultivating strength and visions to face trials of life with heroic calm and determination. Religion should teach strength to the poor and the downtrodden. Religion should be the gospel of strength and activism. Every one should work for the religious regeneration of mankind through renunciation and service.

Vivekananda emphasizes on religion of love. He firmly believed that it is only through love that mankind could be brought together. Another word for love is God. It is in God that all the hopes,

aspirations and happiness of humanity are centered. All that is great and holy is associated with it. But he is never tired of saying that love or emotion must not sink in to sentimentality. His formula is, if your heart comes into conflict with the head, follow the heart. But he is against excessive emotionalism.

Vivekananda makes it a point to distinguish religion from sentimentality. It is to be demarcated from rituals and customs. Emotion is short lived. It is the association of custom with religion that makes it 'shop-keeping religion'. In such a religion God is not looked up on as an end in itself, but a means of transaction of business. He strongly criticized ritual ridden cults like Tantra. Even mysticism is to be assessed with great care. Vivekananda says we want not occultism and mysticism but man-making religion. He prefers to believe in a God who gives bread in this world than to a God who gives undying bliss in heaven.

A religion which teaches only renunciation and nothing else, is a gospel of inaction and isolation. Man is often pictured in some religions as a miserable sinner, weak and helpless. This is wrong. Man himself is the true abode of divinity. The true aim of man should be to draw attention to the divinity already in man. Vivekananda thus goes away from glorifying God outside man. No religion should make man a helpless empty nothing. The religious man must first be a proud human being.

Religion is not what is found books. It is not an intellectual consent. It consists in realisation. It is a perfectly natural and normal element of human life. It is simply the experience of human nature in the higher ranges of its activities. It is source of highest kind of happiness.

Vivekananda believed in the possibility of Universal Religion. Religions of the world vary in important details. They differ from the point of view of mythology, rituals, social values, and philosophic traditions. Yet Vivekananda says, "The religions of the world are not contradictory and antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion". He continues; "Religion is one because like blood and breath, it belongs to the very life of man". The essence of all religion is the same and that is God-realisation. A religion of love, peace and harmony is a universal religion, according to Swami Vivekananda.

4.3. ETHICS OF MAHATMA GANDHI

Mahatma Gandhi lit the imagination of the entire world. The waste of human ability energy and money on armament will continue unabated, and diversion of world resources to development will remain a pipe dream, so long as human does not learn the great lesson which Gandhi preached so convincingly in our own times that non-violence is the law of our species. Today Gandhian values have special significance for national integration. Communal harmony has become essential for national integration and hence Gandhi gave it the highest priority. By communal harmony Gandhiji did not mean merely paying lip service to it. He meant it to be an unbreakable bond of unity. In the religious context Gandhi emphasized that communal harmony has to be based on equal respect for all religions. Everyone, Gandhi said, must have the same regard for other faiths as one had for one's own. Such respect would not only remove religious rifts but lead to a realization of the fact that religion was a stabilizing force, not a

disturbing element. Gandhi's basic axiom was that religion since the scriptures of all religions point only in one direction of goodwill, openness and understanding among humans.

He regarded education as the light of life and the very source from which was created an awareness of oneness. Gandhi believed that the universality of ethics can best be realized through the universalisation of education, and that such universalisation was the spring board for national integration. Harmony is not brought about overnight. Gandhi advocated the process of patience, persuasion and perseverance for attainment of peace and love for harmony and was firmly convinced of the worth of gentleness as panacea for all evils. Communal harmony had the pride of place in Gandhi's constructive programme. He taught us the dignity of labour as a levelling social factor that contributed to a national outlook in keeping with the vision of new India. He always believed that a nation built on the ethical foundation of non-violence would be able to withstand attacks on its-integrity from within and without.

Gandhi pleaded for the humanization of knowledge for immunization against the ideas of distrust among the communities of the nations and the nationalities of the world. He wanted to take the country from areas of hostility into areas of harmony of faiths through tolerance, so that we could work towards understanding each other. His mass contact programme was specifically aimed at generating a climate of confidence and competition and eliminating misgiving and misconceptions, conflicts and confrontation.

Gandhi also held that bridging the gulf between the well off and the rest was as essential for national integration as inter-religious record. He said that we must work for economic equality and social justice, which would remove the ills caused by distress and bitterness. He stressed that the foundation of equality, the core of harmony will have to be laid here now and built up brick by brick through ethical and economic satisfaction of the masses. There is no denying the fact that Gandhi was deep rooted in his cultural and religious traditions. The phenomenal success Gandhi registered in far away South Africa fighting for human rights and civil liberties and later the adoption of the Gandhian techniques by Nelson Mandela and the subsequent revelations made by the former South African president De Klerk that he was greatly influenced by Gandhi's principles.

In the American continent Martin Luther King's heroic fight for civil liberties on the Gandhian lines and his own admission that it was from Gandhi that he learnt his operational tactics also is not an isolated instance of the relevance of the Gandhian tactics. Martin Luther King (Jr.) said, "If humanity is to progress, Gandhi is inescapable. He lived, thought and acted, inspired by the version of a humanity evolving towards a world of peace and harmony. We may ignore him at our own risk."

Gandhi successfully demonstrated to a world, weary with wars and continuing destruction that adherence to Truth and Non-violence is not meant for individual behaviour alone but can be applied in global affairs too. Gandhiji described seven social sins: Politics without principles. Wealth without work; commerce without morality; education without character; pleasure without conscience; science without humanity; and worship without sacrifice.

Though he was open to various religious traditions, Gandhi was mainly influenced by Hindu and Christian traditions. Gandhi agreed that we can say that God is love, but he felt that the word love is used in many ways and can be ambiguous. Therefore, Gandhi preferred to say that truth is God rather than God is truth, because the former proposition expresses a belief that even the atheists share. The belief in the presence of an all-pervading spirit in the universe led Gandhi to a strict formulation of the ethics of nonviolence (ahimsa). But he gave this age-old ethical principle a wealth of meaning so that ahimsa for him became at once a potent means of collective struggle against social and economic injustice, the basis of a decentralized economy and decentralized power structure, and the guiding principle of one's individual life in relation both to nature and to other persons. The unity of existence, which he called the truth, can be realized through the practice of ahimsa, which requires reducing oneself to zero and reaching the furthest limit of humility.

Equality of religions is one of Gandhi's cardinal beliefs. It is based first on the unfathomable and unknowable character of the one God who is over us all; secondly, on the never-ending forms of divine revelation and human religious responses to them; thirdly on the centrality of the law of non-violence enjoined by all the religions; fourthly, on the existence of errors and imperfections in all religious and fifthly, on the conviction that all religions are in evolution towards fuller realization of truth. According to Gandhi, not Christology but ethics as the means to truth constitutes fundamental Christianity, and it is the same in all religions. It is possible to say that where there is boundless love and no idea of retaliation whatsoever it is Christianity that lives. Gandhi tends to say that it is impossible to comprehend religion without ethics. In fact there exists a distinction between religion and ethics, though they are related.

Check Your Progress I

- Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) How do you understand 'universal religion' by Swami Vivekananda?

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2) Explain briefly Gandhi's description of seven sins.

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4.4. ETHICS OF SARVAPPALLI RADHAKRISHNAN

Radhakrishnan tried to present Hinduism as significant to modern and, thereby, to offer a vision to human who today is threatened by one's own inventions, a vision that would enable one to work towards greater human solidarity and authentic development.

Human beings by nature are value seekers. They strive for truth, beauty and goodness. Ethical principles are unconditional commands. They are guidance to man to attain his real self. Human life is transitory. Man is not satisfied with the fragments of happiness (which are full of dualities, discords and contradictions). Radhakrishnan maintains that man is in need of a deep ontological unity behind all these fragments, which alone can give him the proper meaning of life, the everlasting peace of mind and spirit. This deep awareness and understanding of the mystery of life can be gained only through ethics, religion, and philosophy. Moral values are necessary for the development of his personality. Non-violence, renunciation and suffering are positive necessities of human life. Renunciation means the rejection of the worldly desires; it is not the rejection of life in the world.

In India, philosophy has been interpreted as an enquiry into the nature of human, human's origin and destiny. To the Indian mind, philosophy is essentially practical, dealing as it does with the fundamental anxieties of human beings, which are more insistent than abstract speculations. We are not contemplating the world from outside but are in it. Events happen in the mind of humans before they are made manifest in the course of history. The present chaos in the world can be traced directly to the chaos in our minds. There is division in human's soul. Scientific and secular humanism alone will not create a harmonious society. Peace of mind is a remote hope until and unless we have a vision of perfection, a glimpse of eternity to prevail against the perspective of time. Security without which no happiness is possible cannot come from the mastery of things. Mastery of self is the essential prerequisite.

Radhakrishnan gives a spiritual interpretation to the modern theory of evolution. He maintains that human is the higher product of evolutionary process. Spiritual evolution takes place after the emergence of human, the spirit in human being a promise of the highest future development.

According to Radhakrishnan, the self is an organized whole different from the self as subject. The self is conscious of its limitations and purpose. The ordinary human does not try to know the mysterious existence of the soul in us. The existence of soul in us can be proved by the analysis of our spiritual consciousness. The voice of the spirit is completely silent in none. The seers have listened to it better. They are the beginnings of new human species. Misuse or lack of use can also destroy the powers of the spirit. All the great religious systems signify the importance of worship and cultivation of love and sympathy through which alone human spirit can be developed.

Human exists in the world for a higher cause. Hindu systems of thought believe in the power of the human mind to lead us to all truth. Our ordinary mind is not the highest possible order of the

human mind. It can rise to a level almost inconceivable to us. The idealist tradition both in the East and the West has asserted the supremacy of spirit in human. Mere physical desire and passion, impulse and instinct, even intellect and will do not exhaust one's nature. The spiritual status is the essential dignity of human and the origin of one's freedom.

The purpose of ethics is also to effect right relationship between the individual and the society. Social order is ordained to develop ethical, material and intellectual spheres of human's life – realize the best possibilities of one's life.

While the truths intuition grasps are self-evident, training is necessary to direct our mental vision to the right objects so that our mind can 'behold' the objects. In so far as our minds are not creative of reality but only receptive of it, we must get into contact with reality, outward by perception, inward by intuition, and by means of intellect interpret and understand it. It is unfortunate that insistence on intuition is often confused with anti-intellectualism. Intuition which ignores intellect is useless. The two are not only not incompatible but vitally united. We can realize the potentialities of spirit only by a process of moral assess which gradually shapes the soul into harmony with the invisible realities. To know better, we must become different, our thoughts and feelings must be deeply harmonized. Intuition is not only perfect knowledge but also perfect living.

Human's nature changes in two ways. First, there are the natural or mechanical changes due to the environmental and inherent causes. Secondly there is the ethical and spiritual change which is conscious. The evolving personality of human is yet to grow to greater possibilities. Morality enables human to rise to a higher plane. He emphasized the religious nature of human. His concept of religion transcends all kinds of creeds and dogmas. It is a universal religion, which fulfils the aspirations of humanity. He respected all religions. Radhakrishnan's philosophy is the philosophy of growth and progress of human's spiritual personality. He conceives that human can attain one's higher destiny by becoming one with *Isvara* through *jnana* and intuition. He believes in cosmic liberation. The total perfection is possible for human only when the human race as a whole is liberated, only when all released souls become one with the Infinite.

Human can develop one's moral nature by cultivating love for one's fellow beings. One has to control one's egocentricity to know truth. We must cease to identify ourselves with the separate ego shut up in the walls of body, life and mind. This is an ethical process. A morally developed person is led by the inner spirit, and not by the conventional or external standards.

Human's highest destiny is to grow more humane, more spiritual and to be more sympathetic in understanding others. Conflicts in their souls have grouped humankind into numerous conflicting groups. Freedom of human is not a whim since our present life is the continuation of the past. The character of human is constituted by the past history of one's life. Human is not a puppet at the hands of fate. Life is a growing stage and the growth is free to a certain extent. The emergence of self and not the self-conscious mind is the basic desire of nature. Matter, life and mind evolve only when their respectively necessary conditions are fulfilled, similarly spirit or the supermind will evolve when the necessary efforts are made and the conditions are ready.

4.5. ETHICS OF AMARTYA SEN

Sen proposes that people's well-being should be evaluated on the basis of their 'capability to achieve valuable functionings'. This approach is called 'the capability approach' which consists of two distinct notions: functionings and capabilities. Functionings refer to the number of 'doings' and 'beings' that a person manages to achieve in life. Sen mentions both basic functionings like nutrition, life expectancy, health and education as well as complex functionings like self-respect, social recognition and political participation. Capabilities refer to the extent of freedom that a person has in order to achieve different functionings. When we look at a fasting monk and a starving poor child, they do fare equally in terms of achieved functioning since both do not eat. But in terms of capabilities, they are unequal in as much as the monk has the freedom to choose that state while the child does not have that freedom. The capability approach therefore is a freedom-centred approach.

The capability approach differs from two other prominent approaches: utilitarianism and liberalism inspired by the American Philosopher John Rawls. Having defined utility in terms of pleasure, happiness or desire-fulfilment, one of the chief aims of utilitarianism is to maximise its overall value in society. Although such thinking today does not form a distinct political ideology, it exerts considerable influence on public policy decisions: 'greatest happiness of the greatest (and perhaps, the socially and politically powerful!) number.' Many countries in the world seem to follow this crude utilitarian calculus when pursuing developmental projects such as building huge dams, establishing industries and sometimes even initiating large-scale deforestation. In contrast to utilitarianism, Rawls bases his philosophy on a set of individual rights: 'each person possesses an inviolability founded on justice that even the welfare of society as a whole cannot override'. His first of the two principles of justice requires that civil and political rights, including freedom of speech and freedom from torture and arbitrary arrest, be given absolute priority. Rawls, in his second principle tries to balance the demands of efficiency and justice: while society's offices and positions should be available to everyone in an open competition, in order to keep social inequality within manageable proportions special attention has to be paid to the needs of the worst off in society.

Sen acknowledges Rawls to be a great moral and political philosopher particularly for advocating a non-utilitarian political philosophy. Yet, Sen thinks Rawls' theory to be limited from the point of view of human capabilities: it does not go deep enough to capture human diversity and some blatant inequalities in society. Human beings differ from one another in a number of ways. There are, first and foremost, differences in personal characteristics such as health, age, sex and genetic endowments. Human beings also vary from one another in the types of external environment and social conditions they live in. These different elements of human diversity crucially affect the ways in which resources such as income and wealth are transformed into relevant capabilities. A physically handicapped person, for example, might be in need of more resources to be mobile than an able-bodied person. Or, increasing the social and political participation of traditionally oppressed groups would demand efforts more than just providing access to resources; it might require tackling some entrenched social, economic and political practices and structures. Since Rawls' theory works with the assumption of a liberal society with citizens having more or less equal capacities, Sen points out, inequalities and disadvantages arising from human diversities are either postponed to be settled by legislative or judicial procedures or at the most relegated as issues falling in the domain of charity.

4.6. LET US SUM UP

Besides the ethical matrix and religious patrimony of India, the ethical teachings of the contemporary Indian thinkers – Swami Vivekananda, Mahatma Gandhi, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan and Amartya Sen – were influenced by the Western ideas of secularism, humanism and rationalism. **Swami Vivekananda** emphasizes on religion of love. He firmly believed that it is only through love that humankind could be brought together. Another word for love is God. It is in God that all the hopes, aspirations and happiness of humanity are centred. Human is the true abode of divinity. The true aim of human should be to draw attention to the divinity already present in oneself. Vivekananda thus goes away from glorifying God outside human. No religion should make human a helpless empty nothing. The religious human must first be a proud human being. Vivekananda believed in the possibility of Universal Religion. The essence of all religion is the same and that is God-realisation. A religion of love, peace and harmony is a universal religion, according to Swami Vivekananda. **Mahatma Gandhi** believed that the universality of ethics can best be realized through the universalisation of education, and that such universalisation was the spring board for national integration. Harmony is not brought about overnight. Gandhi advocated the process of patience, persuasion and perseverance for attainment of peace and love for harmony and was firmly convinced of the worth of gentleness as panacea for all evils. Communal harmony had the pride of place in Gandhi's constructive programme. He taught us the dignity of labour as a levelling social factor that contributed to a national outlook in keeping with the vision of new India. He always believed that a nation built on the ethical foundation of non-violence would be able to withstand attacks on its-integrity from within and without. For **Radhakrishnan** humans by nature are value seekers. They strive for truth, beauty and goodness. Ethical principles are unconditional commands. They are guidance to human to attain one's real self. Human life is transitory. Human is not satisfied with the fragments of happiness (which are full of dualities, discords and contradictions). Radhakrishnan maintains that human is in need of a deep ontological unity behind all these fragments, which alone can give him the proper meaning of life, the everlasting peace of mind and spirit. This deep awareness and understanding of the mystery of life can be gained only through ethics, religion, and philosophy. Moral values are necessary for the development of one's personality. Non-violence, renunciation and suffering are positive necessities of human life. **Amartya Sen** proposes an economic ethics of 'capabilities'. Capabilities refer to the extent of freedom that a person has in order to achieve different needs. Human beings differ from one another in a number of ways, in health, age, sex and genetic endowments. These differences crucially affect the ways in which resources such as income and wealth are transformed into relevant ethical capabilities.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What does give humans the proper meaning of life?

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2) How do you explain ethics of capability by Amartya Sen?

4.7. KEY WORDS

Poverty: Poverty is the inability to choose due to lack of resources.

Ahimsa: Ahimsa is a term meaning to do no harm. It is an important tenet of the religions that originated in ancient India. It is a rule of conduct that bars the killing or injuring of living beings.

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4.9. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1. Vivekananda believed in the possibility of Universal Religion. Religions of the world vary in important details. They differ from the point of view of mythology, rituals, social values, and philosophic traditions. Yet Vivekananda says, "The religions of the world are not contradictory and antagonistic. They are but various phases of one eternal religion". He continues; "Religion is one because like blood and breath, it belongs to the very life of man". The essence of all religion is the same and that is God-realisation. A religion of love, peace and harmony is a universal religion, according to Swami Vivekananda.

2. Gandhiji described seven social sins: Politics without principles. wealth without work; commerce without morality; education without character; pleasure without conscience; science without humanity; and worship without sacrifice.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Human beings by nature are value seekers. They strive for truth, beauty and goodness. Ethical principles are unconditional commands. They are guidance to man to attain his real self. Human life is transitory. Man is not satisfied with the fragments of happiness (which are full of dualities, discords and contradictions). Radhakrishnan maintains that man is in need of a deep ontological unity behind all these fragments, which alone can give him the proper meaning of life, the everlasting peace of mind and spirit.

2. Amartya Sen proposes an economic ethics of 'capabilities. Capabilities refer to the extent of freedom that a person has in order to achieve different needs. Human beings differ from one another in a number of ways, in health, age, sex and genetic endowments. These differences crucially affect the ways in which resources such as income and wealth are transformed into relevant ethical capabilities.

BLOCK-3 INTRODUCTION

Moral consciousness is not just another inherent dimension of human relationship. It is the essence of interpersonal relationship. It is only through the authentic application of moral consciousness can one rise above ignorance, inexperience, and self-interest that regularly impede moral judgement. Through the development of moral consciousness, a person is able to gain the most appropriate knowledge, wisdom, sensitivity, and insight for ensuring that they can act justly, rightly and promote common good. To this end, this block focuses its attention on this relatively neglected but vitally important aspects and elements of moral consciousness such as moral experience, virtues and vices, human action, norm of morality, and natural and moral law.

Unit 1 is on “Moral Experience.” This unit introduces the learners to the concept of moral experience in general and guide them to gain an insight into the philosophical analysis of the main components of moral experience, moral judgment, moral dilemmas, moral principles and moral sentiments. Various theories connected with the norm for moral experience are presented so that there is some clarity with regard to moral decisions.

Unit 2 is on “Virtues and Vices.” Virtues are the habits that characterize the human personality which quests for final fulfillment, specifically happiness. Humans search for happiness. The means to attain this goal is virtuous life. In this unit, after a preliminary understanding of the meaning of virtue we make an effort to grasp the Socratic, Platonic and the Aristotelian conception of virtue followed by teachings on the same in major world religions.

Unit 3 is on “Analysis of Human Action.” This Unit studies human action which is central to human conduct and Ethics. The unit highlights the obstacles that could possibly obstruct the performance of human act. Then it analyses the factors that generally influence the morality of human action against the backdrop of determinism and indeterminism.

Unit 4, “Norm of Morality,” explains the basic understanding of the norms of morality. We understand conscience as subjective norm of morality and intuition, law and pleasure as objective norms of morality. Norm is a rule or standard for our judgement. It remains as a standard or rule with which we can judge our actions as good or bad. For this we have to compare the human acts with the norms before we form our conclusions.

Unit 5, “Natural and Moral Law,” is oriented to understand the phenomenon of morality, to define natural law, to understand its nature, i.e. its universality and particularity, change of natural law, the relation of natural law to particular laws, its relation to human dignity, to the concept of intrinsic evil and to understand the criticism of natural law and to answer it. Our understanding of natural law has shown that there is an essential relationship between moral values and reason. The good manifests itself to reason. Or, it is only in the light of reason that the good becomes visible.

The above given five units emphasize that moral consciousness, that arises from moral experience, is the essence of interpersonal relationship. The cultivation of virtues and avoidance of vices are human actions in accordance with subjective and objective norms of morality having their foundation in natural and moral law.

UNIT 1

MORAL EXPERIENCE

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Study of Moral Experience
- 1.3 Moral Consciousness
- 1.4 Data for Moral Experience
- 1.5 Philosophical Analysis
- 1.6 Norm for Moral Judgment
- 1.7 Moral Dilemmas
- 1.8 Moral Principles
- 1.9 Moral Sentiments
- 1.10 Dynamics of Moral Experience
- 1.11 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.12 Key Words
- 1.13 Further Readings and References
- 1.14 Answers to Check Your Progress

-----1.0.

OBJECTIVES

The major objective of this unit is to introduce the learners to the concept of moral experience in general and guide them to gain an insight into the philosophical analysis of the main components of moral experience, namely moral consciousness, moral judgment, moral dilemmas, moral principles and moral sentiments. Various theories connected with the norm for moral experience are presented so that there is some clarity with regard to moral decisions. So at the end of this unit, the student will be able:

- To understand moral experience in general
- To gain a philosophical insight into the various theories of moral judgment
- To have an idea of moral dilemma, moral principle and moral sentiment
- To understand the meaning of dynamics of moral experience

1.1. INTRODUCTION

Ethics is a branch of enquiry in Philosophy. It is a treatise which studies human behaviour and determines what is right and wrong behaviour. Another term for ethics is moral philosophy. It attempts to show that there is in human beings a spontaneous and moral awareness and orientation for distinguishing between right or wrong. The capacity for differentiating the mere registration of facts from the meaningfulness of such facts is based on rationality. Ethics does not merely describe the rules of conduct as a positive science but it also aims, as a normative science to show if moral conclusions can serve as objective norms for daily living. The whole of human history may be viewed as a journey in moral experience. Humanity has undertaken this important voyage by a continuous process of moral decisions.

Against this backdrop, 'Moral Experience' includes a wide range of concepts like moral consciousness, moral sense, moral sentiments, moral dilemmas, moral principles and moral judgments. Moral experience investigates all these as human events. Psychological states such as intentions, motives, will, reason, emotions like guilt and shame, moral beliefs and attitudes offer further scope for moral experience. It does not stop with psychology but covers concepts like virtue, character, habit and freedom. Hence moral experience may be studied both as a descriptive and as a normative science.

1.2. STUDY OF MORAL EXPERIENCE

The Study of Moral experience is motivated by scientific curiosity, a search for explanations of all kinds of moral phenomena, more specifically as to what is designated as moral experience. However, the study must include the promotion of human welfare. Moral experience is highly contextual and communal. Therefore cultural and social factors play a very important role in the understanding of moral experience. Another significant aspect of moral experience is the moral system which regulates the member of the community. Moral experience is in constant need of revision and improvement in view of public service in a democracy. Individual development of personality always takes place through the study of one's moral experience. Moral sense derives its character from the public context within the larger socio-political and intellectual context. One could argue for moral experience purely on individual conviction. Rejection of external authority and belief in one's own inner light situates moral sense within human nature itself without any reference to any agency or divine will.

1.3. MORAL CONSCIOUSNESS

Moral experience begins with moral consciousness or moral sense. In fact moral consciousness and moral experience are used as synonyms by many. But it is good to distinguish between the two. Experience is a generic term in the sense that whatever affects a person can be called an 'experience'. It can be an emotion like love or hatred. It can be active or passive like love for a friend or love of a friend. One can speak of one's progress in studies as 'knowledge experience.' Any experience leaves behind an impression or memory. Such impressions or memories cumulatively add up to one's experience. The totality of such experiences contributes to the formation of a human personality.

However in the experiential process of personality development of an individual, there is always a lack of awareness. It is only when an individual becomes aware of one's latent talents and potentialities of every aspect like mind, heart and will that one could speak of consciousness. As a human experience 'human consciousness' is never total. Even though human consciousness or the self-reflective process of a person is integral to human nature, it is possible to distinguish the contents of the various fields of human consciousness. These fields are normally referred to as 'noetic consciousness', 'aesthetic consciousnesses' and 'moral consciousness' which highlight the formal objects of Truth, Beauty and Goodness.

The formal object of moral consciousness or rectitude deals with what is right and the right thing to do. Rectitude or Goodness is very meaningful word. Careful reflection and calm reasoning is required to understand the implications and importance of the phrase 'moral goodness' or 'moral

rectitude' which constitutes the major component of moral experience. The passage from moral experience to moral consciousness may very well be compared with the entry point of an airport and the myriad runways on the tarmac. It is again like going from the merely implicit background opaque experience to the explicit foreground of enlightened consciousness. So far, it has been dim, vague and unthematic. Henceforth it would be clear, plain and thematic.

1.4. DATA FOR MORAL EXPERIENCE

At this juncture, a remark is necessary as to what is specific or 'subjective' experience of a particular individual and what makes for the general or 'objective' experience of every person. A study of the moral experience of others obtained from public contact with them and a careful study of moral history would throw light on the question of the data of moral experience. The most immediate primary data of moral experience are actions which are good and which are done by everyone and the actions which are bad and which are avoided by everyone. The scholastic tenet that 'the good is to be done and the evil to be avoided' is the principle of common sense. Humans come to the awareness of this distinction through the process of socialization, influence and education.

Some good actions are absolute, some are conditional and some others are optional in practice. Similarly some bad actions are avoided absolutely while others are avoided conditionally. A sense of obligation or constraint is the result of the feeling of 'should' or 'should not'. Moral experience is based on a moral choice or freedom to comply with the sense of obligation or constraint. Moral obligation becomes objective in the sense that an individual finds oneself as 'obligated' even before any moral decision. It comes to express a universal application. The second aspect of moral experience is that what is right must be done because it is right to do it and it is an end in itself and avoid what is wrong and must be avoided. The sense of satisfaction when the right thing is done and the sense of guilt when a wrong thing is done is another important datum of moral experience. The right action gets approval and praise while the wrong action invites condemnation and blame.

1.5. PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS

A philosophical understanding of moral experience invites us to explore the meaning of terms such as 'good or bad', 'right or wrong'. There are different approaches to moral experience. Linguistic analysis of moral experience serves as a useful method to understand moral problems. Meta-ethical theories like logical positivism, emotivism and intuitionism do not actually solve ethical problems but contain very precious insights for understanding moral experience, particularly with regard to moral ideal or moral value which cannot be reduced to non-moral value. Moral experience is made up of specific moral actions. Moral actions issue from moral values. And the totality of moral values can be called the moral order.

What is the foundation for moral experience? Do humans build such a foundation? Is it universal? How do the humans come to know such a foundation? The first two questions are explicit and the latter are implicit.

Humans as beings with a conscience are dynamic, always becoming and in the making, transparent, undetermined and indefinable. They become the foundation of moral experience. If

Humans as social beings are the immediate domain of moral experience, then interrelatedness becomes the foundation for moral order and experience. This interrelatedness operates at three levels namely, a relatedness with an absolute being, a relatedness with other humans and a relatedness with the infra-human world. For the moment, the relation with the Absolute as religious value is kept aside. The other two relations play a significant role in moral experience. Expression of moral sentiments towards the infra-human world is analogous in the sense that one's attitudes towards animals and plants are similar to one's attitudes towards fellow human beings. Only the relation with other humans serves as the primary sphere of moral experience. Actions in this domain become morally qualifiable and quantifiable.

The social dimension is a constitutive aspect of the human order. Humans are not merely 'social animals' but are bound by 'social contract' as well. The human interrelatedness serves as the foundation for moral experience, human rights and duties. While the believer considers the foundation of moral order to be God, there are others who take human relatedness and freedom to be the foundation of the moral order.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What do you understand by moral experience?

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2) Why is natural law universally valid?

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1.6. NORM FOR MORAL JUDGMENT

Once the foundation for moral experience is established, the question about the criterion for moral judgment arises. Moral judgments must be based on 'norms, rules, standards or criteria. Ethical history has proposed ethical theories which are founded on ethical principles. A cursory view of these norms would shed some light on moral judgment. These theories may generally be classified as teleological (from the Greek word, 'telos-end') and deontological (from the Greek

word 'deon-that which is binding, duties). Teleological theories propound 'ethical egoism', represented by hedonism of Epicurus and Thomas Hobbes, 'eudemonism' of Aristotle and 'ethical altruism' or Utilitarianism represented by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

TELEOLOGICAL THEORIES

Epicurus (4th century BC) looks at pleasure as the motivating power of moral experience and indeed as the end of human life. Pleasure is not the present transitory sensation. It lasts throughout a life time. Pleasure consists in the absence of pain than in positive gratification. It is preeminently serenity of soul or repose (atarxia). Virtue is necessary condition for serenity. Vices produce pain and are an impediment to the acquisition of the serenity of the soul. The highest virtue is phronesis, the prudential art of calculating and measuring pleasure and pain. Epicurean norm is self-centred and hedonistic. What is conducive to the purpose becomes the norm of moral judgment.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679AD) explains all kinds of experiences, namely physiological, emotional, intellectual and volitional in terms of physical motion. Pleasure sets in motion all these of events while pain impedes them. It is reasonable to aim at pleasure for self-preservation which also implies that humans must endeavour to establish peace among themselves which is the first law of nature. Along with this, humans must be willing to forego their claim to have everything. These laws of nature are dictates of reason which govern moral judgment and moral experience. Thus there is openness to social consciousness and civil law in the social utilitarianism of Hobbes. His norm for moral judgment can be interpreted as self-preservation or civil law. Civil law aims at the common good. His insight is that moral good is based on human interrelatedness. Both these theories are termed as 'ethically hedonistic'.

Aristotle (384 BC) states that every thing aims at perfection as the 'good'. In the attainment of perfection, humans achieve happiness. The highest good consists in the attainment of perfect exercise of properly human activities. These human activities are moral and intellectual virtues. Virtue is the mean or middle between two extremes, (e.g.) courage is the mean between foolhardiness and cowardice. Virtue is a constant disposition of the soul. While moral virtues perfect the will, intellectual virtues perfect the mind. Aristotle lists five intellectual virtues. 1) the art of know-how (tekne-later technology) 2)prudence(phronesis) 3) demonstrative reason(episteme) 4)intuitive reason(nous) and 5) wisdom(sophia). The cardinal moral virtues are: 1) courage, 2) temperance, 3) justice and 4) wisdom. In the philosophical contemplation of wisdom, does consist the supreme goodness and perfect happiness. Hence practice of virtues becomes the norm of moral judgement.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832AD) a major figure in the history of ethics emphasizes utility, which is that property in any object whereby it tends to produce benefit, advantage, pleasure, good and happiness to the party whose interest is considered. The British utilitarian movement originated with Bentham since it was he who applied the utilitarian principle to civil legislation and morals for the first time. It is measured by the degree of conduciveness to the greater happiness of the greatest number of humans. He states that humans are moved to action by the attraction of pleasure and the repulsion of pain. By pleasure he not only means sensual pleasure but also aesthetic, intellectual and benevolent satisfaction. His famous 'felicific calculus' enables

humans to decide what concrete action to perform or avoid so as to find the greatest amount of happiness. Any moral action results in happiness based on the following seven factors. 'the intensity of pleasure, its duration, its certainty or uncertainty, its propinquity or remoteness, its fecundity of further pleasurable sensations, its purity from unpleasant sensations, and its extent or number of people affected. The norm of moral judgement is pleasure understood in the light of his 'measure of utility'. Bentham's ideas represent personal utilitarianism.

John Stuart Mill (1806-1873AD) is even more explicit than Bentham when he states that 'the general principle to which all rules of practice ought to conform and the test by which they should be tried is that of the conduciveness to the happiness of mankind or rather of all sentient beings'. He defines utility as the 'Greatest Happiness Principle' as the foundation of moral experience. Actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness he means pleasure and the absence of pain. According to Mill, what humans desire immediately is not their personal happiness but common happiness. Besides there is not only a quantitative difference between pleasures but also a qualitative one. And it is virtue which is conducive to common happiness. He associates the utility principle with the notion of justice. The norm of moral judgement in the case of Mill would be the 'conscientious feelings of mankind'. Hence Mill may be designated as representative of social utilitarianism.

DEONTOLOGICAL THEORIES

The second set of moral theories is deontological which lays stress on duty or obligation. The norm for moral judgement is based on the 'rightness' of a moral duty. Deontological theories like the Divine Voluntarism of Ockham and Moral Positivism of Durkheim speaks of moral norm as extrinsic to moral experience. But the Cosmism of the Stoics, the Moral Sense of Shaftsbury, the Formal Rationalism of Kant, the Right Reason of Thomas Aquinas and the Human Nature of Suarez locate the moral norm as intrinsic to moral experience.

William of Ockham (1290-1349AD): Divine freedom and omnipotence play an important role in Ockham's thought. Since moral order like the created order is contingent, what is good or bad is in such a way as God commands or forbids it. By an absolute power God has established a definite moral order and it is not likely to be changed. He speaks of 'right reason' and any morally good will, a moral virtue or a virtuous act is always in conformity to it. Indeed for an act to be a virtuous act, not only must it conform to right reason but also it must be performed simply because it is good. It appears that on the one hand he posits the absolute will of God as the foundation, norm and source of moral experience and on the other he proposes 'right reason' at least as the proximate norm of morality. According to Ockham, the ultimate and sufficient reason to follow right reason is God's will.

Emile Durkheim (1858-1917AD) For Durkheim, morality is a social phenomenon. Society is not the sum of individuals but it is a kind of ideal. This ideal or 'collective conscience' of the group is the source of religious and moral ideals. So morality has a social function and it consists in the help it gives the individual to adapt themselves to live harmoniously with the mores of the group. The norm for moral judgment would be precisely these mores of one's social group.

Collective thought becomes the norm for the truth or falsehood. This kind of thinking in ethics is called 'Moral Positivism'.

The Stoics (4th cent BC onwards) According to the Stoics, reality consists of two principles, one is active and the other passive which stand one to the other as the soul to the body. Good and evil are two necessary parts, each subserving the perfection of the whole cosmos. All human actions are necessitated by fate. Virtue consists in one's internal conformity to the logos, or the cosmic order. Virtue is the only good for humans desirable in and for itself and vice is its own punishment. Humans are social beings and as citizens of the cosmos they must live according to the Logos.

Lord Shaftesbury (1671-1713AD) As an ardent admirer of Aristotle, Shaftesbury insists on the social nature of humans. Self-love as distinct from selfishness can be consistent with and contribute to love of others or benevolence. Rectitude or virtue is the harmony of one's passions and affections under the control of the reason both with regard to oneself and with regard to others. The emphasis is laid on character rather on actions. Virtue must be sought for its own sake. His theory of 'moral sense' states that every human is capable of perceiving moral values and distinguishing between virtues and vices. Moral concepts are connatural to humans but he admits that moral sense may be darkened by bad customs and education.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804AD) Kant is a landmark in the history of morality. Moral knowledge does not depend exclusively on experience but contains a priori elements like necessity and universality. But Kant attempts to show that these elements originate in practical reason. He understands by practical reason the choices made in accordance with the moral law. He discovers in practical reason the nature of moral obligation. The ultimate basis of moral law cannot be anything else but pure practical reason itself. It is Kantian rationalism. Kant starts with an analysis of the idea of 'good will'. He discovers that a good will is a will which acts for the sake of duty alone. It acts out of reverence for the moral law. It acts because duty is duty. Moral law itself is the source of moral obligation. He further proceeds to formulate the universal form as the principle to serve as the criterion for the moral judgment. Kant calls this universal form of the moral law as the 'categorical imperative'. The possible ground for categorical imperative must be an end which is absolute and not relative. For Kant the supreme good is virtue, which is nothing but making one's will accord perfectly with the moral law. No other philosopher has brought out better than he, the nature of the moral obligation, its independence of empirical experience and its foundation in reason.

Thomas Aquinas (1224-1274AD) The most prominent Christian philosopher and theologian of the Middle Ages speaks of God as the ultimate cause of everything. A certain plan and order exists in the mind of God which he calls the 'Eternal Reason' or the Eternal Law. As manifest in creation, he calls it the 'Natural Law' which can be known through human reason. Any act that conforms to the plan of God is good; otherwise it is bad. The ultimate end of man is God personalistically conceived. Human reason is the proximate homogeneous norm of moral experience.

Francis Suarez (1548-1617AD) The eternal law is a free decree of the will of God who lays down an order to be followed. The principles of the natural law are self-evident and therefore

known immediately and intuitively by all normal human beings. For Suarez the moral good consists in the conformity to human nature that is to rational nature as such. Human reason is seen as a capacity to distinguish between acts which are conformed to human nature from those which are not. And hence human reason not only becomes the foundation of moral experience but also its standard.

The teleological theories approach moral experience and moral values as good, namely, the good of the humans. The deontological theories approach moral experience and moral values as a right, namely the obligation of the humans. There is a relation of reciprocity between the good and the right. While the norm of the good is an ideal for the humans, the norm of the right is moral consciousness itself. As human interrelatedness is the immediate ontological foundation of the moral order and love is the existential foundation, the basis of moral activity, the norm for moral judgement has to be located in the golden mean of Confucius, 'do not do to others what you do not want others do to you', the golden rule of the New Testament, 'do to others what you want others do to you' or in the categorical imperative of Kant, 'so act as to treat humanity whether in your own person or in that of any other always and at the same time as an end and never merely as a means' The norm of morality is constitutive of a person's self-actualization as a social being and its practical principle for moral judgment is the principle of universal love. Theory and practice together form what is called moral experience.

1.7. MORAL DILEMMAS

The term 'Moral dilemma' is applied to any difficult moral problem. Dilemmas raise hard moral questions. In the context of relevance of morality, moral philosophers state moral dilemma when one moral reason conflicts with another. Moral reasons normally conflict with religious or aesthetic reasons. But moral dilemmas occur only when there is conflict between two moral reasons. A moral reason is a moral requirement just in case it would be morally wrong not to act on it without an adequate justification or excuse. E.g. X holds a weapon for Y; then X has a moral reason to return it when asked for. But if X feels that Y would commit a heinous crime with the weapon, then X has moral reason not to return the weapon.

1.8. MORAL PRINCIPLES

Normally a person of moral principle is associated with a fixed set of rules that ignores the complexities of the situation and fails to adapt one's behaviour to changing circumstances. The morality of principles is contrasted with the morality of sensibility which lays stress on virtue as sympathy and integrity. But a general sense of moral principle indicates some factor that is generally relevant to what ought to be done. Moral principles can then be regarded as statements picking out those factors of situations that can be appealed to as moral reasons. Correctness of universal moral principles is taken as a condition of the correctness of particular moral judgments. Ultimate moral principles and their correctness is a necessary condition of the correctness of all other moral judgments. Without some ultimate moral principles, moral judgments cannot be justified.

1.9. MORAL SENTIMENTS

Moral sentiments are a subset of affective phenomena like feelings, dispositions and attitudes that are more or less intimately related to moral phenomena. Moral sentiments are varied and result in different responses to moral phenomena. There are cognitivist and non cognitivist theories of emotion which also apply to moral sentiments. Cognitivists (Nussbaum: 2001) identify emotions with evaluative judgments. Noncognitivists (William James: 1842-1910) view emotions as essentially felt experiences different in kind from that of beliefs and judgments. Contemporary noncognitivists (Prinz: 2004) believe that sentiments are not properly amenable to assessment in terms of truth or falsehood. Philosophers have debated the role of moral sentiment in moral deliberations and judgments, moral motivation and moral responsibility. Today moral philosophers are especially concerned with the role of moral sensibility, a capacity for experiencing or disposition to experience feelings, emotions, honour, pride and shame relative to the role of reason.

Philosophical interest in the affective aspects of one's moral experience is not limited to any epoch like the moral developments in the 18th century British moral philosophy. Right from the early Greek thought, one finds a concern with the place of feelings, emotions and affective attitudes generally in the constitution and care of the psyche or soul. . For Plato and Aristotle human excellence requires that one's soul is properly constituted in the relation of the rational, desiderative and appetitive parts- the latter comprising the domain of sentiments and emotions. Proper constitution of the soul is an achievement of the harmony among all the three. All affects of the soul have ethical import even if they do not have ethical content.

1.10. DYNAMICS OF MORAL EXPERIENCE

In the evolutionary vision of the human community, the question of universal validity of moral norm raises questions. The dynamic becoming of the human order relativizes any absolute norm for moral experience. Authors like Charles Darwin (1809-1882AD), Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955AD) Sri Aurobindo (1872-1950AD) with much evidence from biology, science and philosophy emphasize the dynamic and changing consciousness of the human and corresponding moral order. Hence the structure of moral experience must be understood in the sense of what constitutes the constant of moral experience and what makes the variable. While moral consciousness in a univocal sense remains the constant, immediate data in an absolute manner, the same moral consciousness in specific and particular contexts of the moral law becomes the relative norm of moral experience. While metaphysical certitude is possible and is in fact existentially operative with regard to the immediate data of moral experience, moral certitude is sufficient with regard to the specifications of the moral law.

1.11. LET US SUM UP

Humans in search of realization base their moral experience in the ontological foundation of moral obligation which is nothing but human interrelatedness and the norm for moral good is nothing but the social character of the human community. Moral precepts and sentiments as self-evident factors regulate moral experience. By continuously becoming human and moral persons and progressively developing human and moral consciousness, moral experience is particularized and concretized. This process involves both moral intuition and reflection on human and moral experience. Love is the form of all moral precepts and norms.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Name some of the important ethical theories.

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2) Write a short note on moral sentiments.

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1.12. KEY WORDS

Moral consciousness: Moral consciousness or rectitude deals with what is right and the right thing to do.

Moral dilemmas: Moral dilemmas occur only when there is conflict between two moral reasons. A moral reason is a moral requirement just in case it would be morally wrong not to act on it without an adequate justification or excuse.

Moral sentiments: Moral sentiments are a subset of affective phenomena like feelings, dispositions and attitudes that are more or less intimately related to moral phenomena. Moral sentiments are varied and result in different responses to moral phenomena.

Moral Principle: A general sense of moral principle indicates some factor that is generally relevant to what ought to be done.

1.13. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.14. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Moral experience begins with moral consciousness or moral sense. In fact moral consciousness and moral experience are used as synonyms by many. But it is good to distinguish between the two. Experience is a generic term in the sense that whatever affects a person can be called an 'experience'. It can be an emotion like love or hatred. It can be active or passive like love for a friend or love of a friend. One can speak of one's progress in studies as 'knowledge experience'. Any experience leaves behind an impression or memory. Such impressions or memories cumulatively add up to one's experience. The totality of such experiences contributes to the formation of a human personality.

2. A philosophical understanding of moral experience invites us to explore the meaning of terms such as 'good or bad', 'right or wrong'. There are different approaches to moral experience. Linguistic analysis of moral experience serves as a useful method to understand moral problems. Meta-ethical theories like logical positivism, emotivism and intuitionism do not actually solve ethical problems but contain very precious insights for understanding moral experience, particularly with regard to moral ideal or moral value which cannot be reduced to non-moral value. Moral experience is made up of specific moral actions. Moral actions issue from moral values. And the totality of moral values can be called the moral order.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. These theories may generally be classified as teleological (from the Greek word, 'telos-end') and deontological (from the Greek word 'deon-that which is binding, duties). Teleological theories propound 'ethical egoism', represented by hedonism of Epicurus and Thomas Hobbes, 'eudemonism' of Aristotle and 'ethical altruism' or Utilitarianism represented by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill.

2. Moral sentiments are a subset of affective phenomena like feelings, dispositions and attitudes that are more or less intimately related to moral phenomena. Moral sentiments are varied and result in different responses to moral phenomena. There are cognitivist and non cognitivist theories of emotion which also apply to moral sentiments. Cognitivists (Nussbaum: 2001) identify emotions with evaluative judgments. Noncognitivists (William James: 1842-1910) view emotions as essentially felt experiences different in kind from that of beliefs and judgments. Contemporary noncognitivists (Prinz: 2004) believe that sentiments are not properly amenable to assessment in terms of truth or falsehood. Philosophers have debated the role of moral sentiment in moral deliberations and judgments, moral motivation and moral responsibility. Today moral philosophers are especially concerned with the role of moral sensibility, a capacity for experiencing or disposition to experience feelings, emotions, honour, pride and shame relative to the role of reason.



UNIT 2

VIRTUES AND VICES

Contents

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Meaning of Virtue
- 2.3 Socrates: Virtue is Knowledge
- 2.4 Plato's Four Cardinal Virtues
- 2.5 Aristotle's Conception of Virtue
- 2.6 Hindu Virtues
- 2.7 Virtues in Islam
- 2.8 Vices
- 2.9 Let us Sum Up
- 2.10 Key Words
- 2.11 Further Readings and References
- 2.12 Answers to Check your Progress

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we are going to study Virtues and Vices from an ethical point of view. After understanding the meaning of virtue, we make an effort to grasp the Socratic, Platonic and the Aristotelian conception of virtue. Then we shall attempt to see virtues in Hinduism and Islam. By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Grasp the meaning of virtue
- Understand the virtues according to Socrates, Plato and Aristotle the three main Greek Philosophers
- Appreciate the virtues in Hinduism and Islam

2.1 INTRODUCTION

We are now in III Block after you have studied the general approach to Ethics: Western and Indian. In the first unit you have seen how experience is the teacher of life. Here we focus upon virtues. What are the virtues? They may be defined as the habits that characterize the human personality which is on the quest for final fulfillment in specifically human happiness. As individuals and as groups, human beings search for happiness. The means to attain this goal was discovered by the Greeks to be in the cultivation of virtue. In Indian philosophies also there are qualities contributing to human well-being; however, quite often instead of focusing on human happiness as such, Indian concepts of virtue are intertwined with the concept of salvation and after life. Something similar happened in Western thought after Greek philosophy met the Christian Revelation. In the present unit however we shall not be dealing specifically with the religious and theological links but only with those elements that fall under the general purview and more or less universal survey of human reason.

2.2 MEANING OF VIRTUE

The Greek term for virtue is *arête* which was used for excellence of any kind. But generally the excellence referred to is an excellence belonging to human person so that the virtues may be described as the forms of human excellence. 'Virtue' which comes from the Latin *virtus* means moral excellence. A virtue is a character trait or quality valued as being good. Personal virtues are characteristics valued as promoting individual and collective well-being, and thus good by definition. The opposite of virtue is vice. In ethics, 'virtue' is used with two somewhat different meanings. (a) A virtue is a quality of character – a disposition to do what is right in a particular direction, or to perform one of the more universal duties. (b) A virtue is also a habit of action corresponding to the quality of character or disposition. We may refer to the honesty of a human person, or to the honesty of his dealings equally as virtues.

Virtues can be placed into a broader context of values. Each individual has a core of underlying values that contribute to our system of beliefs, ideas and/or opinions. Integrity in the application of a value ensures its continuity and this continuity separates a value from beliefs, opinion and ideas. In this context a value (e.g., Truth or Equality or Creed) is the core from which we operate or react. Societies have values that are shared among many of the participants in that culture. An individual's values typically are largely, but not entirely, in agreement with their culture's values. Individual virtues can be grouped into one of four categories of values: Ethics (virtue - vice, good - bad, moral - immoral - amoral, right - wrong, permissible - impermissible) Aesthetics (beautiful, ugly, unbalanced, pleasing) Doctrinal (political, ideological, religious or social beliefs and values) Innate/Inborn (inborn values such as reproduction and survival).

Laird has divided virtues into three classes: (a) There are virtues of what he calls, 'the righteous quality'. A virtue of this kind consists in the habit of performing a duty of a particular kind and in the quality of character which leads to this kind of action. The only distinction that can be made between virtuous conduct of this kind and right conduct is that the term 'virtuous conduct' emphasizes the habitual performance of what is right.

(b) There are virtues of the 'requisite quality'. These are necessary to a virtuous character, but are also found in bad characters, and indeed may tend to increase the wickedness of the bad. Such virtues include prudence and perseverance. The villain who is persevering in his villainy is a worse man than the villain who is hesitant.

(c) There are virtues of the 'generous quality'. These are chiefly of an emotional kind and they add something not strictly definable, but of the nature of beauty or of moral intrinsic value, to actions that are in other respects right. They sometimes even give a strange quality of nobility to conduct that is morally wrong. We find this in the adventurous courage sometimes attributed to a brigand chief and in the loyalty of often shown to people utterly unworthy of that loyalty. Virtues of this kind seem to have some intrinsic value; this at least is suggested by the value that we assign to these virtues in the characters of people where no good result follows from the presence of the virtue in their actions.

Of the three classes, virtues of the 'righteous quality' are the most important in the moral life. Virtues of the 'requisite quality' are clearly subordinate to the virtues of the 'righteous quality', for they are of value only when they accompany such virtues. Virtues of the 'generous quality' depend more on the natural endowments than the other two classes do, and are hardly to be acquired merely by the conscientious doing of one's duty. Virtues of this quality have an appeal

that is perhaps more aesthetic than moral, but they do give to goodness a colour and an adventurous atmosphere which are sometimes sadly lacking in those whose virtues are merely of the righteous quality. Those who think of virtue as being something more than doing one's duty appear to be thinking often of some virtue of this kind, and these virtues do have about them a richness of emotion and a picturesqueness to which few people attain in the moral life.

2.3 SOCRATES: VIRTUE IS KNOWLEDGE

The core of Socrates' ethics is the concept of virtue. Virtue, according to Socrates, is the deepest and most basic propensity of man. This virtue is *knowledge*. "... if there exists any good thing different, and not associated with knowledge, virtue will not necessarily be any form of knowledge. If on the other hand knowledge embraces everything that is good, we shall be right to suspect that virtue is knowledge." If virtue is knowledge it can be known and consequently taught. This is the meaning of the imperative "know yourself." Know yourself means bring your inner self to light. Through knowledge human gains possession of oneself whereby one becomes one's own master.

According to Socrates virtue is the highest aim and greatest good one has to seek in life. He also insisted that if it is to be highest aim and the greatest good it must have universal consistency and be the same for all. Now, what is universally consistent and the same for all is knowledge which is obtained through concept by the use of reason common in all. ***The relation between virtue and knowledge is inseparable. For, Socrates thinks that health, wealth, beauty, courage, temperance etc., which are customarily considered to be various forms of good, are good only if they are guided by wisdom; if guided by folly they could be considered forms of evil.***

Ethics, according to Socrates, has yet another dimension. It does not stop at mere acquisition of the knowledge of the ideas of good. The knowledge of the idea of the good aims at controlling all other ideas and ultimately guides the whole man, including his will and feeling, and necessarily leads him to good actions. Hence ethical knowledge tends to culture the soul which ultimately leads the soul towards regaining its pure, pristine glory. For Socrates this is the reason for believing that "no one does wrong knowingly" and "that knowledge is virtue."

Socrates says that virtue or goodness is one, although practices differently in different forms of good. In Plato's *Protagoras* Socrates says that although wisdom, temperance, courage, justice and holiness are the principal forms of virtue, there is one single reality which underlies them all. Yet on another occasion, in Plato's *Meno*, we find Socrates looking for one virtue which permeates all other virtues.

Socrates explained this by means of an example of a healthy body. According to him all kinds of bodily excellence follow from one single health of the body, similarly, all kinds of virtue follow from the health of the soul. What is meant by the health of the soul? The soul has different functions. The health of the soul follows from orderly arrangement of these different functions. In Plato's *Gorgias*, we see Socrates saying that the functions of the soul are reasoning, temper, and desire. The function of reasoning aims at attaining wisdom, temper means the courage, and desire is the soberness. The health of the souls depends on the organized relation that these functions hold to each other. An orderly arrangement of these functions is something like the

following. Wisdom commands and temper assists in the execution of these commands, while desire furnishes the material basis for the actualization of these commands. The aim of the oneness or unity of the virtue is the ultimate happiness of the individual. "A successful functioning of the harmonious activities under the regulation of reason yields happiness." Thus the Socratic notion of virtue as one means is "the self of a good man is an organic unity of all its functions."

The Socratic notion of virtue as one leads us finally to conclude that there is one Idea of the Good which underlies all the ethical activities of man which are intrinsically good. Socrates speaks in the *Republic* of Plato that

...in the region of the known the last thing to be seen and hardly seen is the idea of good, and that when seen must need point us to the conclusion that this is indeed the cause for all things of all that is right and beautiful, giving birth in the visible world to light, and author of light and itself in the intelligible world being the authentic source of truth and reason, and that anyone who is to act wisely in private or public must have caught sight of this.

Check your progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the meaning of virtue?

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2) Explain the Socratic dictum "Virtue is Knowledge".

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2.4 PLATO'S FOUR CARDINAL VIRTUES

The four virtues which Plato described in the *Republic* were later called the *cardinal* virtues. The word 'cardinal' is a derivative of the Latin word 'cardo', meaning a hinge, and the cardinal virtues are the virtues by which the moral life is supported as a door is supported by its hinges.

Plato describes the four cardinal virtues in *The Republic*:

Wisdom (calculative) - see the whole

Courage (spirited) - preserve the whole

Moderation (appetitive) - serve the whole

Justice (founding/preserving virtue) - "mind your own business" i.e. "tend to your soul"/"know yourself"

Plato defines how an individual can attain these virtues: *Wisdom* comes from exercising reason; *courage* from exercising emotions or spirit; *moderation* (sometimes "temperance") from allowing reason to overrule desires; and from these *justice* ensues, a state in which all elements of the mind are in concord with one another. Justice is described by Plato to be the founding and preserving virtue because only once someone understands justice, can he or she gain the other three virtues, and once someone possesses all four virtues, it is justice that keeps it all together. Courage is the virtue that will be found in Kings and Queens. Wisdom will be found in the Philosopher Kings and Queens and the guardians. Moderation and justice will be found in all of the above and the artisans.

2.5 ARISTOTLE'S CONCEPTION OF VIRTUE

Aristotle said that the moral end is 'eudaimonia', which may be translated as happiness, and he said that 'eudaimonia' consisted in the exercise of a person's soul in accordance with virtue. To put it in Aristotle's own terminology, 'eudaimonia' is the *end* or what was later called the final cause of the moral life, while virtue is what was later called the *form* or the *formal cause* of the moral life. The *form* is analogous to the conception of his picture in the mind of an artist which guides and limits one's activity as one works, and which gives shape to one's creation. Aristotle defined virtue as a habit of choice, the characteristic of which lies in the observation of the mean or of moderation, as it is determined by reason or as the practically prudent person would determine it.

Aristotle regarded virtue as primarily a habit of action, and so it was with him only secondarily a quality of character. Virtue is not a mere habit, but a habit of choice. Aristotle defined choice as the deliberate desire of things in our power after consideration of them by the intellect. Choice accordingly is in some sense free for it deals with things in our own power, and it is when such a deliberate choice is repeated that it becomes the habit of action which we call a virtue. The choice, for example, of doing what is right in the face of pain becomes, when habitual, the virtue of courage. The mere doing of single good actions may be accidental or merely impulsive; it is the habitual choice that counts as virtue.

The point in Aristotle's definition which has been most discussed is his notion of the mean or middle course. A virtue is regarded as if it were a middle position between two vices; courage for example, is the middle position between rashness and cowardice, and liberality is the middle position between extravagance and miserliness. The place of the mean relative to the vices at the extremes depends on the circumstances of each individual. A soldier's courage should be nearer to rashness than that of a statesman, for it is his business to take risks which it would be criminal on the part of a statesman to take. This conception is obviously in agreement with the Greek emphasis on proportion and harmony in art, as expressed in the maxim 'Nothing too much' or virtue lies in the middle.

Check your progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Explain the four Cardinal virtues according to Plato.

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2) Explain Aristotle's conception of virtue.

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2.6 HINDU VIRTUES

Hinduism, or *Sanatana Dharma* has pivotal virtues that everyone keeping the Dharma is asked to follow. For they are distinct qualities of *manusya* (humankind), that allow one to be in the mode of goodness. There are three modes of material nature (*guna*), as described in the Vedas and other Indian Scriptures: *Sattva* (goodness, creation, stillness, intelligence), *Rajas* (passion, maintenance, energy, activity), and *Tamas* (ignorance, restraint, inertia, destruction). Every person harbours a mixture of these modes in varying degrees. A person in the mode of *Sattva* has that mode in prominence in one's nature, which one obtains by following the virtues of *Dharma*.

The modes of *Sattva* are the following: Altruism: Selfless Service to all humanity; Restraint and Moderation: This is having restraint and moderation in all things. Sexual relations, eating, and other pleasurable activities should be kept in moderation. Some orthodox followers also believe in sex only in marriage, and being chaste. It depends on the sect and belief system, some people believe this means celibacy... While others believe in walking the golden path of moderation, i.e. not too far to the side of forceful control and total abandon of human pleasures, but also not too far to the side of total indulgence and total abandonment for moderation. Honesty: One is required to be honest with oneself, honest to the family, friends, and all of humanity. Cleanliness: Outer cleanliness is to be cultivated for good health and hygiene; inner cleanliness is cultivated through devotion to god, selflessness, non-violence and all the other virtues; which is maintained by refraining from intoxicants. Protection and reverence for the Earth. Universality: Showing tolerance and respect for everyone, everything and the way of the Universe. Peace: One must cultivate a peaceful manner in order to benefit oneself and those around him. Non-Violence/Ahimsa: This means not killing, or not being violent in any way to any life form or sentient being. This is why those who practice this Dharma are vegetarians because they see the slaughter of animals for the purpose of food as violent, when there are less violent ways to maintain a healthy diet. Reverence for elders and teachers: This virtue is very important to learn respect and reverence for those who have wisdom and those who selflessly teach in love. The Guru or spiritual teacher is one of the highest principals in many Vedic based spiritualities, and is likened to that of God.

2.7 VIRTUES IN ISLAM

In the Muslim tradition the Qur'an is, as the word of God, the great repository of all virtue in earthly form, and the Prophet, particularly via his hadiths or reported sayings, the exemplar of virtue in human form. The very name of Islam, meaning "acceptance," proclaims the virtue of submission to the will of God, the acceptance of the way things are. Foremost among God's attributes are mercy and compassion or, in the canonical language of Arabic, *Rahman* and *Rahim*. Each of the 114 chapters of the Qur'an, with one exception, begins with the verse, "In the name of God the Compassionate, the Merciful". The Arabic for compassion is *rahmah*. As a cultural influence, its roots abound in the Qur'an. A good Muslim is to commence each day, each prayer and each significant action by invoking God the Merciful and Compassionate, i.e. by reciting *Bi Ism-i-Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim*. The Muslim scriptures urge compassion towards captives as well as to widows, orphans and the poor. Traditionally, *Zakat*, a toll tax to help the poor and needy, is obligatory upon all Muslims (9:60). One of the practical purposes of fasting or *sawm* during the month of Ramadan is to help one empathize with the hunger pangs of those less fortunate, to enhance sensitivity to the suffering of others and develop compassion for the poor and destitute.

The Muslim virtues are: prayer, repentance, honesty, loyalty, sincerity, frugality, prudence, moderation, self-restraint, discipline, perseverance, patience, hope, dignity, courage, justice, tolerance, wisdom, good speech, respect, purity, courtesy, kindness, gratitude, generosity, contentment, etc.

2.8 VICES

Vice is a practice or a habit considered immoral, depraved, and/or degrading in the associated society. In more minor usage, vice can refer to a fault, a defect, an infirmity or merely a bad habit. Synonyms for vice include fault, depravity, sin, iniquity, wickedness and corruption. The modern English term that best captures its original meaning is the word *vicious*, which means "full of vice". In this sense, the word *vice* comes from the Latin word *vitium*, meaning "failing or defect". Vice is the opposite of virtue.

The term *vice* is also popularly applied to various activities considered immoral by some: a list of these might include the abuse of alcohol and other recreational drugs, gambling, smoking, recklessness, cheating, lying and selfishness. Behaviors or attitudes going against the established virtues of the culture may also be called vices: for instance, effeminacy is considered a vice in a culture espousing masculinity as an essential element of the character of males.

THE CHRISTIAN VICES

Christians believe that there are two kinds of vice: those which originate with the physical organism as perverse instincts (such as lust), and those which originate with false idolatry in the spiritual realm. The first kind of vice, although sinful, are believed to be less serious than the second. Some vices recognized as spiritual by Christians are blasphemy (holiness betrayed), apostasy (faith betrayed), despair (hope betrayed), hatred (love betrayed) and indifference (scripturally, a "hardened heart"). Christian theologians have reasoned that the most destructive

vice equates to a certain type of pride or the complete idolatry of the self. It is argued that through this vice, which is essentially competitive, all the worst evils come into being. In Judeo-Christian creeds it originally led to the *Fall of Man*, and as a purely diabolical spiritual vice, it outweighs anything else often condemned by the Church.

The Roman Catholic Church distinguishes between vice, which is a habit inclining one to sin, and the sin itself, which is an individual morally wrong act. Note that in Roman Catholicism, the word "sin" also refers to the state which befalls one upon committing a morally wrong act; in this section, the word will always mean the sinful act. It is the sin, and not the vice, which deprives one of God's sanctifying grace. Thomas Aquinas taught that "absolutely speaking, the sin surpasses the vice in wickedness". On the other hand, even after a person's sins have been forgiven, the underlying habit (the vice) may remain. Just as vice was created in the first place by repeatedly yielding to the temptation to sin, so vice may be removed only by repeatedly resisting temptation and performing virtuous acts; the more entrenched the vice, the more time and effort needed to remove it. Saint Thomas Aquinas says that following rehabilitation and the acquisition of virtues, the vice does not persist as a habit, but rather as a mere disposition, and one that is in the process of being eliminated.

Dante's seven deadly vices are: Pride or vanity — an excessive love of the self (holding the self outside of its proper position regarding God or fellows; Dante's definition was "love of self perverted to hatred and contempt for one's neighbor"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, pride is referred to as *superbia*. Avarice (covetousness, greed) — a desire to possess more than one has need or use for (or according to Dante, "excessive love of money and power"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, avarice is referred to as *avaritia*. Lust — excessive sexual desire. Dante's criterion was that "lust detracts from true love". In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, lust is referred to as *luxuria*. Wrath or anger — feelings of hatred, revenge or denial, as well as punitive desires outside of justice (Dante's description was "love of justice perverted to revenge and spite"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, wrath is referred to as *ira*. Gluttony — overindulgence in food, drink or intoxicants, or misplaced desire of food as a pleasure for its sensuality ("excessive love of pleasure" was Dante's rendering). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, gluttony is referred to as *gula*. Envy or jealousy - resentment of others for their possessions (Dante: "love of one's own good perverted to a desire to deprive other men of theirs"). In the Latin lists of the Seven Deadly Sins, envy is referred to as *invidia*. Sloth or laziness - idleness and wastefulness of time and/or other allotted resources. Laziness is condemned because it results in others having to work harder; also, useful work will not be done. Sloth is referred to in Latin as *accidie* or *acedia*.

Check your progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. List the Hindu and Islamic Virtues.

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2. What is a vice? Which are the seven deadly vices?
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2.9 LET US SUM UP

‘Virtue’ which comes from the Latin *virtus* means moral excellence. A virtue is a character trait or quality valued as being good. Personal virtues are characteristics valued as promoting individual and collective well-being, and thus good by definition. The opposite of virtue is vice. While for Socrates knowledge is virtue, for Aristotle virtue lies in the middle, and Plato speaks of the four cardinal virtues on which rest all the moral virtues. Every religion advocates a virtuous life and shuns vices. We have seen how Hinduism and Islam stress on various moral virtues and point a way to salvation. On the other hand, by looking at the vices and the seven deadly sins we have understood the way Christianity advocates a virtuous life. Hence the message of all the three religions: Live virtuously and avoid all the vices.

2.10 KEY WORDS

Arete: Greek term for excellence of any kind.

Virtue: Latin term for moral excellence

Vitium: Latin term for vice, meaning defect.

Cardinal comes from the Latin ‘cardo’ meaning hinge. So cardinal means the main on which others are hinged.

2.11 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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2.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check your progress I

1. The Greek term for virtue is *arête* which was used for excellence of any kind. But generally the excellence referred to is an excellence belonging to human person so that the virtues may be described as the forms of human excellence. ‘Virtue’ which comes from the Latin *virtus* means moral excellence. A virtue is a character trait or quality valued as being good.

Personal virtues are characteristics valued as promoting individual and collective well-being, and thus good by definition. The opposite of virtue is vice. In ethics, 'virtue' is used with two somewhat different meanings. (a) A virtue is a quality of character – a disposition to do what is right in a particular direction, or to perform one of the more universal duties. (b) A virtue is also a habit of action corresponding to the quality of character or disposition. We may refer to the honesty of a human person, or to the honesty of his dealings equally as virtues.

2. Virtue, according to Socrates, is the deepest and most basic propensity of human. This virtue is *knowledge*. If virtue is knowledge it can be known and consequently taught. This is the meaning of the imperative "know yourself." Know yourself means bring your inner self to light. Through knowledge man gains possession of himself whereby he becomes his own master. According to Socrates virtue is the highest aim and greatest good one has to seek in life. He also insisted that if it is to be highest aim and the greatest good it must have universal consistence and be the same for all. Now, what is universally consistent and the same for all is knowledge which is obtained through concept by the use of reason which is common in all. ***The relation between virtue and knowledge is inseparable. For, Socrates thinks that health, wealth, beauty, courage, temperance etc., which are customarily considered to be various forms of good, are good only if they are guided by wisdom; if guided by folly they could be considered forms of evil.***

Check your progress II

1. Plato describes the four cardinal virtues in *The Republic*. They are: wisdom, courage, moderation, justice. Plato defines how an individual can attain these virtues: Wisdom comes from exercising reason; Courage from exercising emotions or spirit; Moderation (sometimes "temperance") from allowing reason to overrule desires; and from these Justice ensues, a state in which all elements of the mind are in concord with one another. Justice is described by Plato to be the founding and preserving virtue because only once someone understands justice can he or she gain the other three virtues, and once someone possesses all four virtues it is justice that keeps it all together. Wisdom is the virtue that will be found in Kings and Queens. Courage will be found in the Philosopher Kings and Queens and the guardians. Moderation and justice will be found in all of the above and the artisans.

2. Aristotle defined virtue as a habit of choice, the characteristic of which lies in the observation of the mean or of moderation, as it is determined by reason or as the practically prudent man would determine it. Aristotle regarded virtue as primarily a habit of action, and so it was with him only secondarily a quality of character. Virtue is not a mere habit, but a habit of choice. The point in Aristotle's definition which has been most discussed is his notion of the mean or middle course. A virtue is regarded as if it were a middle position between two vices; courage for example, is the middle position between rashness and cowardice, and liberality is the middle position between extravagance and miserliness. The place of the mean relative to the vices at the extremes depends on the circumstances of each individual. A soldier's courage should be nearer to rashness than that of a statesman, for it is his business to take risks which it would be criminal on the part of a statesman to take. This conception is obviously in agreement with the Greek emphasis on proportion and harmony in art, as expressed in the maxim 'Nothing too much' or virtue lies in the middle.

Check your progress III

1. The Hindu virtues are: altruism- selfless Service to all humanity, restraint and moderation, honesty, cleanliness, protection and reverence for the earth, universality, peace, non-violence/ahimsa, reverence and respect for elders and teachers. The Muslim virtues are: mercy, compassion, prayer, repentance, honesty, loyalty, sincerity, frugality, prudence, moderation, self-restraint, discipline, perseverance, patience, hope, dignity, courage, justice, tolerance, wisdom, good speech, respect, purity, courtesy, kindness, gratitude, generosity, contentment, etc.

2. Vice is a practice or a habit considered immoral, depraved, and/or degrading in the associated society. In more minor usage, vice can refer to a fault, a defect, an infirmity or merely a bad habit. Synonyms for vice include fault, depravity, sin, iniquity, wickedness and corruption. The modern English term that best captures its original meaning is the word *vicious*, which means "full of vice". In this sense, the word *vice* comes from the Latin word *vitium*, meaning "failing or defect". Vice is the opposite of virtue. The seven deadly vices are: pride or vanity, avarice, lust, wrath or anger, gluttony, envy or jealousy and sloth or laziness.



UNIT 3

ANAYLYSIS OF HUMAN ACTION

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Understanding of Human Act
- 3.3 The Constituent Elements of Human Act
- 3.4 Impediments for Human Act
- 3.5 Factors Determining the Morality of Human Acts
- 3.6 Determinism and Indeterminism
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Key Words
- 3.9 Further Readings and References
- 3.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

3.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this unit are:

- Ethics, as a science of morality, judges human conduct which is basically made up of human actions. So having a correct understanding of the notion of human act is the first aim of this unit.
- Secondly, this unit highlights the obstacles that could possibly obstruct the performance of a human act.
- Thirdly, it is very important to analyse the factors that generally influence the morality of human action.
- Lastly, this unit endeavours to comprehend the theories of determinism and indeterminism as they are closely associated with the analysis of human action.

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Humans are said to be evaluative in nature. Whenever a person does something we find others analysing his/her behaviour and commenting that it was good, bad or at times indifferent. Ethics is said to be a philosophical treatise which studies human behaviour and tries to determine whether the act performed was morally right or wrong. It cannot content itself with simply registering facts; it attempts to reflect on the meaningfulness or meaninglessness of such facts, establish or reject them on a rational basis, understand their implications, draw relevant consequences and, above all, intuit their ultimate cause. There is a continuous effort made for studying our own moral beliefs and our moral conduct and striving to ensure that we, and the institutions we help to shape, live up to standards that are reasonable and morally based. This contributes towards establishing sound moral foundation on which people build their lives. Hence one can reasonably aver that Ethics represents a broad framework for determining a core value system one uses for our day to day existential situation.

The above discussion raises an essential question: How we judge certain actions as good or right whereas others are regarded as bad or wrong? Any attempt to provide an adequate answer to this query brings us to the analysis of a basic question: What is human action?

3.2 UNDERSTANDING OF HUMAN ACT

Scholastic philosophy outlines a distinction between *Actus Hominis* and *Actus Humanus* i.e. 'Acts of Man/Human' and 'Human Acts' respectively. Not every act that a human being does is a typically human act. Human activities, like the circulation of blood, heart beat, over which normal people in general have no control are not classified as human acts. Such acts which are beyond the control of humans and those which they share in common with animals are called as 'Acts of humans'. Acts of humans, then, are involuntary and therefore, not morally responsible for them.

On the other hand a 'Human Act' is one which proceeds from knowledge and from consent of free will. Or in other words it is an act which emanates from the will with a knowledge of the end or goal to which the act leads. The Human act is to be distinguished from acts of humans which are performed without intervention of intellect and free will. An act is termed as distinctively a human act which is voluntary in character, that is, the human person under consideration could have done it differently if s/he had so willed or chosen. It is an act which is in some way under the control or direction of the will, which is proper to humans. Such an act is performed by a person deliberately and intentionally in order to realize some foreseen end/s. Thus one can rightly assert that a voluntary act proceeds from the will with the apprehension of the end sought, or, in other words, is put forth by the will solicited by the goodness of the object as presented to it by the intellect. Such acts, moreover, proceed from the will's own determination, without necessitation, intrinsic or extrinsic.

3.3 THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF HUMAN ACTS

Constituent elements of the human act refer to the inner causes or the constituting elements which generate a human person to undertake a certain act. The understanding of the human act indicates that there are two essential elements which constitute a human act: The Intellectual Element and The Volitive Element.

The Intellectual Element

Knowledge is one of the important qualities which distinguish humans from other sentient beings. Absolute truth in all situations and matters might be beyond human capabilities. But we humans can attain truth and that not all truths are relative are undeniable facts, as Epistemology will have established. The denial of such assertions only results in re-asserting them, by the very act itself. Universal scepticism and absolute relativism are found to be self-contradictory and as such are philosophically untenable doctrines.

The faculty of willing can make a choice for something and seek it only when it is first known. This act of knowing is undertaken by the faculty of the intellect. The human act is voluntary when its different elements and its implications are sufficiently known by the agent or the doer

prior to the operation of the will. This process of knowing entails certain important conditions: (i) adequate knowledge of the aspired object, (ii) attention to the action by which the particular object is to be pursued and (iii) judgement on the value of the act.

The fulfilment of the above elements is found to be essential, for, human person cannot consciously and freely will something without having proper knowledge about what the object one is concerned with and therefore conscious of the act one is to perform in order to achieve the desired aim. It is also required that one evaluates the action undertaken in its concrete nature as a desirable good or an undesirable evil. Such an appraisal includes judgement on the moral or ethical value of the act.

Furthermore, the goodness or the badness of a particular human act is judged only under those of its aspects which are sufficiently known. For instance a person who robs and kills a person not knowing him to be his brother, he is guilty of criminal injury but not culpable of offence of fratricide.

However, from the above discussion one should not presuppose that we have full knowledge of the act and its implications every time we undertake a human act. There is still room left for mistakes. What we affirm here is that with right effort the person can have sufficient knowledge of the object and its other considerations which are essential for the making of a human act.

The Volitive Element

Another important characteristic which sets apart the human person from animals is that of voluntariness or what we commonly designate as free will. It is the task of the intellect to conceptualize the good, to propose it to the will as something desirable, and to judge the suitability of the means in its attainment. This awareness which is based on certain amount of reflection is very important in the analysis of the human act. It can occur in varying degrees depending on which, they can affect the morality of the act. However, just this awareness is insufficient for the production of the human act. It is required that the presented good is willed freely by the person. The volitive dimension points that the will can freely make a choice of the concrete object in which the good is sought. Thus when we hold a person morally responsible for his/her action, we assume that the act was done freely, knowing and willingly. The idea of responsibility would seem then to connote and presuppose that of free will.

If a human person for some valid reason is not free to choose what he/she would like according to his/her insight and will, but has to act against one's will, his/her action is not free and consequently such an act cannot be designated as a human act. For instance a mentally disturbed person feels compelled to do something again and again but he/she is conscious of the object one is concerned with and also the end of the action with which the object is pursued, yet such an act will not be voluntary because its execution is done with psychic compulsion and not with free will. So an act to be a free act and consequently a human act, it is to be done without any internal or external compulsion. The degree of compulsion determines to a large extent the voluntariness of the action and consequently the culpability of the person. For instance a high degree of compulsion may almost render the act involuntary and subsequently reduce the degree of culpability.

One must note that anything that is an object of the will, we call the thing willed. But not everything that is willed is necessarily an effect of the will; for e.g. the setting of a house on fire which is not caused, but desired by someone, is something willed but is not the effect of the will. Thus when what is willed is both the object and the effect of the will, we call it voluntary.

One can conclude the discussion on the two constitutive elements of the human act: intellectual and volitive, by affirming the essential union of the knowledge and will in the generation of the human act.

Process involved in a Voluntary Act

Very often a voluntary act, performed by an agent knowingly and freely in order to realize some foreseen end, is not a spontaneous reaction. It involves a dynamic process. Voluntary action has its advent in the mind. It begins with a feeling of want or a craving or a desire which is either real or ideal. Such an impulse, though to a certain extent painful, is mixed with pleasure which arises from the anticipation of satisfaction of this craving by the attainment of the desired object. The person also has awareness of the means that are required to attain the proper object. In a simple action, where there is no conflict of motives, the choice is easily made and the desired action is performed. However, in our daily course of living many of our actions are of a complex nature which often involves a conflict of motives thereby causing difficulty in the matter of choice that eventually delays decision and the performance of the act. Hence, when the self is confronted with divergent and competing motives the mind experiences a challenge generated by conflict of motives. In order to tackle this, the mind deliberates on the merits and demerits of the different courses of action that are available. After weighing the advantages and disadvantages the mind chooses a particular motive and a particular action to achieve the end. This act of selection of one motive to the exclusion of others results in decision. The decided motive is subjectively evaluated as the strongest motive among the others. The decision phase is often converted immediately into action and the decision is actualised. However at times the decision might be postponed for a future fulfilment in which case there is scope for resolution. Resolution refers to the capacity of remaining committed to the decided motive. The state of decision or resolution gives way to the actual performance of a bodily action which is technically designated as a human act. The undertaking of the external bodily action produces changes in the external world, certain of these are foreseen consequences whereas many others are unforeseen consequences.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is human action? Explain the relationship between the intellectual element and the volitive element in the performance of human action.

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3.4 IMPEDIMENTS FOR HUMAN ACTS

In the process of performing a human act the individual might encounter certain obstacles which though may not nullify the human act and make it involuntary but they may reduce the imputability or culpability of the individual, thereby making him less responsible for the particular act. In this section, we shall elaborate some of the main impediments which might affect either the intellectual or the volitive constituent (or both together) of the human action.

Ignorance: This to a great extent affects the intellectual dimension of the human act. It is elucidated as lack of adequate knowledge in an individual with regard to the nature or moral quality of an act one is performing or proposes to perform. Ignorance is mainly of two categories: Invincible ignorance and Vincible ignorance. The former is explained as that ignorance which cannot be dispelled by reasonable diligence a prudent individual would be expected to exercise in a given situation. Such ignorance almost renders the act performed as involuntary and consequently the individual may not be imputable for the act for what is unknown cannot be the object of volition. On the other hand, Vincible ignorance is that which could be eliminated by the application of reasonable diligence. Here the agent has not put in enough effort to gain the required knowledge and as such the concerned person is culpable or imputable for the act performed under such type of ignorance. However the degree of imputability depends on the extent of the individual’s culpable negligence.

Passion: It is often connoted as a powerful or compelling emotion or feeling for instance an experience of strong hate or sexual desire. Passion is said to be a strong tendency towards the possession of something good or towards the avoidance of something evil. The more the intensity of the emotions, the less the capability for making balanced and objective deliberation. Thus passion is considered as an obstacle to human act. One can enumerate two main kinds of passions: Antecedent and Consequent. The former refers to passion elicited without the consent of the will. Here the person might not be fully responsible for the passion and as such the culpability is much less if not fully absent. Consequent passion is passion which is within the control of the will, therefore the agent is responsible for the arousal of the passion and as such imputable for the act.

Habit: Habit is an acquired tendency for doing something as a result of repeated practice. It may be voluntary or involuntary, depending on whether it was imbibed with consent of a person or without. Habits usually do not render an act non-human, because though they exert certain

coercion they can be overcome by a committed effort. As such imputability of acts from habit increases or decreases depending upon the effort exerted.

Fear: It is defined as the shrinking back of the mind on account of an impending evil considered to be difficult to avoid or even impossible at times. Fear may be grave or mild according to whether it is caused by a grave evil whose avoidance is rather difficult if not impossible, or only by a mild evil which can be easily avoided. Fear is characterised as highly grave when it exercises great deterrence on an average person for e.g. fear of killing. Fear is relatively grave when the threatened evil is generally considered as objectively slight but it scares a particular person subjectively depending on the person's emotional disposition. Fear hampers the use of reason and as such destroys voluntariness. Fear in general does not fully destroy the voluntariness of action but merely reduces its gradation and as such usually lessens its culpability. Only in extreme cases when the highly grave fear totally impairs the two constitutive elements the act done out of fear may be regarded as involuntary.

3.5 FACTORS DETERMINING THE MORALITY OF HUMAN ACTS

Analyzing the morality of the human act is said to be a complex enterprise since it is affected by so many conditions which are within and without. Most of the moralists agree that to judge the goodness or badness of any particular human act, three elements must be weighed from which every act derives its morality. They are: the **Object** of the act, the **Circumstances** surrounding the act, and the **End** or **Intention** that the one performing the act has in mind.

The Object of the Human Act

It is that which the action of its very nature tends to produce. Or in other words it refers to the effect which an action primarily and directly causes. It is necessarily the result of the act without taking into account the circumstances or the end. For example the object of setting fire to hut of a slum-dweller is to burn whereas the end might be revenge. The object is usually regarded as the primary factor for moral judgement of a human act. From the viewpoint of object an act is generally classified as morally good, bad or indifferent. For a morally good act, the object of it must be good.

The Circumstances contextualising the Human Act

These include all the particulars of the concrete human action which are capable of affecting its morality. They are such things as the person involved, the time, the place, the occasion, which are distinct from the object, but can change or at times even completely alter its moral tone. Circumstances can make an otherwise good action better for e.g. giving food to a person who is almost dying of starvation. They can make good an act which is otherwise indifferent, for e.g. sitting with a person who is feeling lonely. But they can also make worse an act which is evil in its object for e.g. robbing a beggar from his/her only meal of the day. Since all human actions occur in a particular context i.e. at a certain time and at a certain place, the circumstances must always be considered in evaluating the moral quality of any human act.

The End or the Intention of the Agent in performing a Human Act

The end or intention of a human act is the purpose that prompts one to perform such an act. Every human act, no matter how trivial, is done with some intention. It is the reason for which

the agent performs a particular act. It is the effect that the agent subjectively wills in his/her action. At times it can so happen that the intention of the agent coincides with the object of the human act, for e.g. offering a glass of water to a thirsty person to quench thirst. However at other times both of them might be different. For e.g. a captured spy may commit suicide in order to safeguard the secrets of the country. A human act to be morally good the agent or doer must have a good intention—he must want to accomplish something that is good in one way or another.

The end too can affect the morality of the human act just as circumstances do. A good intention can make better an act which is good in its object, for e.g. helping a poor person to start a small business with the intention of making him independent. Also the end can worsen a act which is already evil in its object, for e.g. killing the father, who is the only breadwinner in the family, so that his children might be on the street. To a great extent many of the actions that we do which otherwise might be indifferent morally in themselves, but they receive their moral quality from the intention behind them.

According to the moralists a human act is said to be morally good when it is good in its object, circumstances and also in the intention, for it is believed that an action is good when each of these three factors is conformed to order (*Bonum ex integra causa*). If even one of these determinants is contrary to order, the action will be bad, at least in part (*Malum ex quocumque defectu*).

3.6 DETERMINISM AND INDETERMINISM

The question of free will or human freedom in the matter of making a moral choice, has been an issue which is discussed and deliberated by philosophers down the centuries. And the complexity of problem makes it rather difficult to take a stand in the category of 'Either Or.' The problem is formulated thus: Determinism versus Indeterminism. Immanuel Kant has given a sound articulation to this issue in his, *Critique of Practical Reason*. He states thus: *The concept of freedom is the stone of stumbling for all empiricists, but at the same time the key to the loftiest practical principles for critical moralists, who perceive by its means that they must necessarily proceed by a rational method.*

Determinism

Determinism is a theory which explains that all human action is conditioned entirely by preceding events, and not by the faculty of the Will. In philosophy, the theory is based on the metaphysical principle that an uncaused event is rather impossible. The success of scientists in discovering causes of certain behaviour and in some cases effecting its control tends to support this doctrine. The deterministic view seems to be very much at home with the scientific temper because the subject matter of any science rests on the principle of causality which asserts that every event has a cause and the aim of science is to find a causal explanation for anything that happens within the domain of that science. Accordingly one can enumerate different categories of determinism based on a particular science. We have the theory of **Physical determinism** stating that human interaction can be reduced to relationships between biological, chemical, or physical entities. This has its origin in the Atomism of Democritus. **Theological determinism** is the theory, which posits that there is God, omnipotent and omniscient, who is determining all

that humans will do, either by knowing their actions in advance or by decreeing their actions in advance. German philosopher Leibniz with his theory of monads advocated a form of theological determinism. He averred that the monads (the simple, indivisible elements) seek their own perfection through a 'preestablished harmony' instituted by God 'the Prime Monad'. **Psychological determinism** posits that we all possess certain mental qualities which govern our life. Freud, with his psychoanalytic theory, expressed a form of psychological determinism that all we do is due to mental factors some of which we are conscious but most of them are beyond our conscious states. **Biological determinism** is the idea that all behaviour, belief, and desire are fixed by our genetic endowment.

In summary we can say that in general, determinism is a doctrine which in some way holds the stance that there is no such thing as free choice for any choice that we make is already conditioned by a set of causes or is settled prior to our act of choosing. As such, the person cannot be held morally accountable or responsible for his/her act.

Indeterminism

Indeterminism is a theory, though not denying the influence of behavioural patterns and certain extrinsic forces on human actions, insists on the reality of free will or the capacity of the humans to make a free choice. This view asserts that humans are an exception to the rigid determinism that occurs in nature. Indeterminists accept the principle of causality but aver that human free will or human choices are not totally bound by the causal law. Some of the proponents of this view try to seek support for their claim by appealing to the Physicist Werner Heisenberg's 'Principle of Indeterminacy' which shows that randomness in the universe is compatible with science. He questions whether it is possible to determine an objective framework through which one can distinguish cause from effect. But one must also note that according to some other thinkers Heisenberg's principle has little to do with choice or free will. Attempts have been also made to use the indeterminism of the latest theory of quantum mechanics, which postulates irreducible physical indeterminacy, to buttress the claim that human actions to a great extent are grounded in free will.

Efforts have been made to reconcile free will with determinism by introducing the theory of soft determinism. This doctrine posits humans are free from external coercion and as such are undetermined but they cannot make a free choice against their individual characters. In other words it asserts that a person is free physically but psychologically he/she is determined. However this reconciliatory tone too has been questioned: if a person is internally or psychologically determined can we really hold that the person is free?

Another theory, which so to say strives to provide a mediating proposal to the problem of determinism and free will, is that of self-determinism. It accepts the causality principle and affirms that nothing can happen without a cause. Hence our so called free acts are also caused but they are caused by the very person as a self-governing or free agent, so that agent could have acted otherwise and freely choose not to do so. Self-determinist believes that though humans are strongly influenced by the motives and as such are called to deliberate between them, still they are not necessitated by them either way, they can make their own choices.

In concluding this section on determinism and indeterminism one has to note that the position or the view one holds will obviously affect one's interpretation of moral responsibility or accountability.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Explain the factors that affect the morality of human action.

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2) Comment on the theories of determinism and indeterminism in the context of the analysis of human action.

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3.7 LET US SUM UP

Human action is explained as an act which proceeds from prior knowledge and free will. It differs from 'acts of humans' which result without the intervention of intellect and free will and as such normally they are beyond human control. From the understanding of human action we deduce the two constituent principles viz, volitive and intellectual which are essential in its constitution. The human action is not a spontaneous reaction but rather a gradual process beginning in the mind and ending by producing certain external consequences. In this process it encounters certain obstacles which obstruct the imputability of the agent performing the act. The morality of the human action depends on three main determinants: object, circumstances and intention. The theories of determinism and indeterminism are closely related to the analysis of human action.

3.8 KEY WORDS

Preestablished Harmony: It is a term from art which is used by Leibniz. It refers to the order in the monads that is installed by God in advance in such a way that each subsequent state is a consequence of the preceding one.

Universal Skepticism: It is elucidated as the philosophical doctrine which doubts that we can have any certitude in knowledge

Fratricide: It is defined as deliberate killing of ones sister or brother.

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3.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Human act is elucidated as that act which an agent performs with knowledge and free will. It is an act which results from the integration of reason and will and so is not determined. The act is within the control of the agent and therefore it is distinguished from 'acts of humans' over which the agent has no power, for e.g. digestion. The intellectual and the volitive elements functions in co-operation in the production of human action. The faculty of willing can make a choice freely for a particular alternative only when the

intellect provides adequate knowledge of the aspired object, indicates the action by which the object is to be pursued and also provides some sort of judgement on the value of the act. Therefore when we hold a person accountable or responsible for a specific action we presume that the concerned act was performed knowingly, willingly and freely. Any sort of compulsion reduces the voluntariness of the action and its eventual culpability. At times if the degree of coercion is extremely high then it can even render an act involuntary.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Moralists have outlined three main factors which, to a great extent, define the morality of a human act. These determinants include: the Object of the act, the Circumstances surrounding the act, and the End or Intention that the one performing the act has in mind. Object refers to the effect that an action primarily and directly causes. This is considered as the primary factor for moral judgement. Circumstances include all the particulars, surrounding the human action, which have somehow the capacity to affect its morality. The end or intention refers to the reason or the purpose for which the agent chooses to perform a particular action. So while judging the morality of a particular action all these three factors are to be evaluated not in isolation but in an integral framework.
2. A voluntary human action is believed to be performed by an agent with prior knowledge and free will. Is human will really free? This is a question that is deliberated by the ethical thinkers for a long time without arriving at an exhaustive solution which is agreed by all without any reservation. The determinists, basing themselves on the metaphysical principle that uncaused event is impossible, appear to be convinced that human action is wholly controlled by preceding events. Their stand is rather strengthened by the scientific temper which is primarily based on the principle of causality which leaves no room for any chance or 'free' happening. On the other hand indeterminists, without denying the principle of causality, aver that humans are specifically blessed with the capacity of free will and that their choices are not totally bound by the causal law. Self determinism seems to be a midway path between the two extremes. It affirms that nothing happens without a cause. Even our so called free acts are caused by the very person as a self-governing or free agent who chooses to act in that particular way.

UNIT 4

NORM OF MORALITY

Contents

- 4. 0 Objectives
- 4. 1 Introduction
- 4. 2 Norm of Morality – Basic Understanding
- 4. 3 Conscience as Subjective Norm of Morality
- 4. 4 Norm as Given by Intuition
- 4. 5 Law as Norm
- 4. 6 Pleasure as Norm
- 4. 7 Let us Sum up
- 4. 8 Key Words
- 4. 9 Further Readings and References
- 4. 10 Answers to Check Your Progress

4. 0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit we explain the basic understandings of the norms of morality in general and go in detail to the different particular norms of morality. As particular norms we see Conscience as subjective norm of morality and Intuition, Law and Pleasure as the objective norms of morality. By the end of this unit you should be able to:

- Explain What norms of Morality means
- Discern between good and evil by the use a well-formed conscience
- Understand what Law means and its use in day today life
- Judge the Intuitions in moral judgement
- Evaluate the pleasure seeking philosophy we have in the present day life situations
- Apply the norms of morality positively in our personal life

4. 1 INTRODUCTION

This is an attempt to understand the norms of Morality in general. Norm is a rule or standard for our judgement. It remains as a standard or rule with which we can judge our actions as good or bad. For this we compare the human acts with the norms and come to our conclusion.

In ethics we can find two kinds of norms: the subjective norm of morality and the objective norms of morality. In the subjective norm of morality, the moral authority dwells within the individual. In ethics, conscience can be understood as the subjective norm of morality.

Objective norm is the standard for an objective evaluation of the human acts. In this group we can see Intuition, Law and Pleasure as the objective norms of morality.

4. 2 NORM OF MORALITY – BASIC UNDERSTANDING

A norm or criterion is a Standard of Judgement. "It is a rule or standard by which principles, facts, statements and conduct are tested, so as to form a correct judgement concerning them". In ethics a moral criterion is a rule or standard by means of which we are able to discriminate between what is morally good and morally evil and to arrive at a correct judgement that a particular act is morally good or morally evil.

The moral criterion presupposes the existence of an objective moral 'standard' or norm with which the particular act can be compared. With the moral norm, human beings can test the morality of the act and judge whether it be good or evil. In general a norm is an authoritative standard, which gives as a pattern or model to which things of similar nature must conform. Thus a judgement can be described as a comparison of an act with the standard or norm. When the act conforms to the norm of morality, we judge the act to be good and when we find that the act deviates from the norm, we judge the act to be evil.

QUALIFICATIONS OF THE NORM

In order to be effective as a moral criterion or standard of judgement, a norm of morality should have the following qualifications:

1. The Norm needs to be Unchangeable

The basic and fundamental nature of morality is its stability. If the norm is changing and fluctuating, the morality would be lacking its fundamental stability. Such a norm would not be a reliable standard, because in such cases human beings can never be certain of the morality of his/her acts.

2. The Norm needs to be Universal

The norm is meant to everybody. It is not for a particular group or class of persons. It should be applicable to all human beings. Everybody should feel himself or herself bound to the moral law. Nobody can be exempted from this obligation.

3. The Norm needs to be Accessible to all

The universal accessibility of the norm is an essential nature of it. Everybody must be able to know at least the fundamental principles of morality. It will help them to lead a moral life. Unless the norm of morality is accessible to all, they can never arrive at knowledge of the fundamental principles of morality because all moral principles naturally flow from the norm.

4. The Norm needs to be Applicable to all Conditions of Life

If only the norm is within the mental reach of every individual, they would be able to make all their actions conform to the norm of morality. In other case, such a norm could not serve a standard for every individual in all his/her actions.

5. The Norm needs to be of single Standard

Although there are many moral actions for human beings, morality remains always as one. Since every human beings have the same human nature, the moral standard of all human beings must be the same. Thus there cannot be one norm for a particular group of persons or actions and another norm for a different group of persons or actions.

4. 3 CONSCIENCE AS SUBJECTIVE NORM OF MORALITY

Conscience is the subjective norm of morality in which we trace the moral authority inside the individual. It is not something that directs from outside. Conscience is an 'inner voice' as described by Mahatma Gandhi which directs one by telling what to do or what not to do. Conscience can be defined as the subjective awareness of the moral quality of one's own actions as indicated by the moral values to which one subscribes.

In the opinion of Butler, an English moral philosopher, conscience has got two different aspects: a cognitive or reflective aspect and an imperative or authoritative aspect. In the cognitive or reflective function of conscience discerning the goodness and badness of the human action is important. It considers characters, actions, intentions and motives with the special aim of discovering their goodness and badness. In the imperative or authoritative aspect the decision is important. Here conscience does not merely give arguments for one action rather than another, but it decides in favour of one action.

Acts of Conscience

The feeling of remorse has always been connected with conscience. It is a deep regret for a wrong committed. Conscience not only makes judgement over certain actions that we have done as right or wrong, but it arouses a peculiar feeling of pain that is extremely unpleasant. This pain of conscience or feeling of remorse is identified by moralists as one of the reasons of avoiding wrong actions.

Antecedent and Consequent Conscience

Conscience can be divided into antecedent conscience and consequent conscience. Antecedent conscience deals with future actions whereas consequent conscience deals with the past actions. Conscience that acts as a guide to future actions, prompting to do them or avoid them can be defined as an antecedent conscience. Conscience which is acting as a judge to our past actions, the source of our self-approval or remorse is known as consequent conscience. In ethics Antecedent conscience, which is a guide to our future action, is more important. The acts of Antecedent Conscience are divided into four. They are: a). First one is the mental act of a 'command' whereby one senses that a particular act is 'to be done'. It is an imperative and the individual is not free not to do the act. b) Second one is the act of 'forbidding' whereby one senses that a particular act is 'not to be done'. It is an obligation to avoid such acts. Doing of such act is an immoral act. c) Third one is that of the act of 'permitting' in which one regards an act as 'allowed' by one's own moral values. d) Fourth one is the act of 'advising' in which one is aware that an act is either probably better to do or probably worse to do.

Division of Conscience

The judgement of the conscience can be understood as the judgement of the intellect. The human intellect can be mistaken either by adopting false premises or by drawing an illogical conclusion. Because of this there can be different consciences such as correct, erroneous, doubtful, certain, perplexed and scrupulous consciences. **A correct conscience** judges as good what is really good, or as evil what is really evil. Whereas an **erroneous conscience** judges as good what is really evil, or as evil what is really good. **A certain conscience** judges without fearing that the opposite may be true. A doubtful conscience either hesitates to make any judgement at all or does make a judgement but with misgivings that the opposite may be true. **A perplexed conscience** belongs to one who cannot make up his/her mind. Such persons remain in a state of indecisive anguish, especially if s/he thinks that s/he will be doing wrong whichever alternative he chooses. **A scrupulous conscience** torments its owner by rehearsing over and over again doubts that were once settled. S/he finds new sources of guilt for old deeds that were best forgotten, striving for a kind of certainty about one's state of soul that is beyond our power in this life.

Check your progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What are Antecedent and Consequent Conscience?.

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2) What are the different Consciences?

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4. 4 NORM AS GIVEN BY INTUITION

In intuition, the basic human reasoning process is questioned. An Intuition can be defined as 'the immediate apprehension of an object by the mind without the intervention of any reasoning process'. A moral intuition is one that apprehends some moral objects immediately, without there being any reasoning about it. Ethical intuitionism is here taken to be the view that normal

human beings have an immediate awareness of moral goodness and moral values. Some of the exponents of this theory have contended that the awareness in question can only be conceived satisfactorily as a form of sense perception.

Objects of Moral Intuitions

There are three possible objects of moral intuitions:

a) Perceptual or Individual Intuitionism

The first object of moral intuition is known as 'perceptual intuitionism' or 'individual intuitionism'. It is the theory that holds that the only way of knowing rightness and wrongness is by such intuitions of the rightness or wrongness of individual actions. We may know directly that one particular act, such as the assassination of Caesar by Brutus, is right. To have this intuition does not imply that political murder would be right in any other case.

b). Dogmatic Intuitionism

Second one known as 'Dogmatic Intuitionism' is the theory which holds that this is the only way of knowing the rightness or wrongness of actions. We may know directly without reflection that certain class or kind of actions is right or wrong; for example that telling the truth is always right.

c). Universal Intuitionism

Third one is the 'Universal Intuitionism' which deals with universal principles of ethics. We may know directly some moral principle by which we can judge actions to be right or wrong. We may know intuitively for example that any action that treats a man merely as a means is always wrong.

Objections to the Intuitionism

There are certain objections to all these three kinds of intuitionism: a) It is true that there are always some actions and some classes of actions and some principles that we can know intuitively to be right or wrong. This is by no means true of every action or every class of action or every moral principle. b) In the human life there will always be occasions of some unusual circumstances. It may be true that intuition of all three kinds works fairly well in normal circumstances. But it does not work in unusual cases. It is self evident that we should speak the truth until we come to the unusual case where our doing so seems likely to involve the sacrifice of innocent lives. c) Infallibility of intuitionism always creates problem. People make mistakes in their intuitions. Use of the term 'intuition' by religious people and mystical philosophers suggests that there is something infallible about intuition. It can be dangerous to humanity. d) Intuitionism fails as an ethical theory, because in every case it is possible to give a reason for what an intuition dictate. Once rationalization starts, the basis of intuitionism itself fails.

Check Your Progress – II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

What are the Objects of Moral Intuition?

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What are the Objections to the Intuitionism?

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4. 5 LAW AS NORM

Law is one of the most important norms of morality which controls the human judges from outside.

General Notion of Law

In accordance with the field of action it is found, the term law appears in threefold meaning:

- a). In its widest and most general sense, a law is the rule or norm according to which something is drawn toward an action or restrained from an action. All beings in this universe are governed by laws in this sense. For example, the law of electricity, of light, of heat, of gravity, of motion ..etc...
- b). In a more restricted sense, a law is the rule or norm which governs the free actions of rational beings in any field of practical endeavour. Such laws refer to the techniques of the various crafts or arts. For eg. Painting, games, sports, architecture, construction ..etc...
- c). In its strictest or ethical sense, the term law means the rule or norm governing the free actions of man relative to moral obligation. The violation of law in this sense involves moral delinquency or sin.

The Nature of Law

A law is defined by St Thomas Aquinas as an “ordinance of reason directed toward the common good and promulgated by the one who has the care of the community”. a). Law is an ordinance of reason. ‘Ordinance of reason’ is the formal cause of the law. By this we mean that a law is a directive demanding a definite course of action. They are not free to accept or reject this ordinance, but are subject to a moral constraint to carry out the injunction demanded by the ordinance and contained in it. A law can only be given to rational beings, with the purpose of controlling their human acts. Since the law belongs to the rational order, in order to be a true law, it cannot command anything contrary to reason. b) A law is directed towards common good. The

final cause of the law should be common good. It cannot be directed to promote the private welfare of individuals or relatively small groups within a community. It should be directed towards the welfare of the community as a whole. Thus a law has the public welfare as its objective. c) A law should be promulgated. The promulgation of the law is the material cause of the law. d) The promulgation of the law should be done by the one who has the care of the community. This legislator is the efficient cause of the law. Laws are matters of public authority and jurisdiction, and only the bearer of the supreme public authority and jurisdiction has the authority to enact a law affecting the common good of all.

Kinds of Laws

Laws can be observed from different standpoints and correspondingly we distinguish between different kinds of laws.

A). From the viewpoint of **Obligation** we distinguish four kinds of laws: affirmative, negative, permissive and punitive.

a). *An affirmative law* is a law of 'command' obligating a person to perform a definite positive act. E.g. The state commands citizens to pay taxes in support of the government.

b). *A negative law* is a law of 'prohibition' obligating a person to refrain from performing a definite act. For e.g. The Decalogue forbids adultery and murder.

c). *A permissive law* is one which allows a person to perform a certain act without hindrance from others.

d). *A punitive or penal law* is one which imposes penalty upon violation. The law itself may stipulate the exact penalty, or it may be left to the discretion of the judge.

B). From the viewpoint of the **Legislator** we distinguish law into divine and human laws.

a). *Divine law* emanate from God as the legislator. The laws contained in the Decalogue were given by God directly.

b). *Human laws* are enacted by legitimate human authority. For eg. The state authority establish laws for its subjects.

C). From the viewpoint of **Duration** law is divided into eternal and temporal.

a). *Eternal law* is the plan of God's wisdom directing all created things toward the realization of their natural end.

b). *Temporal laws* are those enacted, not from eternity, but in time by temporal authority. For. E.g. By state through legislative or responsible channels.

D). From the viewpoint of **Promulgation** law can be divided into natural and positive.

a). *Natural law* is law in so far as it is manifested by the natural light of human reason reflecting on the fundamental principles of morality.

b). *Positive law* is a law enacted by legitimate authority, such as the state, supplementing the provisions of natural law and made in view of the special need of the community.

4.6 PLEASURE AS NORM

From the very beginning of human history there had been people who considered pleasure as the supreme good of human life. For them pleasure is the only norm of morality. They believed that every human activity is prompted by a desire of seeking pleasure.

Hedonism

The word hedonism has its root in Greek word 'hedone' which means 'pleasure'. Hedonism is one of the oldest, simplest and most earthly of ethical theories. It is the ethical theory which teaches that pleasure is the only mark of good life and those who desire to lead a good life must seek pleasure by all means. Historically the beginning of hedonism can be sought in the philosophy of Cyrenaics and the Epicureans. We find hedonism first proposed by Aristippus, the leader of Cyrenaic school, who identified happiness with pleasure. According to him pleasure is the only mark of good life and all pleasures are essentially alike though they differ from the point of view of intensity.

Epicureans also attached importance to pleasure but they did not give much significance to the momentary pleasure. For Epicures the end of life is not intense pleasure, but an abiding peace of mind, a state of cheerful tranquillity. Above all we must avoid fear of the gods and fear of death.

In India too we had the philosophy of the Charvak which stated that the pleasure of the moment should be sought. It taught people to eat, drink and be happy for tomorrow we may die.

Hedonistic theory was revived during the Renaissance, and was propounded in England during the seventeenth century by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Lock (1632-1704). Later exponents of the pleasure theory were Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873).

Check your progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is the nature of Law?

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2) What is Hedonism?

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4.7 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have explained the basics of the norms of morality in general and have gone in detail to the different particular norms of morality. As particular norms we see Conscience as subjective norm of morality and Intuition, Law and Pleasure as the objective norms of morality. In the subjective norm of morality, the moral authority dwells within the individual.

Objective norm is the standard for an objective evaluation of the human acts. The moral criterion presupposes the existence of an objective moral 'standard' or norm with which the particular act can be compared. With the moral norm, human beings can test the morality of the act and judge whether it is good or evil. In general a norm is an authoritative standard, which gives us a pattern or model to which things of similar nature must conform. Thus a judgement can be described as a comparison of an act with the standard or norm. When the act conforms to the norm of morality, we judge the act to be good and when we find that the act deviates from the norm, we judge the act to be evil.

4. 8 KEY WORDS

Norm – Norm is a rule or standard of judgement.

Conscience – It is the subjective awareness of the moral quality of one's own actions as indicated by the moral values to which one subscribes.

Intuitionism – The immediate apprehension of an object by the mind without the intervention of any reasoning process.

Law – An ordinance of reason directed toward the common good and promulgated by the one who has the care of the community.

Hedonism – The theory that teaches that pleasure is the only mark of good life.

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4. 10. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Conscience can be divided into antecedent conscience and consequent conscience. Antecedent conscience deals with future actions whereas consequent conscience deals with the past actions. Conscience that acts as a guide to future actions, prompting to do them or avoid them can be

defined as an antecedent conscience. Conscience which is acting as a judge to our past actions, the source of our self-approval or remorse is known as consequent conscience. In ethics Antecedent conscience, which is a guide to our future action, is more important. The acts of Antecedent Conscience are divided into four. They are: a). First one is the mental act of a 'command' whereby one senses that a particular act is 'to be done'. It is an imperative and the individual is not free not to do the act. b) Second one is the act of 'forbidding' whereby one senses that a particular act is 'not to be done'. It is an obligation to avoid such acts. Doing of such act is an immoral act. c) Third one is that of the act of 'permitting' in which one regards an act as 'allowed' by one's own moral values. d) Fourth one is the act of 'advising' in which one is aware that an act is either probably better to do or probably worse to do.

2. The judgement of the conscience can be understood as the judgement of the intellect. The human intellect can be mistaken either by adopting false premises or by drawing an illogical conclusion. Because of this there can be different consciences such as correct, erroneous, doubtful, certain, perplexed and scrupulous consciences. **A correct conscience** judges as good what is really good, or as evil what is really evil. Whereas an **erroneous conscience** judges as good what is really evil, or as evil what is really good. **A certain conscience** judges without fearing that the opposite may be true. A doubtful conscience either hesitates to make any judgement at all or does make a judgement but with misgivings that the opposite may be true. **A perplexed conscience** belongs to one who cannot make up his/her mind. Such persons remain in a state of indecisive anguish, especially if s/he thinks that s/he will be doing wrong whichever alternative he chooses. **A scrupulous conscience** torments its owner by rehearsing over and over again doubts that were once settled. S/he finds new sources of guilt for old deeds that were best forgotten, striving for a kind of certainty about one's state of soul that is beyond our power in this life.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. A law is defined by St Thomas Aquinas as an "ordinance of reason directed toward the common good and promulgated by the one who has the care of the community". a). Law is an ordinance of reason. 'Ordinance of reason' is the formal cause of the law. By this we mean that a law is a directive demanding a definite course of action. They are not free to accept or reject this ordinance, but are subject to a moral constraint to carry out the injunction demanded by the ordinance and contained in it. A law can only be given to rational beings, with the purpose of controlling their human acts. Since the law belongs to the rational order, in order to be a true law, it cannot command anything contrary to reason. b) A law is directed towards common good. The final cause of the law should be common good. It cannot be directed to promote the private welfare of individuals or relatively small groups within a community. It should be directed towards the welfare of the community as a whole. Thus a law has the public welfare as its objective. c) A law should be promulgated. The promulgation of the law is the material cause of the law. d) The promulgation of the law should be done by the one who has the care of the community. This legislator is the efficient cause of the law. Laws are matters of public authority and jurisdiction, and only the bearer of the supreme public authority and jurisdiction has the authority to enact a law affecting the common good of all.

2. The word hedonism has its root in Greek word 'hedone' which means 'pleasure'. Hedonism is one of the oldest, simplest and most earthly of ethical theories. It is the ethical theory which teaches that pleasure is the only mark of good life and those who desire to lead a good life must seek pleasure by all means. Historically the beginning of hedonism can be sought in the philosophy of Cyrenaics and the Epicureans. We find hedonism first proposed by Aristippus, the leader of Cyrenaic school, who identified happiness with pleasure. According to him pleasure is the only mark of good life and all pleasures are essentially alike though they differ from the point of view of intensity.



UNIT 5

NATURAL MORAL LAW

Contents

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 The Ethical Phenomenon
- 5.3 Natural Law (Definition)
- 5.4 Reason and Morality
- 5.5 Universality and Natural Law
- 5.6 Natural Law and Change
- 5.7 Natural Law and Human Dignity
- 5.8 Natural law and the Concept of Intrinsic Evil
- 5.9 Criticism of Natural Law
- 5.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 5.11 Key Words
- 5.12 Further Readings and References
- 5.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

It is to understand the phenomenon of morality, to define natural law, to understand its nature, i.e. its universality and particularity, change of natural law, the relation of natural law to particular laws, its relation to human dignity, to the concept of intrinsic evil and to understand the criticism of natural law and to answer it.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Knowledge of natural law is as widespread as humankind itself. So also is its critique. The task here is to reflect on natural moral law. I intend to proceed as follows. I give first a brief description of the concept of natural law. Then some of the basic criticisms of natural law will be enumerated. And finally I will try to answer some of those criticisms. That will constitute this unit on natural moral law.

5.2 ETHICAL OR MORAL PHENOMENON

In the light of natural reason man distinguishes between good and bad. According to theoretical reason, wonder over the very existence of things is the beginning of all knowledge. The “prescribing character” or the “ought” character of the good is the primordial ethical phenomenon and ethics begins from that primordial phenomenon, and practical reason has also its origin here. The difference between good and bad is in the nature of the good. The good urges the human subject towards that which ought to be, and the bad pulls in the opposite direction. The good makes a claim on man, and he who has understood this has understood the contradiction between good and bad.

Ratio boni (the reason of the good or the call of good) is that all men desire the good. All men desire the good precisely because the good manifests itself as desirable. Whoever understands

the *ratio boni* also understands the ought character of the good. He also understands simultaneously the highest norm of morality, namely good is to be done and evil to be avoided. The supreme norm of natural law: do good and avoid evil, is born from or based on the ought character of the good.

Good is to be done and evil is to be avoided. The power of the good to lead man to the good manifests itself in the judgement of practical reason urging man to realize the good. The validity (*Gültigkeit*) of all the norms of practical reason rests on the primordial insight (*Ureinsicht*) into the meaning (*Sinn*) of the good. This is open to all men. That is to say, the light of the good is available to all men.

5.3 NATURAL LAW (DEFINITION)

The supreme principle of ethics or morality is: good is to be done and evil to be avoided. And that one principle is grounded in the ought character of the good. It is from this one principle that practical reason draws all its other individual norms. All the individual laws of natural law, to the extent they refer to the one supreme principle of natural law (do good and avoid evil), participate in the reasonability of the supreme principle.

The presuppositions of any moral philosophy are a) the capacity of practical reason to perceive truth and, b) a substratum (rudimentary basis) of human nature that remains the same through all historical changes. A genuine ethical theory must believe in the universal validity of its principles.

Natural law presupposes that there is a common human nature which is constant. It is from that human nature that ethical principles are drawn. Thus the objective foundation of natural law is the nature of man. Natural law exists before practical reason, i.e. practical reason discovers it because natural law is grounded in the basic structure of being man. Natural law, unlike emotivism, (i.e., the theory that morality is a question of emotion), is based on the being of man, on the nature of being human.

Natural law, or the phrase “by nature”, expresses the minimum presuppositions for being an ethical subject, that is, freedom and reason. Without these, one cannot be an ethical subject. Natural law understood as the minimum pre-suppositions for being human is same for all, in every culture and age. These minimum conditions are protected by the negative commands of natural law.

Natural law as an ethical theory proposes principles that are valid for all people because it contains minimum indications for being human and it defends the most basic sector (*unhintergebarer Raum*) of a human being. The minimum of natural law that is common to all men is applicable everywhere and is independent of revelation or divine intervention. It is available to any man as man.

Natural law as a moral philosophy is against relativism and believes in the truthfulness and universal validity of moral norms. One needs natural law to be able to criticize the ideologies of one's society. In the absence of natural law one will be forced to give equal value to both cannibalism and a democratically ordered society. Natural law must be the basis for individual moral laws and civil law, and it should be independent of any religious foundation. It should be accessible to any man as man.

Thomistic natural law is a combination of natural reason and the natural inclinations of human towards a fulfilled life (*gelungenes Leben*). Natural law and human life goals are given in the very nature of man. There are goals in human life and the inclinations lead man to them. The goals are recognized as good by practical reason naturally, i.e. without any other aid.

The inclinations point to the goals that lead to fulfillment in life. And knowledge of good and evil follows the order of the inclinations. There are principally three types of inclinations in man: The first level inclinations are those inclinations in common with all substances. These concern self-preservation. The second level inclinations are inclinations in common with all living beings. These concern social living, procreation and education of the young. Third level inclinations are inclinations that are specific to man. They concern striving for knowledge which include knowledge about God, and desiring to live in fellowship with others. The desire to live in fellowship calls for avoidance of ignorance. The same includes the inclination not to hurt one's fellowmen.

The inclinations in man correspond to the dictates of practical reason. But what is the precise relationship between the two? Interpreters of Thomas, the medieval philosopher, have proposed three types of relationship between the inclinations and practical reason: The inclinations are just a frame-work. Practical reason is decisive. There is a relationship of practical reason informing the inclinations. And finally there is the position that the inclinations give detailed goals of life and practical reason just approves them. Eberhard Schockenhoff, a German ethicist, is of the view that practical reason cannot be seen as just a ratifying agent. Nor can it be that the inclinations are an unlimited amount of raw material to be given form by practical reason. According to Schockenhoff, the supreme law of practical reason diversifies into individual ethical norms and together with the inclinations they form a unity informed by reason. Reason is like a music conductor who fine-tunes the inclinations. Or again, reason is like an author who transforms the rough draft of a book (inclinations) into a coherently written book. Reason informs the inclinations and they become norms of the actions of men.

Natural inclinations show the fulfillment image (*Vollendungs-gestalt*) of being human only in an outline. Reason has to devise the means towards that goal, i.e. evolve norms for the conduct of men to realize the goal. Man must, in the light of reason, choose concrete actions to realize the life goals. To view the inclinations as giving in detail the norms of behaviour is to go against the reservation Thomas himself had about them. It is to read into Thomas what later Scholastics (philosophers between 9th and 14th centuries) said after two to three centuries.

Only those inclinations that are according to reason belong to natural law. The one supreme principle of natural law, namely, do good and avoid evil, splits into many individual norms so as to lead the inclinations to the fulfillment of human life.

5.4 REASON AND MORALITY

Human obeys a law because it is reasonable. Every law must have reason in it. The *vis obligandi* (the obligating or compelling power) of a law (*Gesetz*) does not come from outside itself but from the internal obligating character of reason itself. According to Thomas Aquinas the *regula et mensura* (rule and measure) of human acts is reason. The only criterion of morality is whether a human act is according to reason or not, i.e. if reason sanctions it or not.

The origin and validity of moral values come from practical reason. This is because it is reason that makes a law that which it is. Without reason there is no law. Reason and its law of non-contradiction finally decide about the content of any moral system. An immoral act is one that contradicts reason. It militates against reason. And it cannot be that a moral value is an importance in one place and a non-importance or its contradiction in another place.

There are two aspects in the faculty of reason in human, namely, theoretical reason and practical reason. One is not subordinate to the other. They are not two faculties in human but a single capacity of the self that is directed towards different objects: theoretical reason is directed towards truth in itself for its own sake, whereas practical reason is directed towards truth in so far as it has to be realized, acted upon.

The fact that both are faculties of the same soul does not rob them of their distinctiveness. These two have their own specific goals (*Ziele*). They are not subordinate to each other but they complement each other. The distinctiveness of both is shown in the fact that each has its own non-demonstrable first principles (*unbeweisbare Prinzipien*). They deduce from their own sources.

Theoretical and practical reason are complementary in the sense that the objects of their orientation can fall either in the field of theoretical reason or practical reason. The object of theoretical reason is the truth in itself. The object of practical reason is the good. The object of theoretical reason is truth in so far as it is worthwhile longing for. The object of practical reason is the good that has been discovered under the aspect of truth or as truth.

The first principles of theoretical reason are not provable. They are self-evident and they are understood by intuition. So also are the first principles of practical reason. Practical reason possesses its own naturally known and non-provable principles. They are not deduced or borrowed from theoretical reason. The first principles of practical reason are the first principles of natural law. They cannot be proved. They are intuitively known.

It belongs to practical reason to seek for the good in the light of its highest principle (do good and avoid evil). But it does not end there. It seeks further the ways or means to realize the good. Both functions belong to practical reason. Practical reason reaches the fullness of its activity to the extent it commands the recognized good to be realized. This is also called the law character of practical reason, i.e. practical reason commands the recognized good to be executed. That is the difference of the universal propositions of practical reason from those of theoretical reason.

The judgements of practical reason do not have the same degree of certainty as those of theoretical reason because the judgements of practical reason deal with contingent events. That does not mean that they are not valid.

5.5. UNIVERSALITY AND NATURAL LAW

One can think about and practice a universal ethic only if one presupposes the universal validity and reach of reason in all men. There is a human nature that does not change. So too, there is an unchanging natural law.

Only the top-most principles (*oberste Prinzipien*) of practical reason and their conclusions are universally valid. The supreme principles of practical reason are valid for all because they are grounded in the very reasonability (*Vernunftfähigkeit*) of human beings. Secondary natural laws are those laws that flow from the first three: do good and avoid evil, the golden rule (do unto others what you would like them to do to you) and love of neighbour. The negative laws of the Decalogue (the ten commandments as contained in the Bible) also belong to them. These laws are known to all men. But they admit of exceptions. The findings of theoretical reason and their conclusions are valid for all (like: the angles of an equilateral triangle are equal). That is not the case with practical reason. Except for the first or supreme principles, the findings of practical reason are contingent, i.e. they are not necessarily valid for all.

Once reason discovers a truth, it is valid for all. "It corresponds completely to the structure of historical perception of truth that such crossing of boundaries occurs in a particular time and place. Once such a discovery or crossing has taken place in the thought of the human spirit, it belongs to the permanent possession of mankind and is valid everywhere" (Schopenhoff, *Naturrecht*, p. 139). Truth once discovered is truth for all and it is independent of historical particularities. It is not dependent on being historically recognized. It transcends historical times and epochs. According to Max Scheler, as soon as a value is discovered, its validity is for all people of all time. It is so because an essential aspect of reality has been discovered. E. Troeltsch (another German philosopher) is of the same view.

Not all the commands of practical reason possess the trait (*Bewandnis*) of a law. Only the universal propositions/commands possess that. It is the aim of Summa Theologica I-II, Question 94, articles 4 and 5 of Thomas Aquinas to show that the universal natural law branches (*auffächert*) into individual concrete norms.

It is practical reason that discovers the universal natural laws. It is again practical reason that discovers the non-universal norms applicable to particular situations. Thus there are grades in the judgements or laws of practical reason.

If it is true that there is a universal concern of reason, then it shows itself on the international level as the international human rights issue. Natural law expresses the dignity of the human person. Natural law lays the foundation for rights and duties. To that extent natural law is universal and its authority is over all men. The idea that there is a right which belongs to all

human beings is the possession of mankind itself. That it has not been respected at all times does not invalidate it.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) What is natural Law?

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2) Why is natural law universally valid?

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5.6 NATURAL LAW AND CHANGE

The different grades of certainty of the norms of practical reason and the diminishing certainty of individual concrete norms in different situations lead us to believe that natural law is an outline, formed by the supreme principles, within which reason has to find individual norms. Natural law is not a closed system with fixed norms. Only those norms that carry the tag “according to nature” are unchangeable. What concrete actions are to be classified as murder, theft and adultery will differ according to both divine and human norms/considerations.

Ethics transcends history. However, its individual norms need not be valid for every situation.

The changeability and non-universality of the norms of practical reason are not due to the inborn incapacity of some men to perceive moral norms nor is it due culpable ignorance. It is due to the contingency and diversity of situations. Besides, human nature changes in a certain sense. There are many laws of nature to which both human laws are added so as to make the true meaning of the laws correspond to the changed situation. For example, the law of not hating one’s neighbour was added to the prohibition of murder. In the same way to the prohibition of not stealing. Practical reason knows the universal laws and draws out concrete norms for the realization of the universal in the particular situation. That these concrete norms vary from place to place and do not possess the same degree of certainty of the universal norms is not a weakness

or deficiency of natural law. It is, rather, due to the fact that reason is a finite reality, and concrete situations do not offer a greater degree of certainty.

Reason finds particular norms for particular situations. The experience of wise and sensitive men play a crucial role here. There are exceptions to the universal laws in particular situations. For example, it is universally accepted that borrowed things or goods given for safe-keeping must be returned. But one would not easily return the weapon of a man who is drunk and is intent on killing someone.

According to Eberhard Schockenhoff, a German ethicist, a list of laws that will not accommodate to changing situations is an unreasonable thing (*Unding*). It is impossible to write a catalogue of human rights that is valid for all time because it is impossible to get a view of the total. Natural law is not a finished catalogue of rights. It is rather the power of reason which discovers universal principles. These principles will take different forms in different cultures.

Natural law is opposed to historicism which believes that human is an evolving creature and what he is will only be revealed by his history. Historicism does not believe in the existence of an unchanging human nature. One has to counter historicism and say that there is a common metaphysical human nature and it is visible only in historical forms. That nature remains essentially same all through history. The moral norms which man discovers also takes place in a historical situation. But that fact does not contradict the existence of a common nature nor universal moral laws.

History is an essential dimension of human and human nature. Because of that, that which is permanent in human and one's nature can only be observed in historical manifestations. Human lives in history. One does not become human on account of history. One makes history on account of one's nature, on account of one's body-soul structure.

Nature and history are not opposed to each other. Human is a historical being, i.e. one realizes oneself in history as a finite being. Human's reason is also a historical reality in the sense that it realizes itself in a historical context. It does not live in the realm of the pure spirit. History is essential to human and one's nature. Thus natural rights, i.e. the idea of a moral criterion of good and evil that transcends all times and ages, must manifest itself in history. However, the dependence of reason on historical situations does not nullify its capacity to discover truth nor does it mean that a truth discovered in a historical context is valid only for that period.

Reason holds on to what has been achieved as experience (*Erfahrung*) in history. The same reason holds man open to the new of every situation. With reason man lives in history. The same reason enables man to transcend history.

The flood of historical events and changes can make natural law appear as relative. It is true that an ethical insight is valid for all time. But its historical realization is often linked to compromises in concrete situations.

5.7 NATURAL LAW AND HUMAN DIGNITY

There is a core sector/aspect (*unhintergebarer Schutzraum*) in a human being. That centre is the person, the source of morality, and it is the aim of morality to protect that sector. The minimum requirements of natural law are the minimum requirements of human right and human dignity. That is to say that there is a basic requirement for being moral. So too there is a basic requirement for demanding and accepting human dignity and right. Human dignity and the rights that flow from it are universal and it can be demanded from any person or government. Respect for human dignity is not just respect for the spiritual powers and convictions of human. It is a respect for the totality of human, body and soul. Human lives one's life not as an angel but as an embodied being in this world.

In natural law, right and morality are closely related. Rights are the moral claims an individual makes on another human being or human beings. To the extent that natural law thinking sees rights arising from the supreme principles of practical reason and since morality itself is grounded in practical reason, rights are closely related to morality. Human rights and ethics belong together. They protect the elementary goals and values of life. Human rights are, like values, a historical manifestation of the principles of practical reason.

Human rights are the minimum conditions, in every age, under which a human being can be seen as an ethical subject and can be held responsible for his deeds. Natural human rights represent the minimum of being ethical. But it can learn from any anthropology that visualizes a fuller human life.

Natural human right is the knowledge of a law, a moral law that is independent of human domination or despotism. International human rights built on the basis of natural rights. Natural rights point beyond themselves. They point to the wealth of religions and the way they propose to fulfill human life.

The state upholds the rule of law (*Rechtsordnung*). Rule of law aims at the realization of a life worthy of a human being. It guarantees the minimum space a human being needs to realize himself as an ethical being. Rule of law recognizes the inalienable rights of the person and his duty in the community.

Human rights presuppose freedom and are grounded in reason. Precisely because of that a change in the concept of right or the discovery of new rights is possible. According to new insights and new situations, rights (civil rights) can change. Civil rights are grounded in natural rights. According to Ernst Wolfgang Böckenförde, (a German ethicist), natural law and rights is a way of thinking of the practical reason. In the light of the fundamental goals of human life, it legitimizes the existing human rights. It also criticizes them and paves the way for progress in human rights.

5.8 NATURAL LAW AND CONCEPT OF INTRINSIC EVIL

If there is something intrinsically valuable, then it stands to reason to believe that there is also something intrinsically evil, because to attack the intrinsically good will be to create an intrinsically evil deed. It is inevitable to use the term "intrinsic evil" when it concerns the mutual respect man has to show to the ethical subject.

The idea of intrinsic evil is not a special teaching of the Church. It is the common property of a moral tradition starting with Aristotle and continuing in the teachings of Augustine, Thomas, Kant and all the non-utilitarians, i.e. deontological ethicists of today.

One should never do an intrinsically evil act. An intrinsically evil act is one that attacks or violates the absolute right, i.e. inalienable right of another person, independent of the fact what benefit such a violation will have for the community as a whole. An intrinsically evil act attacks the minimum conditions necessary for being human. This minimum condition is the possibility for free self-determination as an ethical subject. An intrinsically evil act attacks the personal centre. Ready examples are rape and torture.

The negative commands of natural law prohibits intrinsically evil acts. Just as the concept of human dignity may not be able to enumerate all the laws needed to protect human dignity, so too the concept of intrinsic evil may not be able to produce an exhaustive list of intrinsically evil acts. The concept of intrinsic evil will remind man of something which he should never do, without enumerating in detail what man should avoid as intrinsic evil in every age/epoch.

Rape, murder (killing of innocent and harmless human beings), torture, infidelity to one's word (breach of promise) and sexual infidelity in marriage are some of the intrinsic evil acts. The evil of rape consists in the fact that it violates the dignity of a human being. That dignity is rooted in freedom and reason. Rape is never in harmony with the respect that is due to a human being.

The innocent has a right, an inalienable right, not to be offered as a means for the greater good of the community. It is the dignity of the other and the "in itself" value of the other (*Selbstzwecklichkeit*) that are the ontological grounds for loving man as our neighbour for his own sake. Torture of the innocent is one of the intrinsic evils that cannot be done for any other good. Its evil consists in the fact that it violates the absolute right, the right of the individual to determine himself (*Selbstbestimmung*). Torture militates against the dignity of the innocent.

One is not responsible for the evil consequence of one's good deed. For example, if one refuses to kill an innocent person, the enemy will kill 200 or 2000 other innocent people.

The prohibition of killing the innocent is valid in normal situations, and not in borderline cases and fictitious circumstances. There may be exceptions to the prohibition. For example, the killing of one's wounded fellow soldier so as to prevent him from falling into enemy hands which would mean torture and death. So also the killing of a man who cannot be extricated from a burning car after an accident. But even these killings are against the dictum: thou shall not kill. The body is the manifestation of a person. The prohibition to kill refers to the bodily existence of man. Man is called to be a reasonable being. But he cannot exist reasonably without a body. Thus the command not to kill is a call to respect the dignity of man as a bodily existing being.

In this context Schockenhoff refers to both teleologism and deontologism. For one, remaining faithful to teleologism, it is not possible to defend the concept of intrinsic evil. Teleologists may respect the command not to kill the innocent. But that is not out of the conviction that there are

intrinsically evil acts, but because they feel that respecting the command not to kill the innocent will bring more benefit to society in the long run. Both teleologism and deontologism are complementary. While deciding about goods other than human beings, teleologism is in order. But while deciding about human beings, their dignity, etc., deontologism is absolutely necessary.

It is only by holding on to intrinsically evil acts that one can, in the long run, fight against terrorists and blackmailers.

5.9 CRITICISM OF NATURAL LAW

In the light of the supreme moral principle, - good is to be done and evil to be avoided - practical reason orders the inclinations. The ordering function of practical reason depends on the order of the inclinations in setting up the *ordo praeceptorum*. The inclinations are pre-moral. Practical reason orders them to the fulfillment goal of man. The inclinations receive their moral quality through reason to the extent that reason invests in them the criterion of good and bad.

That there are certain basic drives in human is undeniable. Modern human, with one's improved knowledge over descriptive or positive sciences, is in a better position to understand the drives/inclinations than Aquinas was in the thirteenth century.

The second criticism of Thomistic natural law is that it commits the fallacy of *petitio principii*. It reasons as follows: The concept of nature is an empty shell that is filled with arbitrary (*beliebig*) contents from sociology or anthropology, and the content is invested with the dignity of being ethical. *Petitio principii* is precisely the fact that, instead of proving the ethical dignity of the content, it is presupposed that the arbitrarily filled content of the concept of nature is ethical.

But the very existence of different grades of truth in the concept of natural law contradicts this accusation of *petitio principii*. If the content of the term nature was filled arbitrarily and then given ethical dignity, then every element of the content must have the same degree of certainty. That is not the case with Thomistic natural law. It is not true that Aquinas fills the empty shell of the concept of nature with any content. Rather he enumerates the basic presuppositions of morality in the concept of nature. And they are: Man is a being of reason and he is responsible for his being. He, as a rational creature, ought to recognize the "good and true" for the very being of man, and that very recognition brings man to his integral fulfillment. Human's inclinations have an orientation towards the good and the true, and reason recognizes the good and the true and approves them. Finally, human realizes oneself as a body-soul reality necessarily in relation with other human beings and in harmony with the orientation of his soul towards the good and the true. These presuppositions are not just arbitrary principles (*Festlegungen*) from which man draws again arbitrary norms. Rather these are the very conditions that make morality possible at all.

The third criticism is that Aquinas has an unhistorical/unchanging understanding of human nature. The answer to this is that Thomas does concede change in human nature. That is evident in the two levels of practical reason. The second level does admit of change of norms in different situations and a change in human nature in the sense of living human life differently in

different epochs/ages. When Aquinas speaks of a change in human nature he does not mean that man becomes something other than human.

Human's nature changes but an unchanging element is presupposed in every age and culture. This is evident from the concept of human dignity which is valid for all generations. Human's dignity does not increase or decrease with the passage of time. That man has certain rights on account of his dignity will also remain stable. What will change is only the way the rights are realized. For example, ladies had no voting rights in certain epochs.

Human's nature changes, i.e. it manifests itself in different ways in different cultures. The cave human's being human is different from the urban human's being human. But they both remain humans. Human's nature has to manifest itself in a particular culture. But no culture exhausts it. Human's nature transcends all historical manifestations.

5.10 LET US SUM UP

Our understanding of natural law has shown that there is an essential relationship between moral values and reason. The good manifests itself to reason. Or, it is only in the light of reason that the good becomes visible. The *vis obligandi* of any law is that it is reasonable. And the essence of moral evil is that it is against the order of reason.

Natural law is the law discovered by reason in human. Natural law is inherent in the nature of human, the core of which does not change. The basis of every good positive law is natural law. So also, every human right is based on natural law. One cannot understand the concept of intrinsic evil without natural law. The discovery of the good leads to the discovery of the evil in itself.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1) Does natural Law change?

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2) What is intrinsic evil?

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5. 11. KEY WORDS

Law: *Law* is a system of rules, usually enforced through a set of institutions.

Nature: The word nature is derived from the Latin word *natura*, meaning “birth.” *Natura* was a Latin translation of the Greek word *physis*, which originally related to the intrinsic characteristics that plants, animals, and other features of the world develop of their own accord.

5.12. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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5.13. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. It is the moral law discovered by reason in the rational nature of man.
2. Natural law is universally valid because it is based on a human nature that is universally the same.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. The most basic natural law does not change. Its application to individual situations change.
2. An intrinsically evil act is one that attacks the absolute right of another human being, no matter what the social benefit of that act is. Just as reason perceives the most basic natural law, so too it perceives certain acts as intrinsically evil.

BLOCK-4 INTRODUCTION

Social ethics is a major branch of philosophy, encompassing right conduct and good life. It is significantly broader than the common conception of analyzing right and wrong. A central aspect of ethics is “the good life,” the life worth living. Social ethics attempts to convince thinkers that individualist ethics have failed to make the world a safe place, and that we cannot progress to a fully social ethics unless we understand the morality of collective action from a specifically sociological point of view. In order to be fully progressive, ethics must shift from its traditional focus on individual behaviors to the structure, morality, and outcomes of social actions and social problems. Some of the major social ills we face today – suicide, euthanasia, abortion, violence, terrorism – are treated in this block.

Unit 1, “Suicide,” presents the inquiry concerning the motives underlying a human’s decision to take one’s own life and the moral responsibility thereby. Human life is basically a gift and it remains the same no matter how much pain and suffering it may bring at one stage or another of its continued existence. Life is authentic only when it is received as a gift, not as burden.

Unit 2, “Euthanasia,” begins with an analysis of the word ‘euthanasia’ taken from the Greek “eu”, which means good and “*thanatos*,” meaning death. It has come to mean the intentional killing, by a deliberate act or omission, of a person whose life is felt by oneself or others not to be worth living. It is often called “mercy killing”, and may mean (aid of) killing by relatives or friends for supposedly “merciful” reasons, or intentional killing by doctors or other health care professionals. There are many words used to describe euthanasia such as active or passive euthanasia, direct or indirect euthanasia, voluntary or involuntary euthanasia, assisted suicide and mercy killing.

Unit 3 is on “Abortion,” which is the termination of a pregnancy by the removal or expulsion from the uterus of a fetus or embryo, resulting in or caused by its death. An abortion can occur spontaneously due to complications during pregnancy or can be induced. An abortion induced to preserve the health of the female is termed a *therapeutic abortion*, while an abortion induced for any other reason is termed an *elective abortion*. The term *abortion* most commonly refers to the induced abortion of a human pregnancy, while spontaneous abortions are usually termed miscarriages. Abortion and abortion-related issues feature prominently in the national politics in many nations.

Unit 4, “Violence,” exposes the student to the nature, kinds and causes of violence, and to the means to face the challenges posed by it. A casual look at our society will tell us the untold miseries caused by it and how it is perpetuated under various shades. There is cultural violence, religious violence, economic violence, media violence, group violence, sexual violence, political violence, etc. Violence begets further violence and not peace. Hence, we need to strive for a practical solution to the problem.

Unit 5, “Terrorism,” explains how terrorism builds a kind of psychological state of extreme fear, insecurity and anxiety, besides the physical damages it causes in terms of loss of life and material goods. A terrorist activity is able to cause massive impairment to an individual and the society at large due to its surprise and shock tactics. The target is selected at random to produce

the maximum panic among the innocent people. It seeks above all to create a sensation within the ranks of the enemy in the public opinion and abroad.

To conclude: Social ethics, treated in this block, aims at understanding the morality of collective action and analyzes the major social ills we face today – suicide, euthanasia, abortion, violence, terrorism. These ills are a serious depreciation of humans as dignified beings and a constant threat to a peaceful and happy living.



UNIT 1

SUICIDE

Contents

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Definition
- 1.3 Philosophical Views
- 1.4 Religious Views
- 1.5 Let Us Sum Up
- 1.6 Key Words
- 1.7 Further Readings and References
- 1.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

1.0 OBJECTIVES

Human life is basically a gift from God and it remains the same no matter how much pain and suffering it may bring at one stage or another of its continued existence. This unit presents the meaning, the philosophical and moral implications of suicide in view of some philosophers and religions.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Life is a mystery to live. God has created us to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to us which He has not committed to another. We have our role or mission in the world. We are a link in a chain. We have a purpose in our life. We are unique and irreplaceable. There is a bond of connection between persons. God does nothing in vain. Life is a gift from God (Supreme Master/Author of life) and we hand it back to Him at the appointed time. Life is authentic only when it is received as a gift, as grace. Life is a precious gift, but really also teaches us that it includes its share of pain, suffering and the cross. Life just is, and we have to learn to make peace with ourselves and with our lives just as they are. In the meantime, suicide is part of our earliest collective social, cultural, and religious memory. Art, myth, and religious symbols in nearly every culture include images of and construct meanings for self-killing. From earliest human history, suicide and religion are inescapably joined. Anthropological evidence shows self-killing has always been a part of human experience. It appears to be a fundamental part of collective human self-consciousness. As human society increased in complexity, so did the role and meaning of taking one's life. The history of culture shows that suicide has had a variety of meanings across time and culture. This unit presents the inquiry concerning the motives underlying a man's decision to take his own life and the moral responsibility.

1.2 DEFINITION

Suicide is a term derived from the Latin word *suicidium*, meaning the taking of one's own life. Latin word *sui* means self and *cide* means kill. Therefore, suicide means "an intentional act of

self killing". Suicide is the act by which a person directly, knowingly and freely brings about his or her own death. This presentation is not concerned with those suicides that moral theologians call indirect, nor with those persons who take their own lives in a state of mental abnormality or who cannot be held responsible for their actions. Suicide is direct when one has the intention of causing one's own death as a thing desired for its own sake (as when death is preferred to the meaninglessness of life) or as means to an end (as when one hangs himself to avoid persecution).

Suicide must be distinguished from the placing of one's life in danger for a sufficient reason as might be true in the case of military men, police, firemen, doctors, and others whose duty calls upon them to risk their lives in the service of others. However, even in these cases due precautions should be observed. In these instances the individual does not desire his own death but rather endangers his life for a greater good.

There is no circumstance which justifies suicide, although emotional situations may be described in which self-inflicted death may save a woman's honor, be the salvation of one's companions, protect national security, or release the individual from torture or a life of pain. In none of these instances, and in no other, is suicide justifiable. On the other hand, in many cases of suicide, the person may be severely disturbed emotionally and hence may not be responsible for his act.

Suicides are of two types: conventional and personal. Conventional suicides occur as a result of tradition and the force of public opinion. Thus, among some tradition-ruled peoples, when certain, situations arise, suicide is inexorably demanded. Notable example in India is the *sathie* of the Indian widow who was forced to immolate herself by cremation on the funeral pyre of her husband.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What is suicide?

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1.3. PHILOSOPHICAL VIEWS

We shall discuss the philosophical views of Plato, Aristotle, Stoics, Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, John Donne, David Hume and Immanuel Kant on suicide.

Plato (427-347 B.C.)

The *Phaedo* presents Plato's most elaborate discussion of the immortality of the soul and the implications of that belief for human behavior. In a brief exchange at the beginning of the dialogue, Socrates is asked to explain the absolute ban on suicide advocated by the Pythagoreans and other religious teachers, and to reconcile it with his own opinion that death may sometime be preferable to life. Socrates restates what he understands the religious teaching to be: life is not ours to do with as we will because we have been placed in a kind of "prison" or "guard post" by the gods and therefore not free to run away. He says that while this doctrine is easy to understand, it does seem correct to him that the gods are guardians that we are but their possessions. Plato teaches that the political community must be reminded that suicide is a grave offense against its good order and the wishes of gods.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) Why one cannot kill himself?

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2) What is the relation between an individual and society?

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Aristotle (384 – 322 B. C.)

Plato's general condemnation of suicide is supported by his student Aristotle, who shares with his teacher the preeminent position as the head of the Western philosophical tradition. According to Aristotle, suicide is an injustice against the political community whose existence is essential to one's own well-being. (Cfr. *Nichomachean Ethics*)

The Stoics

The stoics justified suicide. In a philosophy so profoundly materialistic and deterministic, there was no room for the concept of personal immortality.

Augustine (354-420)

Augustine reinforces Plato's objection to suicide with a forceful reminder to Christians of their duty to obey the commands of the one true God and to endure suffering in imitation of Jesus Christ. He was the first to set the argument down more or less systematically in one place, weaving it from pagan and scriptural sources alike to form what might be called the base-line Christian case against suicide. For centuries after his death, his argument exerted strong influence over the development of Western thought, customs and law.

St Augustine treats the question of suicide with fine irony and even bad temper. The Donatists with their practice of suicide, inspired by ignoble religious motives, made him lose his cool. He sees every suicide as an objective murder. The cases related in the Old Testament have no moral force in the New. Such suicidal episodes are related as historical events which happen but which are to be condemned in themselves. They fall into the class of events narrated in Scripture so that they can be judged, not so that they may be imitated. (Cfr. St. Augustine, *Epist.*, 204, 6-7 in PL 33, 941.) There is no pretext by which suicide can be justified, not even for the avoidance of sin or in order to put an end to a painful and unfortunate life. Those who toy with the idea of suicide with the excuse of safeguarding virginity and other ethical virtues he castigates as fools and madmen. (Cfr. St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* I, 26 in PL 41, 40; *Epist.*, 204, 5 in PL 33, 940.) Suicide cannot be seen as an act of Christian fortitude, but rather as a lack of it, since fortitude 'has the characteristic function of guiding and strengthening man in adversity'. (Cfr. St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XIX, 4, 5 in PL 41, 630-631.) But what, he asks, is to be said of those holy women who, to save themselves from being violated by their torturers, threw themselves into the river? Augustine admits that the Church has honoured them, but displays considerable caution and reserve on the issue. If what tradition teaches about such women is correct, their recognition by the Church be justified if they had some extraordinary reason, such as the intervention of some special inspiration on the part of God, by virtue of which these material suicides could be judged morally as acts of heroic obedience to the Almighty. Such a possibility cannot be entirely discounted, but Augustine is doubtful about whether it would have applied in the cases related, which handed down by oral tradition to Eusebius of Caesarea. (Cfr. St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* XIX, 26 in PL 41, 39.)

Leaving such cases aside, anyone who consciously and deliberately takes his or her life is always culpable. Those who plot against their own lives despoil themselves of moral innocence in advance so that, when they die, they do not die innocent, but guilty of the act they bring about. (Cfr. St. Augustine, *Contra Gaudentium* I, 13, 14 in PL 43, 711-712.) As we have seen, Augustine admits the possibility of a strange command from God which might have to be obeyed at the cost of taking one's own life, but he adds with heavy irony that if anyone is sure of having received such a command from God, then he had better kill himself. And who can boast of such certainty? He lists all sorts of mental disturbances and false religiosity as excuses for putting suicidal ideas into practice, but concludes emphatically: 'What we state, what we stress, what we demonstrate in a thousand ways, is that no one should voluntarily take his own life in order to free himself from temporal sufferings, since he will fall into eternal sufferings; nor to avoid the sins of others, since then he - who was not stained by the sins of others - commits a most grave sin himself, nor on account of his own past sins, since if he is to expiate these through doing penance, he has particular need of this life in which to do that penance; nor through desire for a better life waiting for him after death, since there is no better life waiting for suicides'. (Cfr. St. Augustine, *De Civitate Dei* I, 26 in PL 41, 39-40.)

Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274)

Aquinas, with Aristotle as his guide, makes Augustine's thesis more and more systematic. The fifth commandment of the Decalogue (Thou shall not kill.) is valid for everyone without exception, and that includes ourselves. Suicide is contrary to the natural law by which every one seeks his own conservation in life and resists any violent movement against the natural desire of life. It is therefore a direct attack on the love which everyone owes to him or herself. Consequently, suicide is a mortal sin. Following Aristotle, he also uses the argument of the whole and the parts. Each part as a part belongs to the whole; each person forms part of the human community and therefore, when someone commits suicide, he commits an offence against the community to which he belongs. Finally, he adds the strongest argument against suicide, which is the theological one. Human life, he argues, is a gift given to man by God and absolutely dependent on the one who, according to Deuteronomy 32:39, alone can deal in life and death. Therefore, anyone who deliberately takes his own life sins against God himself. The conscious and willed suicide, in destroying his own life, usurps God's power of judgment in a cause which is outside his (the suicide's) competence. (*Summa Theologiae* 2a-2ae, q. 64 a. 5.)

Man can dispose freely of his person in many things; but he can never morally decide his final transition from this life to another, happier one. Such a decision goes beyond the limits of human freedom and has to remain dependent on the will of God. As St. Augustine said, we have to *wait*, respecting the course of nature, for the happy future life that God has promised to those who are faithful to him. It is never permissible for man to anticipate it by taking his own life.

Aquinas equally rejects sentimental motives like taking one's life in order to free oneself from the sorrows of this life on earth. Death, he says, is the last and greatest evil that man can suffer. So committing suicide is equivalent to choosing the worst evil of all. Nor does it make sense to take one's life to make up for some crime committed, and still less through fear of committing some serious crime in the future. Those who have sinned should do penance. If they take their life, all they achieve is to add another even more serious sin and remove the very possibility of penitence and conversion. Fear of future sins is very weak argument. First, because, as St. Paul says (Rom. 3:5), one may not do evil that good may come of it; the bad means cannot lead to good ends. Now suicide is a great and certain evil; future sins, on the other hand, will always be lesser and uncertain evils. Furthermore, God is powerful and merciful in helping us not to fall into temptation and in forgiving us if we do fall.

On the suicides related in the Bible and the cases of persecuted Christians who took their lives in order to save their honour, St. Thomas adopts the same reserved and unenthusiastic stand as St. Augustine. The metaphysical possibility that some may have acted under divine inspiration cannot be discounted, but such a possibility in no way invalidates the arguments advanced against suicide in general.

Finally, St. Thomas denies that suicide can ever be an act of real courage. Not even those cases described with some narrative enthusiasm in the Bible. He states that, on the contrary, every suicide supposes weakening of human will power, which flinches at and gives way to the difficulties of life. (Cfr. *Summa Theologiae*, ad 2um, ad 3um, ad 4um et ad 5um.)

In brief, first, Aquinas argues - drawing on Aristotle - that it is in the nature of every living being to wish to preserve itself. To take one's own life is therefore not only a violation of God's commandment, but an act contrary to the natural law. Second, Aquinas emphasizes that suicide is an act of injustice against the political community. Here again he draws upon Aristotle understood political life as natural to human and essential to one's well-being. No one is entitled to make rules for oneself in disregard of the laws of the community as if one were the solitary citizen and sole ruler of one's own polls. Third, Aquinas condemns suicide as an arrogation of the power over life and death that rightly belongs to God alone. Human's sovereignty over oneself, evidenced by one's free will, does not extend to the manner of one's passing from this world to the next.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What are the arguments of Aquinas against suicide?

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John Donne (1572-1631)

Biathanatos is the first work in English to break with the previously settled disposition on suicide established by Augustine and Aquinas. The form of Donne's argument roughly parallels that of the *Summa Theologiae*: the first part is entitled "Of Law and Nature," the second, "Of the Law of Reason" and the third, "Of the Law of God".

To the argument that all living things naturally incline to their own preservation, Donne replies that some men seem, equally naturally, to yearn for death. Donne concedes that while the desire for death, like many other human desires, can be corrupted by selfish or base motives, it should not for that reason be condemned out of hand. Deciding whether suicide is properly natural to human, Donne says, requires us to understand the intentions that direct some to take their own lives.

In the second part of his argument, Donne critiques the notion that suicide is an offense against the political community. The prohibition of suicide by civil law, he argues, says little about its status as immoral act. The law, after all, condemns many things that are immoral. True, an epidemic of suicide would clearly injure the social order, but the universal prohibition favored by moralists ignores those exceptional cases where the chief effect of the law is to condemn some to

extended suffering. Here, as in the first part of his argument, Donne insists that a proper assessment of suicide must include an analysis the actor's intent; a hypothetical effect on society is insufficient reason to proscribe the act as always and everywhere immoral.

In its concluding section, *Biathanatos* takes issue with traditional scriptural exegesis holding that suicide contravenes the law of God. Donne acknowledges the weight of the doctrinal tradition but is struck by the fact that Scripture nowhere *explicitly* condemns suicide. Moreover, the suicides recounted in the Bible are too various to be explained by Augustine's effort to condemn as morally illicit all those not specifically authorized by God. Once again, he argues that the only way to determine the morality of suicide is to assess the actor's motive; and as Scripture is notably silent on this point, Donne concludes that we are at liberty to say that not all suicides are necessarily contrary to God's will. One must distinguish between suicide in general and suicide directed toward the glory of God (as with martyrdom, for example), or suicide that is motivated by the welfare of others in accordance with Christian charity. In the end, God is the only fitting judge of the morality of such behavior, because he and he alone know the hearts of those who die by their own hand. Donne gives no general license to suicide.

David Hume (1711-1776)

David Hume's path leads to an essentially utilitarian concept of ethics. Hume's philosophical skepticism and his defense of individual autonomy in moral decision-making create the crucible in which his essay on suicide is formed. In general, it may be said that he brings the argument back to a position first fully articulated by the Stoics: when persistent grave misfortune, particularly in matters of health, robs one of the enjoyment of life, death by one's own hand can be a reasonable and welcome alternative. He thinks it necessary to address the effects of those arguments upon the minds of others. He does this in part by recasting the Thomistic arguments - though he does not refer to Aquinas by name. The core argument Hume chooses to address is that suicide encroaches upon 'the office of divine providence,' thereby 'disturbing the order of the universe.' He reduces this claim to the idea that all life belongs to God in the same manner that one may be said to own a piece of property. He suggests that perhaps suicide offends not only against God's ownership of our lives but also against the natural order of the universe he created.

Finally, Hume argues that not all suicides arise from prideful rebellion against God. Many are the consequence of abject misery that can no longer be endured. Surely the desire to eliminate pain and suffering cannot be evil in and of itself, especially if the suicide acknowledges his gratitude to God for such good as befell him before his misfortune.

Immanuel Kant (1729-1804)

Kant uses suicide to illustrate broader philosophical argument and the proper application of the categorical imperative. He hypothesizes a man whose various misfortunes bring him to the brink of despair. Despite his condition, the man remains able and willing to make rational moral decisions. May he take his own life if he concludes that continuing to live will cause him more pain than pleasure? Kant answers that the animating maxim for such an argument proceeds from self-love. But self-love, he argues, is unable to justify suicide, because self-love necessarily

presupposes the actor's continued existence. By ending his existence, the actor would contradict the basis for the maxim on which he proposed to act. Self-love cannot justify eliminating the conditions without which self-love could not exist. The maxim on which the would-be suicide proposes to act could not be made universal without destroying the very ground on which the possibility of morality rests.

Suicide is immoral because it attacks the moral order itself. Suicide makes self-love the end of action, and the moral agent's life becomes a means to this end in abandonment of its proper ends. To destroy the subject of morality in one's own person is to root out the existence of morality itself from the world, so far as this is in one's power; and yet morality is an end in itself.

Kant's opposition to suicide in a sense brings us full circle. In it we hear echoes of the Platonic and Judeo-Christian arguments that our lives are not ours to dispose of as we will, and that although man is free to choose how to lead his life, and although he is capable of ending it, he is nevertheless obliged to do his duty. The ground of Kant's argument is radically different from that of his ancient predecessors, but his conclusion is strikingly similar. God is our owner. We are his property. Suicide violates an obligation to God.

1.4. RELIGIOUS VIEWS

From the religious point of view suicide was regarded always as a crime, a violation of the social order. We shall discuss suicide according to the religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam and Christianity.

Hinduism

Hinduism stands firmly on the position reached in the *Dharmasutras*, which permits religious suicide, while censuring ordinary forms of suicide or self-murder. There are in the Brahmanas two doctrines which undoubtedly pave the way for the approval of suicide from religious motives. In the first place, there is developed the conception that the proper sacrifice is that of man's self; and that other forms of offering are substitutes. In the second place, in the latest of the great Brahmanas, the *Satapatha*, the closing act of both the human and the universal sacrifices, is the giving away, by the performer, of the whole of his possessions, including in the latter case even the land, and his wandering into the forest, doubtless as a preliminary to an early death.

Buddhism

Buddhism condemns suicide unmistakable terms, it does not prohibit all self-killing. A man must live his allotted span on life. He cannot avoid by suicide, the sufferings which are the result of his former evil deeds; nor can he win sooner, by voluntary death, the reward of his good deeds. Everything comes to him who waits. We are confronted with a number of stories which prove beyond dispute that self-killing may in certain cases be the cause or the occasion of the attainment of sainthood, although in other cases it may be premature and sinful. Mahayana praises certain self-killings as self-surrender and worship. Abandoning one's existence is to be looked upon as the best self-sacrifice, for to give one's body is better than to give alms; and also

as the best worship, for to burn one's body as an offering is certainly more meritorious than to kindle lamps at a shrine. In accordance with the principles of the new Buddhism, self-surrender culminating in voluntary death has been held in honour in various Buddhist countries.

Jainism

Jainism frankly recognizes and commends religious suicide. But suicide is not permitted for all; it is allowed to those ascetics who have acquired the highest degree of perfection, and in essence it consists in giving up begging and lying down in a place to await death by hunger and thirst. The popularity of the practice is attested throughout the whole history of Jainism. Suicide, however, is still not permitted, to others than ascetics, and non-religious suicide is regarded with special horror by the Jains, as they disapprove of all taking of life.

Islam

At the present time, and for many centuries past, there has been unanimity of opinion throughout Islam that suicide is a violation of a divine command contained in the Quran and the Sunnah of the Prophet.

Christianity

The Church's moral teaching and canonical discipline are basically inspired by biblical revelation, which holds all life without exception to be a gift from God the creator and an object of special predilection by Christ as redeemer. Man, therefore, is not the ultimate guardian of his life. He is only a faithful and watchful custodian of it, and has to give an account of his custodianship to God. The society into which Christianity burst, however, was one in which suicide was idealised and even counselled as a heroic act of human virtue. It saw man as tied basically not to God, but to the State, while at the same time proclaiming his absolute autonomy by recommending suicide, either as a lesser evil when faced with the demands of the State and the hardships of life, or simply as a proud affirmation of human self-sufficiency. This was the mentality of many important Greek and Roman philosophers and sages at the time when Christianity made its appearance on the historical scene.

Christian moral thinking on suicide reached its culmination in the teaching of St Augustine. His thought was later codified and enriched in the thirteenth century by St Thomas Aquinas, who has become the central and indispensable reference point for all Catholic moral theologians down to our own day. The first Christian moralists were primarily concerned with refuting the Stoic and Epicurean views that favoured suicide. St Augustine was forced to consider the matter by a group of terrorist commandos, who sometimes took their own lives as an extremist form of provocation to violence. In St Thomas' day, suicide was again current among Albigensja and Cathars. In the nineteenth century, romanticism in its poetical, philosophical and sociological manifestations again idealized suicide, and in our own times it is once more becoming alarmingly prevalent with the growth of materialism of the present-day culture.

1.5. LET US SUM UP

As regards the attitude of the philosophic schools, the teaching of the Pythagoreans condemns suicide. According to Orphic or Pythagorean doctrine, the soul is undergoing in the body a penitential discipline for ante-natal sin. Hence suicide is an unwarranted rebellion against the will of God on the part of the individual, whom it behoves to wait until it please God to set him free. Plato, if we may infer his position from the *Phaedo* and the *Laws*, condemns suicide on grounds which we could characterize as religious. Religious, too, are the grounds on which Aristotle appears to regard suicide as reprehensible. Aristotle treats suicide as an offence not against the individual, but against the State, and that of a religious kind, as involving the city in pollution and requiring therefore penalties of a religious nature. Stoic teaching was decidedly favourable to suicide. Life and death being for the wise man indifferent, morally neither good nor evil, the question of suicide resolves itself for him into a decision whether life or death is in a given case preferable. Life in accordance with nature being the Stoic ideal, when the conditions essential to that ideal are no longer fulfilled suicide becomes a reasonable deliverance. The most powerful influence on Western thought about suicide originates in Jewish Scriptures' account of the creation of human in God's image.

1.6. KEY WORDS

Decalogue: Ethical Decalogue, or Ten Commandments, a list of religious and moral imperatives told to be written by God and given to Moses on Mount Sinai in the form of two stone tablets, as found in Exodus 34.

Myth: A myth is usually a sacred narrative explaining how the world and humankind came to be in their present form. Many scholars in other fields use the term "myth" in somewhat different ways. In a very broad sense, the word can refer to any traditional story.

1.7. FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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1.8. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Suicide is intentionally bringing about one's death by passive or active means. A person who commits suicide is a person who acts on the desire to die.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. The soul is immortal. Life is not ours to do with as we will. It is given by God. We cannot run away from the reality of life and kill ourselves.

2. Human is a social and political being. Each individual has a duty towards the community/society. Suicide is a grave offence against the good order of the society and the wishes of gods.

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. Judaism does not justify self-interested suicide. The Catholic Church is firm, uncompromising and absolute in rejecting suicide. Augustine (A.D. 354-430) condemns suicide. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) is as uncompromising of suicide as was Augustine. In fact, Aquinas borrows from Augustine (as well as from Aristotle). He exhibits threefold moral criticism of suicide: he claims that one who commits suicide fails in one's duty (a) to oneself, (b) to one's community, and (c) to God. A failure in one's duty to oneself: Suicide is wrong, according to Aquinas's initial argument, because it is a breach of charity. Charity is a duty we have toward ourselves because to act otherwise is contrary to the inclination of nature whereby we naturally love ourselves and seek to preserve ourselves in existence. A failure in one's duty to one's community: Aquinas' second argument against suicide is one that he borrows from Aristotle: to commit suicide is to rob the community of one of its community members. A failure in one's duty to one's God: Aquinas' second argument against suicide is that suicide is a violation of the sovereignty of God and therefore a failure in our duty to our Creator. His reasoning is that I belong to God because I have been created by Him, life is God's gift to me, and thus for me to kill myself is to make a decision that is only God's to make.

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2.0 OBJECTIVES

The objective of discussing euthanasia is extremely important as of today because of the breakdown of family life, the improvement of medical technology and the importance attached to productivity of human life which comes into play. The whole thrust of this unit will be:

- To show human life at present cannot be created at the laboratory
- The hand of god is seen clearly in all religions and atheists attributed to some power
- The death penalty is not right and here

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The word Euthanasia is taken from the Greek “eu”, which means good and “thanatos”, meaning death. It has come to mean the intentional killing, by a deliberate act or omission, of a person whose life is felt by himself or others not to be worth living. Euthanasia is often called “mercy killing”, and may mean (aid of) killing by relatives or friends for supposedly “merciful” reasons, or intentional killing by doctors or other health care professionals.

There are many words which are used to describe euthanasia such as active or passive euthanasia, direct or indirect euthanasia, voluntary or involuntary euthanasia, assisted suicide, and mercy killing. I will not cloud the discussion with detailed analyses of these. I will focus on the matter at hand. Euthanasia simply put is when the doctor kills the patient.

2.2 HISTORY

The Hippocratic Oath has framed the basis of a physician’s ethic. Written by Hippocrates, 400 years before the time of Christ, its ethic very clearly stated is “first do no harm” taken from the Latin “primum non nocere”. Sadly, in recent decades, physicians have departed from this ethic and taken the role of killing in addition to that of curing.

The legalization of abortion has permitted licensed physicians to directly kill when a weeping judge at Nuremberg asked "How did all this killing start?" "The guiltily one said "**When the first innocent person was killed, for now it is down the slippery slope**". The current climate of our culture has witnessed a further devaluation of human life, with the allowing of killing of born persons by physicians. Initially the purpose stated is as being done for only the most serious cases, those in severe pain, those who will anyway die.

The very idea of euthanasia means subjectively qualifying the value of human life, something which should never be allowed. As a result we undermine the security of those who are most vulnerable. We place a price tag on human life thereby judging that human life has only a relative value instead of an absolute or sacred value.

The term "Mercy Killing" has been used to legalize euthanasia. The phrase "Voluntary Euthanasia" has origins in a campaign of "Eugenics to improve "the human race by getting rid of its weaker members. It is based on a post-Darwinian theory, called Social Darwinism. This theory teaches that it is the duty of the strong to destroy the weak in order to assist human progress. This theory still has active supporters from some sociologists and political figures.

Advances in psychiatry have brought about the scientific and humane treatment of the mentally ill. However it should not be forgotten, that psychiatrists have participated in the mass killing of those who had mental illnesses. In an experiment in 1939, by a group of German physicians and a chemist, four men were killed with carbon monoxide gas. These four men were trusting, cooperative, had done nothing wrong and created no disturbance. Yet the physicians placed a value on their lives. They were ordinary mental patients in a state psychiatric hospital responsible for their care and well being. Following this successful case, gas chambers were installed in six psychiatric hospitals in Germany. (Wilke p 20-21)

2.3 EUTHANASIA IN THE WORLD

The first direct order for euthanasia was issued by Hitler on September 1, 1939, and an organization was set up to execute the program.

The Germans are not alone in this "crime" other countries did this and are still doing it. Some, secretly and hospitals and physicians are increasingly involved all over the globe, even when legislation forbids it. Today physicians in Holland are progressively devaluing the price of human lives, with more and more lives being counted as useless, progressively killing those counted as not worth living.

The Holland Experience

Sadly, 40 years later Dutch physicians have become proponents of widespread euthanasia which is commonly practiced in the Netherlands. Though there are written guidelines and laws regarding euthanasia, a careful analysis reveals much abuse and non adherence.

It has dramatically changed societal values and there has been a damaging impact on the family and the value of those who are elderly, physically challenged, mentally ill, chronically ill, and simply not born as "perfect". One of the Dutch guidelines from the minister of health states that "the request for euthanasia must come only from the patient and be entirely free and voluntary." In fact, physicians are directly killing their patients, no longer just the physician assisted suicide. Euthanasia which had been initially voluntary, for the terminally ill, and those with physical problems has reached euthanasia for the chronically ill, those with psychiatric conditions, and even involuntary euthanasia.

They have the need for patient protection groups and patients are afraid to be admitted to the hospital for fear of being killed. There is a case documented by J.C Wilke where a Dutch general physician admitted a cancer patient to a hospital on Friday for diagnostic evaluation.

Her cancer had spread, however the patient was comfortable and able to live independently. She was told the plan was to discuss her condition on Monday with specialists to decide on further treatment. Her physician was away for the weekend. When he returned on Monday another patient was in her hospital bed, and a doctor in training informed him that she was euthanized over the weekend because she was incurable and they anyway needed the bed.

Holland is a country where euthanasia is commonly practised. It has dramatically changed their social values and the impact on the family and the value of the elderly has been damaging, as is documented.

The Germans had a euthanasia program which emptied out the mental hospitals, institutions for handicapped children and chronically and incurably ill. In Holland, Dutch physicians refused to join in this program. Of 6,000 Dutch physicians, 4,261 signed a petition against the German program. Many doctors were jailed and threatened with death. They refused to kill handicapped patients and as a result of their united resistance the Reich Commissar withdrew his euthanasia request. Under Nazi rule, Holland was the only occupied country where mass killings of the institutionalized did not thus occur.

Legalized Euthanasia has given doctors in Holland incredible power over the patient's life or death. Only in a minority of cases is the patient involved in the decision. There is a loss of patient autonomy. In Holland, elderly citizens are given the message that it is really their duty to die. This is to prevent being an expensive burden, and depriving their loved ones of life's necessities! The patient doesn't ask to be killed as often as her family asks that her life be ended.

United Kingdom, United State and Australia

In Britain, since the 1930's there have been demands for euthanasia for the mentally or physically handicapped, the dying and the aged. In 1969, a second "Voluntary Euthanasia Bill" was presented before the British Parliament.

In the U.S Supreme Court, there is a case in which a woman who wanted to stop caring for her chronically ill husband gave him a choice between euthanasia and a nursing home. He chose euthanasia because he was afraid of being taken care of by strangers in an unfamiliar place. The physician performed euthanasia in this

***"Authentic Freedom is an exceptional sign
of the divine image within us and when he cannot
enjoy that freedom or it is temporarily to another
he/she acts in the name of the Creator of Life"***

In the U.S, there were failed attempts to legalize direct euthanasia in California, Oregon, and Washington. Later arguments were made for "physician assisted suicide".

Jack Kevorkian the Michigan pathologist who was famous for his suicide machines, and was called "Dr. Death" was responsible for the direct killing of Thomas Youk, who had Lou Gehrig's disease. As a result, Dr. Kevorkian was convicted of second degree murder and unlawful delivery of controlled substances. Dr. Kevorkian by his own estimate, had participated in the killing of 130 people by March 1999, his conviction confirmed that the homicide laws protect the sick and disabled as well as the strong and healthy. Australia too has been undergoing this push for legalization.

The Polish Experience

In Poland, for the moment there is no legal euthanasia. Unfortunately, liberal media continues to take the subject, provoking discussion on the basis of false assumptions. People do not know

how you can effectively treat pain and depression. The proposals of euthanasia appear wherever there is loss of faith in God – the Lord of Life and promotion of self-seeking society of consumption. The Proposal to shorten the life of the patient is often the result of their own frustration and discomfort.

Euthanasia in India

Euthanasia is not legalized, but covert practise does occur. Also, in Maharashtra & Kerala two Bills have been introduced but not passed. The Indian population is not in favour of euthanasia. In this area the church law is the same as Indian law. Dr. Malini Karkal, PhD, a Senior Statistician reported in a 1991 survey euthanasia in India was Rejected significantly by all religions

Hindus 93%

Muslims 92%

Christians 97%

Jain & Buddhists 100%

If the study is repeated today and explained correctly, it would still be largely unacceptable in India.

Check your progress I

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer

b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is mercy killing?

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2. What is the status of Euthanasia in India?

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2.4 DEVALUING HUMAN LIFE

The ethical implications of euthanasia are enormous. It is not a private decision. In helping one person to die, it makes it easier for us to kill the ill, weak, elderly, unfit and unwanted people. The family, friends, and health care providers become desensitized. Society will find political, social and economic reasons to shorten lives. Those who are weakest become most vulnerable including those with retardation, disabilities, the sick, elderly, poor, AIDS patients, and drug addicts, besides population control of the “financially unproductive”.

In today’s world where the Sale of Organs is highly profitable, euthanasia offers lucrative gains to those who are thus financially motivated.

Infanticide is a form of euthanasia in infants. The New England Journal of Medicine published a study on a two and a half year period, where 299 babies died in the Yale New Haven Hospital. 43 of the babies were allowed to die after the doctor and family discussed the propriety of not letting the child live. C. Everett Coop, the former surgeon general of the US, has described a new and unwritten right to the perfect child written by these “physicians”.

2.5 THE DIGNITY OF HUMAN LIFE IS INTERNAL, NOT EXTERNAL

Every person has a right to live with dignity until death. Dignity is not equated with control of bowel function. It is not dependent on whether a person is able to independently care for his own bodily needs at all times.

When we measure a person's value by the external shell in which he lives, we rob the individual of the respect and dignity he deserves.

A terminally ill elderly man was brought dying from the streets to the home of Mother Teresa's in Kolkatta where he received caring and compassion. A few days later before naturally dying, he said with a grateful smile "All my life I have lived like an animal. But now I am dying like an angel." The suffering of being unwanted had been removed for here he experienced love for the first time and a caring he had never known from genuine persons.

There are numerous individuals who have had disabilities, weaknesses, and illnesses that have lived beautiful lives but when materialism damages our attitude toward quality of life, we start seeing them, as unfit for living and as those who we do not consider perfect. Who can say that a retired elderly person or a blind, deaf, handicapped or mentally ill person does not have quality of life? How do we view Stephen Hawking, Joni Erikson Tada, or Helen Keller? What is legal is not always moral. What is common is not always natural or good. Euthanasia is not a religious issue, but a human one.

"Science, religion, ethics and philosophy must be integrated into an ethos providing an ethics for all to follow and look up to."

All religion and morality believe that "if we are not for life, we are against our own survival." Pope John Paul II was a scientist par excellence. In "Redemptor Hominis", he teaches that Ethical Analysis requires that we keep three priorities.

The priority of Person over Things. The Spirit over Matter, and Ethics over Technology. Many years ago the great scientist, Louis Pasteur, said, "Science gives the techniques but the Spirit gives the impulse".

"And who are the greater criminals, those who produce the instruments of death, or those that use them?" Robert E. Sherwood.

No one is free from stress, depression or suffering. Clinical depression can and must be treated. Support by the community, care givers, and health network can make a tremendous difference. Depression can often be the result of a chemical imbalance in the brain.

Many of those who suffer trauma, disability, mental illness, the stress of chronic diseases and advanced age suffer from depression. We simply cannot ignore depression in the elderly. At any time a depressed person may request to have their life ended, and the medical community must adequately address the treatment of depressed patients and remove the cause as far as possible by lessening loneliness and increasing community involvement and program participation. Euthanasia is not a solution for depression.

"Death must not be looked upon as only a terror or merely the merciful release from suffering, but as the most precious moment of encounter with the Lord"

Suffering is a normal part of life which everyone experiences. Through the experience of suffering a person may grow in grace, strength, and compassion for others. Compassionate care means to help a person live to the fullest until he or she dies. Terminal illnesses such as cancer require a special plan of care and support.

There is a time when heroic or extra ordinary medical care will only prolong the process of dying instead of curing or saving a person's life. It is at this time that we must call upon palliative care to help at the end of life care for an individual. This is a time for dying with human dignity and not being forced to die. Extra ordinary medical care is the use of ventilators, and other

artificial medical support of life systems which interfere with the natural process of death and do not save life but in essence prolong the dying process.

A person may instruct his family as to what is to be done in case he becomes unconscious, suffers brain damage and is unable to speak for himself. He may request never to use artificial support systems such as a respirator. However, in extreme life threatening situations, a person may change their mind. No one knows what their frame of mind will be until that situation arises. Also the medical implications are different in each case. Sometimes the use of artificial support is a temporary measure which can be discontinued once a patient recovers.

However artificial support becomes extra ordinary when a person has illness which is past the stage of recovery. A good ethical doctor need not continue life support systems when he is medically confident and supported by another physician and the patient's deteriorating condition. In this situation, there comes a time when a decision must be made by the physicians, patient and family regarding the withdrawal of support. In other words a decision to discontinue the tubes and give compassionate end of life care. All religious laws and governmental legislation are in basic agreement as to when this is necessary as also the Indian Law.

2.6 PAIN KILLERS

Pain killers are to be used freely when physical pain is present. Pain can be measured and observed objectively. It is a physical indication that something is wrong in the body. Modern pain killers can treat 90% of pain.

According to the World Health Organization, 95% of cancer pain can be controlled and the remaining 5% reduced to a tolerable level. Some patients may even reject their use, but it is the obligation of the medical community to offer pain control when needed, even if it may indirectly hasten death.

However it should also be noted that in some cases pain control may actually prolong the process of dying. In addition to adequate analgesia, emotional support and communication is a necessary part of care for those who are dying. The family also needs guidance and support during this time. Hospices can provide excellent end of life care. Palliative care when at its best, offers what euthanasia cannot give, the preservation of human dignity until a person dies.

Cancer patient Ms. N said, "I don't want any pain killer or sedatives anymore, I want to see and hear my loved ones around me when I say farewell". Her family greatly appreciated this value for them. Her dignity lay in her freedom to decide her values, feel pain and communicate with her beloved family and deny herself that value and be almost being unconscious.

Check your progress I

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer

b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. Does every person have a right to life?

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2. When should one use pain killers?

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2.7 A SPIRITUAL RESPONSE

The prime responsibility is with the family, but since many people have no family, the community becomes responsible, and the community includes the churches and religious bodies who pioneered care all over the world.

All religions and community services and responsible people should understand that it is God's image we see in the dying person. He/she is not a non person.

Instead with the breakdown of family life, our ideas are shaped far more than we realize by official attitudes and the fiscal system. These group us by age, and divide us into "Gainfully Employed" or "Dependent", very much like machines, which are classified as "latest model" or "obsolete", and "in working order" or scrap". Such an outlook takes no account of real human value.

ARE YOU ready to replace our Culture of Care and Commitment with the culture of death and abandonment? Then do so – at the sure risk of losing our humanity. If not practice palliative care with Eustress.

"Palliative Care means the active total care of patients whose prognosis is limited due to progressive, far-advanced disease. The purpose of such care is to alleviate pain and other distressing symptoms and to enhance the quality of life, not to hasten or postpone death".

The dying have three basic rights. They must be treated at all times as a child of God, treated so that they retain their individuality and their personality. Secondly, they are entitled to withdrawal of treatment when it is no longer curative; this is not euthanasia, but good medicine.

Thirdly, they are entitled to as much – or as little – of the truth they want to know.

Recording our rich heritage let us endeavour to preserve, strengthen and reinforce our caring skills in contrast in abundance and killing the image of the Creator by Eustress.

Eustress needed for the patient, the family & the physician to change the stress of suffering into a persuasive position of responsible caring with nature, strengthening heart and hand of the patient physician and the family. Dying patients also need time, time to come to terms with what they are being asked for, they are being asked to make their peace with God, and to make peace with their own families as a nurse with much experience of death. I am convinced that ninety per cent of people know when they are dying. We never lie to patients, we never tell them they are not dying when they are. If they ask, there are various ways of telling them.

2.8 EUSTRESS

The inability to face stress personally but especially in their patients or in relatives who appear distressed because they want to appear that they can get their "problem" out of the way has not warranted enough attention by all sections of society.

Often patients lack sufficient Faith, Positive Family Support and Friends who could rally around turning their illness into Eustress or good stress which could not only strengthen their personality to fight their disease but actually provide relief or even a "cure" or "ease" to accept what can be done.

The physicians often have never been taught or learnt how to change the tremendous stress of illness and suffering by spiritual or family therapy and group therapy which are positive steps. The fantastic journey out of depression and the canyons of darkness into the light of God's Love and Life is amazing therapeutic, and the human spirit governing the body is in your own ability. This is the message to doctors, nurses and relatives - face, fight jointly – do not take flight!

This is the Challenge to doctors and nurses “Change Stress – face the Challenge to your own Ability to develop the Capability of your patient encouraging his/her recovery of mind and spirit i.e., the soul, to a state of eustress, facing dying calmly and in thus reassuring their families.”

Hospitals benefit financially from using Life Support Systems even when unnecessary. Iatrogenic Diseases that are emerging as a major disaster range from investigations, medication, unnecessary surgical intervention and procedures / refreshing responsive.

2.9 CASE STUDIES

1. When Winston Churchill was dying of pneumonia his distraught wife Clementina records how this doctor said “Nothing more we can do and save him. But there is a new medicine called Pencillin not yet on the market. If we could get it! Who has this drug and can we get it” asked Clementina. “It’s in the US and a man named Alexander Fleming has developed it”.

“But that’s Winston’s close friend” said Clementina, “Winston saved his life when he was drowning as a friend. Let’s ask him”. They did and penicillin was flown across the Atlantic and the rest is history as Winston recovered and led the way to a victorious end.

Jack Willke a physician who has dedicated his whole practising life and skills to fighting euthanasia has frequent encounters with the resiliences of dying persons. He has vowed never to play “God” and either predicts death or even dying but to always promotes precious human life.

As a junior intern he saw 2 vials of precious penicillin suddenly made available to the hospital and given to a seriously infected, dying young man recover and live.

I am a person who passes through this world. I have seen many beautiful and wholesome things and I was attracted always only by them. One day, one fine day, I saw a light. It seemed to me more beautiful than anything else and I followed it. I realized that it was the Truth”. **C.**

Lubich. *Remember there is no truth without justice and no justice without love and life.*

2. Dr. Hingorani eminent surgeon (and Surgeon to the President of India) recalls a case which made him change his mind of supporting euthanasia.

He had an advanced case of a father with cancer of the jaw. The two sons of this man had come the previous evening and asked that the father be given an injection to die, as “they” could not suffer to see him. Dr. Hingorani was debating this procedure when a relative of the father met him the next morning and said she had suspected the request made and wanted to alert the doctor as they stood to gain financially if the father died now. The details were such that Dr. Hingorani was shocked that the sons could be so callous when their father’s eyes were still shining with affection for them. He changed his pro euthanasia mind dramatically.

3. Sir Francis Chichister’s doctor once told him he was soon to die. Yet, he went on to live another 15 vigorous years. In his autobiography, “Famed heart surgeon Dr. Christian Barnard related that as a young intern he once came within a needle plunge of committing a mercy killing on a woman who was in extreme agony from cancer pain . He stopped and did not go ahead as he was suddenly called for another emergency. The woman recovered and lived for three “good years” and then died peacefully with her family around. This made him change his whole attitude to “taking life”.

4. Dr. Lusito deSouza of Tata Cancer Hospital, Mumbai similarly changed when a woman of 45 had come to see “the good doctor” who had treated her many years ago in the same hospital and hoped that her “gastric” symptoms would be cured as he had done everything for her. She had left the city and returned with her son after many years.

When Dr. Lusito asked for her case file he confirmed an “incurable” cancer 15 years earlier as she had been assessed as not “mentally, strong enough to take the verdict of being incurable, and told just to rest and eat well. This he discovered from the old records. He was stunned that the woman was standing in front of him fit and fine with her young son.

“We must remember that there is no obligation to treat exists when the costs of maintaining life greatly outweigh the benefits.”

2.10 PALLIATIVE CARE

The family also needs guidance and support during this time. Hospices can provide excellent “end of life” care. Palliative care when at its best offers what euthanasia cannot give. The preservation of human dignity until a person dies. Pain killers may prolong the dying process besides causing other side effects and a choice to accept, continue or reject made if the patient can do so.

Nurses and Doctors who work in Palliative Care (Hospices) report how they themselves are uplifted and empowered to appreciate Human Life when working with the physically weak and dying.

It is a fact little known and not repeated enough that depressions and suicide have little or no place in the lives of the simple and the impaired persons, and the highest rate in pop stars or the rich!.

2.11 QUALITY OF LIFE

To repudiate the quality-of-life argument, therefore, requires a defence of treatment in even incurable cases. Such, a defense would question the validity of any surrogate or proxy judgments of the worth or quality of life when the wishes of the person in question cannot be ascertained.

The essence of the quality of life argument is a proxy’s judgment that no reasonable person would prefer the pain, suffering and loneliness or for example, lie in a crib at an IQ level of 20, to an immediate, painless death.

But in what sense can the proxy validly conclude that a person with different wants, needs and interests, if able to speak, would agree that such a life were worse than death?

At the start one must be sceptical of the proxy’s claim to objective disinterestedness. If the proxy is also the parent or physician, as has been the case in paediatric euthanasia, the impact of treatment on the proxy’s interests, rather than solely on those of the child, may influence his assessment.

But even if the proxy were truly neutral and committed only to caring for the child, the problem of egocentricity and knowing another’s mind remains. Compared with the situation and life prospects of a “reasonable man”, the child’s potential quality of life indeed appears dim. Yet a standard based on healthy, ordinary development may be entirely inappropriate to this situation. One who has never known the pleasures of mental operation, ambulation, or social interaction surely does not suffer from their loss as much as one who has. While one who has known these capacities may prefer death to a life without them.

We have no assurance that the handicapped person, with no point of comparison would agree. Life, and life alone, whatever its limitations, might be of sufficient worth to him”.

The only group of defective newborns who would clearly qualify as non person is anencephalies, who altogether lack a brain, or those so severely brain damaged that it is immediately clear that a sense of self or personality can never develop.

We must remember that Euthanasia is not about turning off machines when life can no longer be supported, nor is it about accepting unwanted intrusions into the life of patient to maintain life at any cost. It is about purposeful killing, taking the life of another person or murder.

What would Mahatma Gandhi or Mother Teresa or even Baba Amte would have gone further than the Hippocratic Oath formulated by the great physician Hippocrates (BC) who stressed only on “Primum Non Nocera”. First, do not harm”. Only –Promote Life.

Surely they would have gone on to say “All life is precious. As we age and the body cells slow down no man or machine can predict when natural death can occur.

Direct killing, deprivation of ordinary nutrition and water can never be condoned. As long as we are loved and wanted nobody would seriously like to die, as these leaders would have said

2.12 PHILOSOPHICAL IMPLICATIONS

The study of philosophy is guided by wisdom as wisdom is understood as the application of intelligence and knowledge to practical living and dying. Now that science has got so much of interest, it is intervening in many areas designer babies by preserving the bodies by freezing to be resurrected when science can meet this challenge after all. The preservation of sperm by freezing is already in practice and the race to produce in live human being is questioned because of the expense of a million dollars. Philosophy calmly takes facts and aspirations into consideration and decides an ethos of thinking which can be accepted or not by human beings. Euthanasia is usually sorted out by incapacitated, unwanted and unloved beings and hence deserves one careful attention to setting precedence.

Philosophy exists as it is a science but it is so wide open to several issues of interference and impression that it may seem vague at times to take a decision. But a decision has to be taken and in all fairness those concerned like the doctors, nurses, patients, family should be intelligently informed and involved as Mahatma Gandhi said “Life is precious” Whatever the quality, the age and when we start setting terms and conditions, it can be dangerous if the above is not followed that is intelligent, information and involvement.

Check your progress I

Note: a). Use the space provided for your answer

b). Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What do you understand by Palliative care?

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2. What is Eustress?

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2.13 LET US SUM UP

Since this is a human life issue, anything pertaining to it should be very clear for the general public, for the judiciary in educational and social fields. At the same time, one has to think how any decision could affect future generations. Since euthanasia falls into the category of vital life issue subjects, the philosophy or study of it is extremely important. It is necessary that only in bioethics but in every field this issue is taken up because it involves the family, the basic unit of society. Previous decisions rulings affected by modern techniques need to be addressed. There are many grey areas affecting human lines. There are instances where dying patients do not accept pain killers or sedations as they wish to be alive, to enjoy the last moments with their

loved ones. Many people are there who do not have anybody to love or who do not feel needed. These are the ones who will sign the living will or put to sleep permanently.

2.14 KEY WORDS

Physician Assisted Suicide: is when a doctor gives the means for suicide to a person who has requested it for himself.

Direct Euthanasia: or active euthanasia is the killing of a patient by direct means, often by lethal injection. It is an act of commission.

Indirect Euthanasia: or passive euthanasia is the killing of a patient by withholding or withdrawing treatment. It is an act of omission, such as withholding antibiotics.

Inertia Killing: when doctors do nothing for the unconscious patient and not knowing what is the correct diagnosis leaving her to die.

2.15 FURTHER READING AND REFERENCES

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2.16 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check your progress I

1. The term "Mercy Killing" has been used to legalize euthanasia. The phrase "Voluntary Euthanasia" has origins in a campaign of "Eugenics to improve "the human race by getting rid of its weaker members. It is based on a post-Darwinian theory, called Social Darwinism. This theory teaches that it is the duty of the strong to destroy the weak in order to assist human progress. This theory still has active supporters from some sociologists and political figures.

2. Euthanasia is not legalized, but covert practise does occur. Also, in Maharashtra & Kerala two Bills have been introduced but not passed. The Indian population is not in favour of euthanasia. In this area the church law is the same as Indian law. Dr. Malini Karkal, PhD, a Senior Statistician reported in a 1991 survey euthanasia in India was Rejected significantly by all religions

Answers to Check your progress II

1. Every person has a right to live with dignity until death. Dignity is not equated with control of bowel function. It is not dependent on whether a person is able to independently care for his own bodily needs at all times. When we measure a person's value by the external shell in which he lives, we rob the individual of the respect and dignity he deserves.
2. Pain killers are to be used freely when physical pain is present. Pain can be measured and observed objectively. It is a physical indication that something is wrong in the body. Modern pain killers can treat 90% of pain.

Answers to Check your progress III

1. The family also needs guidance and support during this time. Hospices can provide excellent "end of life" care. Palliative care when at its best offers what euthanasia cannot give. The preservation of human dignity until a person dies. Pain killers may prolong the dying process besides causing other side effects and a choice to accept, continue or reject made if the patient can do so.

Nurses and Doctors who work in Palliative Care (Hospices) report how they themselves are uplifted and empowered to appreciate Human Life when working with the physically weak and dying.

2. The inability to face stress personally but especially in their patients or in relatives who appear distressed because they want to appear that they can get their "problem" out of the way has not warranted enough attention by all sections of society.

Often patients lack sufficient Faith, Positive Family Support and Friends who could rally around turning their illness into Eustress or good stress which could not only strengthen their personality to fight their disease but actually provide relief or even a "cure" or "ease" to accept what can be done.



UNIT 3

ABORTION

Contents

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Concept and Meaning of Abortion
- 3.3 Types and Methods of Abortion
- 3.4 Risks Involved in Abortion
- 3.5 Abortion and Breast Cancer: The ABC Link
- 3.6 Attempts to Legalise Abortion
- 3.7 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.8 Key Words
- 3.9 Answers to Check Your Progress
- 3.10 Further Readings and References

3.0. OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this unit is to provide you with a comprehensive understanding of the practice of abortion and the various issues associated with it. After reading this unit you should be able to:

- Differentiate between the types and methods of abortion.
- Out line the various grounds for legal termination of pregnancy.
- Understand the pros and cons of abortion

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Family is the basic unit of the society. It is from the family that the society and social institution including the religions recruit people. Family comprise of a father and the mother and their children. In many societies we find joint families and extended families.

Marriage legitimizes the legal birth of offsprings. With the advent of medical technology, media explosion and consumerism, the age old positive value system is undergoing drastic change. As a result many young people particularly from urban areas prefer to live with their legal or Illegal partner (spouse) and opt for a life without having children. Several governments including that of India have legalized abortion to enable a woman to legally kill the helpless child in her womb. With the political sanction and other support from the medical system abortion has become a common practice across the globe.

Statistics pertaining abortion speak volumes about the changing attitudes of people to value system. While official statistics estimates the annual abortion rate at 6 to 7 million, estimates by various NGOs show that the actual annual figure could be over 25 million in India while the global figure stood at around 50 million.

It has been proved beyond doubt that in several states in India (particularly from the north) there is an attempt for sex selective abortion which causes termination of female foetuses. Very often people who are involved in the act of abortion including the mother, in-laws, physicians etc. are not aware of the long term implication of the act on the mother, family and the society. In this unit we shall describe the meaning of the term abortion, various types and methods of abortion, legal aspects involved in abortion as well as the impact of abortion on the individual.

3.2. CONCEPT AND MEANING OF ABORTION

Abortion is made up of two Latin words- *ab*-meaning off or away and *oriri* meaning to be born. Abortion means taking away a human life which would in the normal course of events be born.

It is the termination of pregnancy by the removal from the uterus of a fetus or embryo, resulting its death. An abortion can occur spontaneously due to complications during pregnancy or can be induced. An induced abortion to preserve the health of the pregnant female is termed a *therapeutic abortion*. An induced abortion for any other purpose is termed as *elective abortion*. The term *abortion* usually refers to the induced abortion of a human pregnancy, while spontaneous abortions are termed as miscarriages.

Abortion has a long history and has been induced by various methods including herbal abortifacients, the use of sharpened tools, physical trauma and other traditional methods. Medications and surgical procedures are used to induce abortion.

An abortion is medically referred to as therapeutic when it is performed to:

- Save the life of the pregnant woman;
- Preserve the woman's physical or mental health;
- Terminate pregnancy that would result in a child born with a congenital disorder that would be fatal or associated with significant morbidity;
- Selectively reduce the number of fetuses to lessen health risks associated with multiple pregnancy.

An abortion is referred to as elective when it is performed at the request of the women "for reasons other than maternal health or fetal disease."

Abortion has two meanings:

Medically it can be described a case of miscarriage, without any outside intervention, occurring within the first three months of pregnancy.

Abortions legalized by the Act on the other hand, are those deliberately procured with the intention of terminating the pregnancy, killing the unborn child.

The terms abortion and miscarriage are used to describe the same phenomena at an earlier and at later stage of pregnancy. Abortion is restricted so as to describe the case occurring in the first

three months of pregnancy and miscarriage to describe one during pregnancy from the beginning of the fourth month until the foetus becomes viable.

Check Your progress I

1. List out the circumstances leading to therapeutic abortion.

3.3. TYPES AND METHODS OF ABORTION

There are many ways of aborting an unwanted foetus. The method chosen depends mainly on the duration of pregnancy to be interrupted as in the first or second trimester (3 months).

Types of Abortion

Early Abortion

Early abortion is the one that occurs before the 12th week whereas late abortion is the category that occurs between the 12th and 20th week.

Spontaneous abortion

Spontaneous abortion or miscarriage occurs without any intervention.

Threatened abortion

Threatened abortion is the process of abortion which starts and can still be reversed to recovery and continuation of gestation.

Inevitable abortion

Inevitable abortion is the one where the changes have progressed to such a state from where further continuation of pregnancy is not possible.

Complete abortion

Complete abortion occurs when the entire products of conception are expelled from out of the uterus. Incomplete abortion is where the evacuation of the uterine contents is only partial.

Induced abortion

Induced abortion is the one, which is performed deliberately for elective reasons.

Sex-selective abortion and female infanticide

Sonography and amniocentesis allow parents to determine sex before birth which has led to sex-selective abortion, and the targeted termination of female fetuses.

Sex-selective abortion might be partially responsible for the noticeable disparities between the birth rates of male and female children in some states.

Methods of Abortion

Manual Vacuum Aspiration

This surgical abortion is done early in the pregnancy up until 7 weeks after the woman's last menstrual period. A long, thin tube is inserted into the uterus. A large syringe is attached to the tube and the embryo is suctioned out.

The tube is connected to a powerful pump with a suction force 29 times more powerful than a home vacuum cleaner.

The procedure tears the baby's body into pieces and the hose frequently jerks as pieces of the baby become lodged. The placenta is then cut from the inner wall of the uterus and the scraps are sucked out into a bottle.

Suction Curettage

This is the most common method of surgical abortion. Because the baby is larger, the doctor must first stretch open the cervix using metal rods. Opening the cervix may be painful, so local or general anesthesia is needed. After the cervix is stretched open, the doctor inserts a hard plastic tube into the uterus, then connects this tube to a suction machine. The suction pulls the fetus' body apart and out of the uterus. The doctor may also use a loop-shaped knife called a curette to scrape the fetus and fetal parts out of the uterus.

Dilation and Evacuation (D&E)

This surgical abortion is done during the second trimester of pregnancy. At this point in pregnancy, the fetus is too large to be broken up by suction alone and will not pass through the suction tube. In this procedure, the cervix must be opened wider than in a first trimester abortion. This is done by inserting numerous thin rods a day or two before the abortion. Once the cervix is stretched open the doctor pulls out the fetal parts with forceps. The fetus' skull is crushed to ease removal. A sharp tool (called a curette) is also used to scrape out the contents of the uterus, removing all remaining tissues.

Dilation and Extraction (D&X)

These procedures typically take place over three days, use local anesthesia, and are associated with increased risk to life and health of the mother. On the first day, under ultrasound guidance, the fetal heart is injected with a medication that stops the heart and causes the fetus to die. Also over the first two days, the cervix is gradually stretched open using laminaria. On the third day, the amniotic sac is burst and drained. The remainder of the procedure is similar to the D&E procedure described earlier.

RU486, Mifepristone (Abortion Pill) Within 4 to 7 weeks after LMP

This drug is only approved for use in women up to the 49th day after their last menstrual period. The procedure usually requires three office visits. On the first visit, the woman is given pills to cause the death of the embryo. Two days later, if the abortion has not occurred, she is given a second drug which causes cramps to expel the embryo. The last visit is to determine if the procedure has been completed. RU486 will not work in the case of an ectopic pregnancy. This is a potentially life-threatening condition in which the embryo lodges outside the uterus, usually in the fallopian tube.

Morning After (Indian Version)

The much publicized emergency contraceptive pills available across the country including the “i-pill” have the approval of the government of India only for use in unavoidable situation such as rape and unwanted pregnancy. These pills have side effects such as excessive and irregular bleeding and can cause damage to the ovary apart from skin allergy, if used regularly. It also causes hormonal imbalance. Although the instruction on these pills read “within 72 hours” experts advise that the pill must be used within 12 hours for a positive result. Unfortunately several young girls are reported to be buying these pills from chemists very frequently, particularly in Urban India. Some of the medical professionals do not consider contraceptive pills cause abortion.

Salt Poisoning

Salt Poisoning is the most often used method after the first trimester. The physician injects a strong salt solution directly into the amniotic sac. The baby breathes and swallows it. It is poisoned, struggles, and sometimes convulses. It takes over an hour to kill the baby. The mother delivers the dead baby in a day or two sometimes alive. The corrosive effect of the salt solution often burns and strips away the outer layer of the baby's skin. This exposes the raw, red, glazed-looking subcutaneous layer of tissue. This technique was originally developed in the concentration camps in Nazi Germany.

Hysterotomy

This method is usually used late in pregnancy and is likened to an "early" Caesarian section. The mother's abdomen and uterus are surgically opened and the baby is lifted out. Unfortunately, many of these babies are very much alive when removed. To kill the babies, some doctors have been known to plunge them into buckets of water or smother. Still others cut the cord while the baby is still inside the uterus depriving the baby of oxygen.

9. Other Methods

Historically, a number of herbs reputed to possess abortifacients properties have been used in folk medicine. The use of herbs can cause serious side effects, such as multiple organ failure, and are not recommended by physicians.

Unsafe and self-induced abortion methods include the misuse of misoprostol, and insertion of non-surgical implements such as knitting needles and clothes hangers into the uterus. These methods are rarely seen in developed countries where surgical abortion is legal and available.

Induced abortion can be traced to ancient times. There is evidence to suggest that, historically pregnancies were terminated through a number of methods, including the administration of abortifacient herbs, the use of sharpened implements, the application of abdominal pressure, and other techniques.

The Hippocratic Oath, the chief statement of medical ethics for Hippocratic physicians in Ancient Greece, forbade doctors from helping to procure an abortion by pessary. Soranus, a second-century Greek Physician, suggested in his work *Gynaecology* that women wishing to abort their pregnancies should engage in energetic exercise, energetic jumping, carrying heavy objects, and riding animals.

Check your progress II

What are the types of Abortion?

3.4 RISKS INVOLVED IN ABORTION

Side effects may occur with induced abortion, whether surgical or by medication. These include abdominal pain and cramping, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. Abortion also carries the risk of significant complications such as bleeding, infection, and damage to organs.

Heavy Bleeding

Some bleeding after abortion is normal. However, if the cervix is torn or the uterus is punctured, there is a risk of severe bleeding known as hemorrhaging. When this happens, a blood transfusion may be required. Severe bleeding is also a risk with the use of RU486.

Infection

Infection can develop from the insertion of medical instruments into the uterus, or from fetal parts that are mistakenly left inside. A pelvic infection may lead to persistent fever over several days and extended hospitalization. It can also cause scarring of the pelvic organs.

Incomplete Abortion

Some fetal parts may be mistakenly left inside after the abortion. Bleeding and infection may result.

Anesthesia

Complications from general anesthesia used during abortion surgery may result in convulsions, heart attack, and in extreme cases, death.

Damage to the Cervix

The cervix may be cut, torn, or damaged by abortion instruments. This can cause excessive bleeding that requires surgical repair.

Scarring of the Uterine Lining

Suction tubing, curettes, and other abortion instruments may cause permanent scarring of the uterine lining.

Perforation of the Uterus

The uterus may be punctured or torn by abortion instruments. The risk of this complication increases with the length of the pregnancy. If this occurs, major surgery may be required, including removal of the uterus known as a hysterectomy.

Damage to Internal Organs

When the uterus is punctured or torn, there is also a risk that damage will occur to nearby organs such as the bowel and bladder.

Death

In extreme cases, other physical complications from abortion including excessive bleeding, infection, organ damage from a perforated uterus, and adverse reactions to anesthesia may lead to death.

Emotional and Psychological Impact

There is evidence that abortion is associated with a decrease in both emotional and physical health. For some women these negative emotions may be very strong, and can appear within days or after many years. This psychological response is a form of post-traumatic stress disorder. Some of the symptoms are:

Eating disorders

Relationship problems

Guilt

Depression

Flashbacks of abortion

Suicidal thoughts

Sexual dysfunction

Alcohol and drug abuse

Spiritual Consequences

Most people in India believe in one or another religion. None of the world religions approve the practice of abortion. Having done an abortion many leave the individual with life long guilt feeling and may even drive some to suicidal tendency. Very often neither the woman, nor those who persuade her for abortion seriously think about the spiritual consequences of abortion before the act.

Placenta Previa

Placenta previa is a medical condition of pregnancy where the placenta covers the cervix, making a cesarean section necessary. This can put the woman to a greater risk which may lead to

loss of blood and subsequent blood transfusion. Placenta previa also causes high risk of Hysterectomy (loss of uterus) involving a major surgery. Induced abortion increase the risk of placenta previa to a great extent.

Pre-term Birth

Pre-term birth as well as low birth weight of subsequently delivered children have been recorded as negative results of the abortion of the first foetus. This will lead to the growth of an unhealthy and weak child in the family.

Suicide and Maternal Mortality

Several Studies have proved the link between induced abortion and increased rates of suicide. Self harm is more in women who have had induced abortion. In England, psychiatric admission as a result of suicide attempts is three times likely for women after induced abortion (C. Morgan et.al "Studies after Pregnancy, 1997). Maternal mortality linked to abortion is very common particularly in developing countries. The rate of maternal mortality linked to illegal abortions are known to be higher.

Consequences of Illegal Abortion

Illegal abortions frequently led to the complications such as perforations of the uterus, hemorrhage and infection requiring gynaecological care and hospitalization. It is also reported that in countries with restrictive abortion laws, the poor were made to suffer more than the affluent, the better educated and the urban elite.

A woman who has undergone an abortion is also more likely to have subsequent children both physically or mentally handicapped. Damage to the wall of the uterus can affect the normal development of the placenta through which the baby takes its nourishment. The commonest and gravest ill effect resultant upon abortion being sterility and inability to carry subsequent pregnancies through the term.

Side Effects of Abortion

The side effects of abortion are serious and most commonly long lasting. Though the subject is controversial when the pregnancy includes an actual life, the termination of the "possible life" remains. Careful consideration for religious, social and medical concerns may lead a woman toward taking a considered decision than the simple fact of not wanting to shoulder the responsibility of a new life.

The decision to approve of an a abortion should be based on the responsibility laid on the woman for terminating life as well as the physical effects of abortion as the body response to this action. In addition to the physical complications, a woman puts herself danger of mental distress due to severity of her decision. In addition to depression, a woman may experience chemical reactions due to medical problems that are known or unknown. The side affects of abortion may be life threatening including cancer, heart disease, and death during the actual process of an abortion.

Complications include uterine hemorrhage, uterine perforation, endometriosis, pelvic inflammatory disease, coexistent ectopic pregnancy, asherman syndrome, and delayed sequelae.

In addition, many women face mental challenges of depression and regret. Though exact statistics are not available of women who experience these complications, they can be deadly. It is a fact that surgery could decrease the functionality of the immune system by putting the body in a vulnerable position in respect to bacteria and viral infection.

In some cases the health of the mother is at risk in a pregnancy and a team of medical professionals must discuss survival of both the woman and her baby. A second opinion is always recommended even when the first opinion is the desired answer. Seeking the opinion of the spiritual guide or religious counselor may help to make better decisions if the mother's life is in danger. Finding support through local and national organizations in addition to friends and family may create the required support for mental and physical wellness during this difficult time. Carrying a baby for nine months is a sacrifice worth taking for a woman who goes through the same in order to give that child life.

3.5 ABORTION AND BREAST CANCER: THE ABC LINK

Breast Cancer is the only type of cancer that has continued to rise across the globe. Most of this increase occur in women in the age group of 20 to 40 years. Several epidemiological studies conducted in mammals all evince a link between abortion and breast cancer called the ABC link (Abortion-breast cancer link by Angela Lanfranchi, in "The Cost of Choice: Women evaluate the impact of abortion" Encounter Books, 2004).

The physiology of the breast provides the evidence of casual link between abortion and breast cancer. The same biology that accounts for 90 per cent of all the risk factors for breast cancer, accounts for the ABC link.

If a woman starts her menstrual cycle early and continues into her late fifties, she is at a higher risk for breast cancer as she has been exposed to monthly estrogen elevations for a long period of time. Similarly, birth control pills can elevate breast cancer risk.

The Lobules Impact

Type 1 and Type 2 lobules are where ductal cancers arise. It is estimated that ductal cancer accounts for 80 per cent of all breast cancer. When a female child is born, she has only a small number of Type 1 lobules. At puberty, when estrogen level rise, the breast forms Type 2 lobules. The estrogen stimulation that causes sore and tender breasts early in pregnancy results in the multiplication of Type 1 and 2 lobules. It is only after 32 weeks that a woman's breast stop growing larger and mature into Type 3 and Type 4 lobules in preparation for breast feeding. If abortion ends a woman's pregnancy before full maturation of her breasts, she is left with an increased number of immature Type 1 and Type 2 lobules. She now has a greater number of the breast lobules where cancers can arise. It is only through the hormonal environment and length of a full-term (40 weeks) pregnancy that there is complete maturation of Type 3 and Type 4 lobules in the breast. This maturation protects a woman and lowers her risk of breast cancer. Abortion in women under 18 and over 30 years old carries the greatest risk as they have highest percentage of Type 1 lobules in their breasts.

The risk of breast cancer increases with induced abortion in the following cases:

When the induced abortion precedes a first full-term pregnancy.

When the women is a teenager.

When the woman is over the age of 30
When the pregnancy is terminated at more than 12 weeks gestation, and
When the woman has a family history of breast cancer.

3.6 ATTEMPTS TO LEGALISE ABORTION

The Soviet Union was the first country to legalise abortion. In 1920, Lenin's government enabled women in first trimester pregnancy to obtain abortion on request. Thereafter many countries introduced liberal clauses in their abortion laws from 1930 onwards. Presently, the laws on abortion vary from abortion on request at one extreme to total prohibition on the other. The four largest countries which have liberalized abortion laws for medical termination of pregnancy are China, India, USA and Russia.

Legalising Abortion

India was one of the first countries which legalized induced abortion through the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971. According to this act, a woman can legally have an abortion if its pregnancy carries the risk of grave physical injury or endangers her mental health, if it is a result of contraceptive failure in a married woman, if it is the consequence of rape, or if it is likely to result in the birth of a child with physical or mental abnormalities. In such circumstances, abortion is permitted up to 20 weeks of pregnancies without any need for spouse consent.

(a) The Conditions under which a pregnancy can be terminated under the MTP Act 1971
There are 5 conditions that have been identified in the Act.

Medical: where continuation of the pregnancy might endanger the mother's life or cause grave injury to her physical or mental health.

Eugenic: Where there is substantial risk of the child being born with serious handicaps due to physical or mental abnormalities.

Humanitarian: Where pregnancy is the result of rape.

Socio-economic: Where actual or reasonably foreseeable environments (whether social or economic) could lead to risk injury to the health of the mother.

Failure of contraceptive devices: The anguish caused by an unwanted pregnancy resulting from a failure of any contraceptive device or method can be presumed to constitute a grave mental injury to the mental health of the mother. This condition is a unique feature of the Indian Law and virtually allows abortion on request.

The written consent of the guardian is necessary before performing abortion in women under 18 years of age, and in lunatics even if they are older than 18 years.

(b) The person or persons who can perform abortion

The Act provides safeguards to the mother by authorizing only a registered medical practitioner having experience in gynaecology and obstetrics to perform an abortion where the length of pregnancy does not exceed 12 weeks.

(c) Where abortion can be done

The Act stipulates that no termination of pregnancy shall be made at any place other than a hospital established or maintained by the Government or a place approved for the purpose of this Act by Government.

Under the new rules, non-governmental institutions may also take up abortions provided they obtain a license from the Chief Medical Officer of the District, thus eliminating the requirement of private clinics obtaining a Board License.

Reasons of Abortion

There are several reasons for a woman to seek abortion. In India one of the major reasons for seeking abortion is the preference for a male child. Other reasons include:

Fear of the ridicule by relatives and friends, if the pregnancy is out of wedlock.

Fear of the woman to have become pregnant while studying in school/college.

Fear of the woman that she cannot care for the child born out of wedlock.

Dissertation by the baby's father.

Fear of carrying a pregnancy for nine months.

Fear of taking care of too many children.

Fear of ridicule for having too many children.

Compulsion from relatives and husband/baby's father.

Easy availability of abortion clinics in urban areas.

Priority for career than having a family.

One of the most common reasons for seeking abortion among married women is limiting family size. A very short interval between conceptions is also often given as a reason for abortion. Women, who have infrequent sex as their husbands are away for long periods, usually do not expect to become pregnant easily. If they do become pregnant, many of them tend to opt for abortion. Preference for sons particularly among some religious groups and poverty are also reasons for seeking abortion.

Conception during certain inauspicious months also motivate women to seek abortion in some parts of South India.

Issues Associated With Legal Abortions

Abortion issues may be divided into:

(1) Physical and medical issues

(2) Emotional issues

(3) Social issues

(4) Moral issues

Physical and Medical Issue

A woman is made physically and psychologically for motherhood. This is the basic fact of her life. If this process of becoming a mother is suddenly stopped, the shock will have its effect. This effect may be physical or mental, immediate or long term.

Emotional Issue

There is emotional and physical unrest experienced during the first few weeks of pregnancy. It is at this time that the expectant mother may be subjected to maximum pressure to agree to an abortion. The common psychological problems associated with abortion are depression, neurosis, guilt etc.

Each individual is different. For some, abortion provides great relief with little or no disturbance. For the others, the experience can be upsetting. The key factor seems to be whether the woman wants an abortion or whether she is hesitant. Being refused an abortion and forced to bear an unwanted child can lead to psychiatric symptoms. But the woman who has health problems and has to have an abortion or who is persuaded to have an abortion against her better judgement is also more likely to show negative psychological reactions following an abortion.

Social Issues

Legalised abortion, saves lives by reducing the number of illegal attempts.

Antiabortionists emphasize their fears that without any restriction, except the individual women and her conscience, an 'Abortion Mentality' develops so that abortion becomes too common and are performed too easily or for reasons that are not serious: For example teenage pregnancy tend to become a common occurrence among several college students in urban areas with free access to abortion facilities.

Moral Issues

Much of the controversy about abortion has centered around the moral issues. In ordinary justice, the child has as much claim as the mother to life and should have even more claim to legal protection of its right, since it is incapable of defending itself.

Rights of the Unborn Child

The UN declaration on the Rights of the child maintains that "The Child by reason of its physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care including appropriate legal protection before as well as after the birth."

The Anti abortionists claim that science has proven beyond any reasonable doubt that human life begins at fertilization. The foetus from the beginning has its own life, is a totally new human being, a new person, with a genetic code quite distinct from the genetic code of its parents. That new life is completely there at fertilization, lacking only development and growth. Abortion always takes away the innocent's already existing life.

Check your Progress Exercise III

1. What are the five conditions under which a pregnancy can be terminated under MTP Act 1971?

3.7. LET US SUM UP

Abortion is the process of willfully removing the foetus from the womb of the mother by one or another method. Although several countries including India have legalized abortion particularly during the first trimester, everyone knows that it is an act of willfully putting an end to the life of a helpless child in the womb of its mother. For the world community it is an ethical issue. In this unit we have deliberated on various issues pertaining to the concept and meaning of abortion, various types and methods of abortion, risks involved in abortion, abortion and its links with breast cancer and other health related problems and various aspects pertaining to legalizing abortion. Although abortion has been viewed as a moral issue and a challenge to human survival in the western world, it is important for us to understand that most of the abortions take place in Asian countries for various reasons. Very often people agree to participate in abortion without knowing the what, why, and how of abortion and its life long impact on an individual, family and the society. This unit is expected to provide the much needed information on abortion from ethical point of view.

3.8 KEY WORDS

Contraceptive: Contraceptive is a device, drug, or chemical agent that prevents conception.

Estrogens are a group of steroid compounds, named for their importance in the estrous cycle, and functioning as the primary female sex hormone, their name comes from *estrus/oistros* (period of fertility for female mammals) and *gen/gonos* = to generate.

Hysterectomy: Hysterectomy (from Greek *hystera* = womb and *ektomia* = a cutting out of) is the surgical removal of the uterus, usually performed by a gynecologist.

3.9 FURTHER READINGS AND REFERENCES

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WEBSITES

- Abortion: Methods and consequences: www.anael.org
Abortion risks www.pregnancycentres.org
Abortion: Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.
Side Effects of abortion: www.christianet.com

3.10. ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Answers to Check Your Progress I

1. Save the life of the pregnant woman;
Preserve the woman's physical or mental health;
Terminate pregnancy that would result in a child born with a congenital disorder that would be fatal or associated with significant morbidity;
Selectively reduce the number of fetuses to lessen health risks associated with multiple pregnancy.

Answers to Check Your Progress II

1. Early Abortion
Spontaneous Abortion
Threatened Abortion
Inevitable Abortion
Complete Abortion
Induced Abortion
Sex-selective abortion and female infanticide

Answers to Check Your Progress III

1. The Conditions under which a pregnancy can be terminated under the MTP Act 1971 include:
Medical: where continuation of the pregnancy might endanger the mother's life or cause grave injury to her physical or mental health.

Eugenic: Where there is substantial risk of the child being born with serious handicaps due to physical or mental abnormalities.

Humanitarian: Where pregnancy is the result of rape.

Socio-economic: Where actual or reasonably foreseeable environments (whether social or economic) could lead to risk injury to the health of the mother.

Failure of contraceptive devices: The anguish caused by an unwanted pregnancy resulting from a failure of any contraceptive device or method can be presumed to constitute a grave mental injury to the mental health of the mother. This condition is a unique feature of the Indian Law and virtually allows abortion on request.

UNIT 4**VIOLENCE**

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- 4.2 Nature of Violence
- 4.3 Kinds of Violence
- 4.4 Causes of Violence
- 4.5 Proposals to overcome Violence
- 4.6 To sum up
- 4.7 Key Words
- 4.8 Further Readings and References
- 4.9 Answers to check your progress

4.0 OBJECTIVES

The main objective of this unit is to expose the student to a very serious problem existing in the world of today. Life of an individual is threatened by many kinds of violence. In this unit you are expected:

- To understand nature, cause and types of violence
- To discuss how violence affects precious lives
- To search for solution/s to this growing problem

4.1 INTRODUCTION

It is quite proper that we take some time to sit back and consider our world which is steeped in violence. A casual look at our society will tell us the untold miseries existing and how this violence is perpetuated under various shades. There is cultural violence, religious violence, economic violence, media violence, group violence, sexual violence, political violence and the types of violence could be in exhaustive. Life is being threatened by innumerable kinds of violence and we feel so powerless and helpless at the intensity and the gravity of the matter. Something has gone wrong somewhere. It is the personal and collective responsibility to get on the right track of life and not on the violent one. Violence can only beget violence and not peace.

4.2 NATURE OF VIOLENCE

The word violence is derived from the Latin word 'violentia' which comes from the root 'vis' which means force. Usually 'violence' denotes great force, excessive or constraint. The first two meanings: force and excessive force are taken from the stand-point of an agent's activity. The third meaning: constraint is taken from that of a passive principle affected adversely by the activity of the agent.

In defining violence we may point out two principles: the constraining and the constrained. The latter, though always passive in relation to the agent inflicting violence, may suffer violence either as an active or as a passive principle.

If it is an active principle, it suffers violence when, by an extrinsic agent, it is forced to act contrary to its own inclination or prevented from acting according to it.

If it is a passive principle (one that requires an external agent to bring it into act), it suffers violence when it is moved to an act opposed to the one to which it is naturally, though passively, inclined or when it is prevented from receiving, from a corresponding natural agent, its proper act to which it has a natural passive inclination.

Violence is firstly the exercise of physical force so as to damage persons or property, but more importantly for our purposes the forcible interference with personal freedom.

4.3 KINDS OF VIOLENCE

Domestic/Family Violence

Domestic/Family violence is an act carried out with the intention or perceived intention of physically hurting another person. A family is defined as a social group characterized by common residence, economic cooperation, and reproduction. The most common domestic violence is exhibited in wife beating, physical punishment of children, fighting between the siblings, incest, marital rape, family homicide, elder abuse etc. Ever since interest in family violence began in the early 1960s, researchers, clinicians and policy makers have intrigued with the idea that family violence may be transferred from one generation to the next within families. Most of the thinking has taken either a learning theory or social milieu perspective, based on the assumption that adults who themselves were victims of or witnessed violence in their childhood homes are more likely than those without such a background to act violently toward their spouses or children.

Verbal Violence

This is a common phenomena present in all most all the cultures of the world. The improper treatment or use of word/s or perversion of meaning or its application is the method used in this form of violence. At the slightest provocation people try to gain dominance over the other party by raising their voice in abusive language. The louder you are able to shout, use abusive and filthy language; victory seems to be at your side. This is also very much seen in the family, at work place, in the market and in private life too.

Psychological Violence

This type of violence is the weapon of the strong ones to subdue the weaker ones by causing a type of fear in them. This kind of violence is much more harmful than the physical violence. Black mailing, tarnishing the good name of some one in public, fear of loosing ones name and fame, psychological pressure at work place, fear of family status being lost are some of the psychological violence which takes place in the society. It is an excessive fear of the unknown things to happen and people become psychotic cases due to mental depression and some times go mad due to such fear.

Sexual Violence

Sexual violence could be defined as exerting force over another person against his/her will and drag him/her into sexual activity. Everyday news paper and TV media brings in scores of examples in this type of violence. All such sexual violence ends up in brutal violence either of physical, mental or both. Women and children are most vulnerable persons in this type of violence.

Gang Violence

Gang violence is an out come of city culture where the rival groups compete with each other for dominance. The disoriented youth is forced to pledge his allegiance to one or the other Gang without which his survival will be in danger. Unemployment and wrong aspirations of the youth drive them into such gangs from where there seems to be no way out. The Gang provides a sort of safety and security to the individual and he in turn is expected to be faithful to the Gang's principles. Most of the Gangs are engaged in organized crime and they become a problem for the law and order in the land.

Child Abuse/violence

Children across the world are the most vulnerable lot when it comes to the question of violence. They are so defenseless and fall prey to various types of abuses. The law prohibits child labour under serious consequences. But the number of children forced to work in unfavourable circumstances for eight to twelve hours a day, for a meager remuneration is a sorry state of affairs. Children are forced to be in household works, construction work, agricultural works and worst of it in sexual racket.

Gender Violence/harassment

Gender violence is type of attitude and force exerted over the weaker section of the society. In a patriarchal society, the male member is said to be the head of the family and responsible for the discipline in the house. This attitude is extended towards all other areas in the society. The women and children are considered to be voiceless in such a society. The gender discrimination, less wage for the same work, stipulated work ethics for women, dress code, total submission to the will of man etc are the kind of gender violence/harassment existing in our society.

Political Violence

Political violence is the use of force for political ends, outside its normal use in international warfare or in the internal administration of justice. Political violence covers a wide spectrum from stone-throwing at demonstration to revolution and civil war. Violence is conventionally distinguished from force in general as unlawful; thus political violence oversteps the limits placed upon the lawful pursuit of political purpose.

Cultural Violence

Much of the recent cross-cultural research on human violence has been based on one or the other of two basic models of human aggression. The first model, the drive discharge or catharsis model

suggests that all groups have an innate level of aggression that must be periodically discharged in some way. The second model, the culture pattern model suggests that some societies have a basic set of values and beliefs that emphasize aggression and violence. In these societies, as compared to other societies that lack such an orientation, violence is likely to be found in all or many spheres of activity including interpersonal relationships, family life, child rearing, religious ceremonies, warfare, and games and sports. Taken to its extreme, the culture pattern approach suggests that in some societies violence is a way of life.

Religious Violence

The initial difficulty in connecting violence to religious ideas and practices is that both these key words seem clear enough to commonsense understandings; everyone knows what they mean, but this clarity is far from simple and varies with almost every category employed. Religion, as far as the common understanding goes, is a way to peace and happiness. How to attach violence to Religion? Violence is firstly the exercise of physical force so as to damage persons or property, but more importantly for our purposes the forcible interference with personal freedom, violent or passionate conduct or language; finally, passion or fury. So we see that the joining together of religious and violence in a single all-embracing phrase involves the need for wide ranging rather than confining definitions. We take religion to involve any beliefs or practices for which there are no pragmatic foundations other than belief although there may be basic historical facts behind some activities. Violence is even more difficult to define because it has to cover both words and actions causing both physical and psychological damage to both people, property, animals and the environment. There are different types of religious violence practiced: extreme fasting, self-mortification, inflicting injuries on ones own body, self-mutilation for religious purposes etc. In the name of different Religion (faith and practice) numbers of conflicting situation/s has/have arisen. Often religion becomes the trump-card at the hands of the politicians/men in power.

Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism is the type of religious fervour created or carved out by some dominant group/s. These groups are guided by the principle of some fascist mentality. Fundamentalists are eager to protect their religion by means of extreme austerity like self discipline, severe punishment of both physical and mental. The strict moral code exercised by them make religion something unbearable and it simply destroys the peace of mind.

Terrorism

Terrorism is the paradigm of political violence, but it eludes easy definition. One type of analysis views it as political killing rendered illegitimate, in contrast to tyrannicide, either by the availability of peaceful alternatives or by its targeting innocent citizens rather than responsible politicians. Another type regards terrorism as low-level warfare directed, contrary to the principles of the just war, against harmless civilians, often owing to the terrorists' lack of adequate resources to defeat a military force.

Is terrorism justified? In no way it is justified either because it inevitably involves the death of innocents or because it is in breach of political obligations. Typically terrorists not only appeal to utilitarian considerations but also argue that innocents are unintended victims who suffer no more, and perhaps less, than in conventional war, or that the citizens who are targeted have

collective responsibility as members of the oppressor group. Terrorists also deny the existence of political obligations to a state which is oppressive or which they refuse to recognize.

Check your progress 1

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What is violence?

.....
.....
.....

2. Which type of violence is employed to subdue the weaker ones?

.....
.....
.....

4.4 CAUSES OF VIOLENCE

Consumerism

We live in a world, which is growing very fast with its new technologies and developments. One of the fast growing trends of today's world is consumerism. Consumerism means equating of personal happiness with the purchasing of material possessions. It is one of the most threatening situations of the modern world. Though it was not a new phenomenon it widely spread over the twentieth and twenty first centuries.

Most people in materially developed countries and middle-class people in the developing world live in the consumerist society. It is possibly due to the development of science and technologies through which productive capacities of mankind has improved a lot. The value system has undergone a drastic change. What was considered to be of high value like austerity, simplicity, community living etc. is given way to lavish life styles, self-centeredness and self possessions. Selfishness is the most painful or the vicious out come of this consumerism. The modern consumerist society blindly forgets the other who is in need of some help.

Consumerism is the equating of personal happiness with the purchasing of material possessions and consumption. Consumerism is commonly associated with the western world, it is multi cultural and non geographical and it is seen in most of the main cities of the world. The roots of consumerism is as old as the first civilizations, that the people purchasing goods in excess of their basic needs. Ancient Rome is the best example for it. Consumerism is not a new phenomenon. It has only become wide spread over the 20th century. Consumerism is said to be the 'promotion of the consumer's interests' or the theory that an increasing consumption of goods is economically desirable.

How does consumerism affects the society?

Consumerism interferes with the working of society, by replacing the normal common sense desire for an adequate supply of life's necessities, relationships with an artificial ongoing and the money to buy them with little regard for the utility of what is bought. An intended consequence

of this, prompted by those who profit from consumerism, is to accelerate the discarding of the old, either because of lack of durability or a change in fashion. It is often interpreted or understood wrongly that economy would improve if people just bought more things and spent more money on buying things. The money, which has to be, better spend on education, nutrition, housing etc. are spent on products of dubious value and little social return. And as a result many consumers run out of room in their homes to store the things that they buy and build again and again new buildings and store houses. If these stored products were so essential in the first place, why do they need to be stored? Lot of things we possess actually are not necessary for us and rarely we are satisfied with the things that we have, thus we have an unsatisfied society. As some one has aptly said: ‘ you work in a job you hat, to buy stuff that you don’t need, to impress people that you don’t like’.

The other extreme consumerism is that Malls have replaced parks, places of worships and community gatherings. People no longer like the trouble even to meet their own immediate neighbours. Most of the gathering have become the part of shopping, people tend to be more comfortable in ‘market places’ than living in a healthy balanced society. Sadly a society is growing up where people often cannot keep the balance between income and their needs. This imbalance in the expenditure makes the people to depression and gradually leads to suicide.

Economic costs of Consumerism

The more consumerism spreads, the weaker is the incentive to manufacture durable and quality products. It is more likely to import cheap and low quality goods which floods the market. By facilitating the sale of whatever is advertised and sold without examination by the purchaser about its quality, origin, environmental degradation will end up in a destruction of productive economy.

Environmental Costs of Consumerism

Consumerism causes the wasteful cause of energy and material far above and beyond that needed for every day living at a comfortable level. The best example for the cost of consumerism is the over use of disposable items. It is said that 200 billion cans, bottles and paper cups are thrown away each year in developed world.

The craze after new products and our casual mentality with plastic and such disposable articles adds up the environmental pollution. The amount of carbon dioxide vomited by vehicles alone in a crowded city is unthinkable. The over use of plastics and such items also cause environmental pollution. Burning of the plastics and rubber items are a great threat to the protection of environment.

It is said that consumerism is the major cause for the macro pollution problems, such as global warming, depletion of the ozone layer, generation of huge quantities of highly toxic wastes and acidification of lakes and destruction of forests. Lack of social concern is the major reason for the consumerism and environmental pollution. Without a second thought in the name of industries and development trees are cut down, rivers are polluted and the soil is poisoned. Thus the bio-diversity is being lost.

Advertisements and Consumerism

One of the main reasons for consumerism is the over powering of advertisements. Many anti-consumerists believe that a modern consumer society is created through extensive advertising and media influence, rather than arising from people's natural ideas regarding the kinds of things that they need. In other words, anti consumerists believe that consumerism is an artificial creation. Today most of the products are made not according to the need of the consumer but according to the welfare of the companies and the supporting media channels. Actually it is they who decide what people have to buy than what people need to buy.

The basic criticism of advertising is that it leads people to purchase goods that they have no wish to purchase. Very often misleading facts and figures of the goods are advertised in such an enchanting way that the unsuspecting minds are simply trapped by it. The advertisement in TV attracts much more than any other medium of communication. The media has got tremendous influence on all sections of people. It exercises both positive and negative impact in the lives of many. We need to be cautious in the use of media that we will not fall a prey to the advertising companies.

Effects of consumerism

The imbalance existing between the wealthy and the poor, the haves and have-nots, some living in super abundance and comfort while the majority in utter want of things creates social, cultural, ecological, and personal problems in the society. A revolution of rising expectations is sweeping the world. People live in a want based economy and pro-growth mentality and this deeply affects the world view. Materialism increasingly spreads, human and spiritual values are lost and the result is a moral crisis.

Effects of consumerism on youth and children

The psychology of the youth in the consumerist world runs like this: 'I can imagine it, therefore I want it. I want it therefore I should have it. Because I need it, I deserve it. Because I deserve it, I will do anything to get it'. Very often the youth is not able to reach the height of their expectation and they are prone to engage in some evil method/s of raising the needed money usually through violent ways.

The present trend of a nuclear family where in the only child is pampered with such a lot of goods, makes the child/children right from the start to develop this consumerist mentality. The kids markets are enormous and there are many products and foods geared towards them. Parents on the one hand find it hard to raise the children in the modern society and children on the other hand, grow increasingly towards consumerism. It is quite natural for the children to get attracted to anything that is colourful and wonderful and out of curiosity they just wish to have it for sometime in their hands not knowing at all, the costs and effects of it. Companies and advertising agencies make use of this tendency in them to the maximum.

Consumerism in India

Consumerism is a fast growing trend in India and increasingly affects people's life-styles, attitudes and values. A greed-based society is growing so fast in our country. The phenomenon of consumerism began in India about 20 years ago. Consumerism is not simply the consumption of products to answer one's needs. It is a special type of consumption not focusing on the basic needs and utility, but on the aspirations of consumers for a better standard of living and social mobility. According to the prediction of the early 1980s that India would become the next

'consumer market power house' is coming true. Consumerism is deeply rooted and affects most classes. In the last two decades, the demand for TVs, Refrigerators, automobiles and music systems are greatly on the increase.

This consumerist tendency is also an after effect of the prestige and competition prevalent among the people. Consumers are brain washed in to buying all sorts of things that are made in any where in the world. People fall as an easy prey to tempting advertisements and end up in purchasing things which are less useful to them.

Economic exploitation

Man is defined as 'a rational animal'. The distinguishing mark in him should be the rationality. There is a strong tendency in man to give expression to his animal nature in various spheres of his life. One of such areas is to show of his power and strength in subjecting others to his brute power or economic status. Money and wealth is a big buyer and those who possess it wield a great lot of influence both positive and negative. Economic exploitation makes the poor still poor and the rich further to grow and glow in their plentitude. The unequal distribution of money and wealth leads to an imbalance in the social life and it often ends up a sort of violence. The glaring example is that of the French Revolution.

Unemployment

The researchers have come to an important factor regarding the cause of violence and that is unemployment. The Youth is a strong force and when they are left with nothing worth to do, no income to sustain the family or themselves, the tendency is all the more greater to engage themselves in kinds of works which could be very anti-social. Unemployment destroys the very dignity of a human being and it simply crushes his ego. He feels unwanted and useless and will definitely search out a way of earning something without paying much attention what the means are. This is how the Youth of the country, the main work-force, is mis-lead and manipulated.

Caste system

The division of the society based on the colour of your skin (chatur varnya) and each group strictly separated from the other with the specification of works permitted in that group and substantiating this division by giving it a divine origin has invited untold atrocities committed against the lower castes and the less privileged always trying to rise above their miserable existence. Caste system is nothing but a clever manipulation of Aryan race (super race) to gain power and keep every one else their subjects. No divine sanction could ever justify the manipulative nature of the caste system. The poor and illiterate are made to believe that it was their fate to be so. One is forced to remain within their caste and never try to do anything which could better their position. Any type of revolution within this system was contained with great violence and force.

Capitalism

The law of the jungle: 'survival of the fittest' seems to be the unwritten law in the capitalism. The cut-throat competition, practically in every field of life makes it impossible for the less fortunate ones to fall out of the race. The driving force in capitalism is the money. It is true that the best in human person could be extracted in such an atmosphere. But the fine human qualities like love, compassion, charity etc. seems to be alien terminologies in the capitalistic society. The

attraction of money, power, and influence is so great that people forget to treat the other persons as individuals but as commodities. The use and throw culture of the capitalism is creating such a big rift between the people that there is always a great danger of some violent retaliation.

Gang culture/rivalry

It has been now established that the Gang culture and rivalries are an out come of the miss-guided Youth in search of some employment. A human being wants to express one self as some one important, useful and wanted. In a society where there is less chance for such a dignified way of life, the Youth is drawn towards Gangs where they find some reason to live for. This is a major problem faced by every developing nation. The large number of youngsters migrating from the village set up to the towns and cities find them less competitive to skilled work and end up in Gangs which provide them with some sense of security and a means to live. The type of job for the Gang is different and different Gangs compete with each other to gain control over the town or the city. It leads to violence and blood shed.

Lack of Education

The global statistics clearly prove that a great number of the population still remain illiterate. Comparing to the by-gone years, we have improved the facilities for education. But when the majority of the people remain illiterate, the society, nation and the world at large run the risk of easily getting manipulated by the clever but vicious minds. World wide we are aware how the simple flock is made to believe in the wrong ideals and they fight tooth and nail for a cause which itself seems to be based on unfounded grounds. Thus lack of education leads to violence.

Moral laxity

Moral laws are finest fabric which knits together the different persons in the society into a whole. The moral laws safe guards the inter personal relationship and builds up a better and strong society. Whenever and wherever the moral laws of the land was tampered with and less attention was given to it, respect for life and value of life had dwindled. Laxity in moral standard of life will clearly reflect in the attitude towards life. There are already visible signs of this danger in the way human beings are treated. Human life has become the least valuable things where as the lives of other animals and birds get a better attention. This easy go mentality may lead one to loose one's own conscience or inner voice and would end up in violence and crime against humanity.

Good leadership

Good and efficient leaders are inevitable for the democratic functioning of the government. The incapable and weaklings are a shame to the nation. The responsibility of the leader is to guide the nation on the right track. But if the leader himself is a flop, then we can only imagine the state of affairs in the land. Lack of good leadership will end up utter chaos and confusion and wicked and criminals will have a field day in such a set up. A free-for-all will be the out come of such a rule. This is a conducive atmosphere for the anti-social elements to thrive. The end effect will be violence and anarchy.

Poor planning and deep corruption

Corruption is a global phenomena! We seem to take shelter under this caption and hardly move our little finger to do anything against it. Money seems to be the sole agent which moves things

forward. The corruption has become so deep rooted that we are forced to be part of this corrupt system. To stand for truth, to be genuine in this world seems to be a Herculean task. The system gets so corrupted that people resort to violence and killing to get the target achieved. The corruption gets an added ground due to the poor planning. The unequal distribution of land and property and opportunities will ultimately lead to a kind of violent revolution.

Media

Is the Media a 'Boon or a Bane'? There had been a lot of debate over this point. It is both. The media has an important role to play in the field of information. The entire world has become a global village through the power of the media. Anything that happens in the remotest corner of the world is instantly transmitted into the channel and telecasted over all the world. The promptness and audacity of the correspondents and TV crew are commendable. They have exposed to the nations the crimes and scandals that are in the higher ups which otherwise would not have seen the light of the day. The media has such a power to create opinion.

On the other hand media can vitiate the information and keep of pumping in wrong and false news and reports regarding the various events that are happening in and around the world. There a lot of truth why the governments are very keen on putting a curb on the media. The constant tug-of-war between the Media and the government/s is due to this aspect of its influence in creating an opinion for or against the government. When the media fails to do its duty, then it is a bane.

The Media influences the rich and the poor, young and old in every day life. It has a tremendous role to play in building up a strong society. It can promote and demote the good value system. It can instigate and subdue the revolution and anti-social activities. It will depend on what stand the media takes with regard to a particular event. When the media is biased and fails to render correct information, then it becomes a means of oppression at the hands of the powerful. This may lead to a violent response.

Frustration

Frustration is a mental state where in you feel totally disappointed with the entire system, administration, persons, situations, job and life itself. The factors that lead to this state of life are many. This is common factor found among the Youth who though posses the best of qualification/s is/are not able to get a job. The long waiting for a suitable and satisfactory job drives the youngsters to various other bad habits. Their retaliation is given vent to violent methods of destruction and anti-social activity. They become an easy prey to the underground organizations which engage in destabilizing the society.

Family Break-up

Family is smallest and important cell where the future citizens are carved out. The best and first education into human value system is taught in the families. What a child sees and learns in the early part of his life, remains with him till his last breath. This clearly shows what an important role the family has in the life of an individual.

The malady of the modern society is the family break up on flimsy grounds. When the family stability and integrity is lost, at stake, the children will be the worst victims of such a set up.

They are defenseless and most vulnerable in such a broken family. It is most probable that they develop a negative attitude towards life which is very difficult to change or correct in the later years. The constant fight and violence in the family to which they are a mute witness in the younger days will show up when they grow up and resort to such violence without any remorse conscience. Thus the family break-up is a serious matter in the up-bringing of the children.

Peer group pressure

The adolescent age/period of a child is a very difficult one. He/she is looking for some role models in life and wants to establish that he/she is some one of importance or worth. This is the age in which the group or peer group pressure plays a great deal of importance in their life. They are at times forced to prove their femininity or masculinity in performing daring adventures or doing some acts which, left alone, they would never think of undertaking. Such peer group pressure may lead one to violent acts of ant-social activity.

Lack of tolerance

Modern man has become too conscious of time and along with that he has lost control of himself. He has become a bundle of impatience and intolerance. Modern man becomes easily nervous at the slightest mishap or a little failure on the part of his colleagues or companions. The culture of "time is money" drives him almost mad and lands him in a state of innumerable illness of both mind and body. He gets easily worked up for a silly reason and spoils his day and whole health on account of that. This lack of tolerance makes him often violent in his behavior and makes him most unpopular among his companions and friends and thus a misfit in the society. It is then no surprise that he soon or later becomes a volley of violent behavior.

False Propaganda

It is the survival tactics of the men in authority and power. The false propaganda is an easy means to instigate people against a particular community or group. This is a crude and most unethical means of inciting the gullible people into violence. The mob frenzy cannot be contained and the harm committed often goes unpunished. This is the precise reason why men in authority resort to this method because they go scot-free. Thus the false propaganda adds more woes to the already existing situation.

4.5 PROPOSALS TO OVERCOME VIOLENCE

Some of the suggestions to overcome the Violence could be the following:

Stable family set up: The family is the cradle of good citizens. If this bond could be strengthened and good up-bringing of the children ensured, a lot of further violence could be removed or contained in the society.

Value based Education:

The job oriented education policy need to be changed into value based education. Basic human values are to be given priority and that will ensure a better society which will be concerned for the welfare of every one.

Pro-life movement and respect for life:

Promoting the pro-life movement culture and respecting life will create a new awareness in the mind of people. This would mean to prevent any kind of aberration that would endanger the life of the unborn.

A stable Government:

A good government which will look after the welfare of the people can reduce the unnecessary violence taking place. Law breakers should be dealt with severe punishment irrespective of what position they hold. Only that will ensure that every one is equal before the law of the land.

Religious and cultural Tolerance:

We live in a multicultural and multi-religious context. A cross cultural and religious knowledge will enhance our appreciation for the other group who are also striving on the way of perfection and salvation. Every culture and each religion has its uniqueness and learning from different cultures and religions in the world will help people to live in a better harmony and avoid unnecessary fight and violence.

Ahimsa- a way of life:

Indian contribution to the world, largely indebted to Mahatma Gandhi, for a peaceful existence is the principle of Ahimsa. It is a deep rooted love for life in every form. Ahimsa (non-injury) extends itself to Ahimsa in thought, Ahimsa in word and Ahimsa in deed. That means the entire life becomes a total love and no violence.

Check your progress II

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. How do youth and children become the victims of consumerism?

.....
.....

.....2.What are the suggestions to overcome violence?

.....
.....

4.6 LET US SUM UP

This unit on Violence has exposed us to the stark reality of beautiful world getting destroyed under the constant threat of various types of violence on the global level. It is a small attempt to make us aware of the need to work out a method where by we will turn up ourselves as promoters of life and not simply destroyers of this beautiful gift of life. We need to learn the value of life and teach others and the next generations to come how to respect each and every life.

4.7 KEY WORDS

Violentia: It is a Latin word which has its root in 'Vis' meaning force.

Consumerism: It is a tendency to purchase more and more though you may not require it.

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4.9 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1. The word violence is derived from the Latin word 'violentia' which comes from the root 'vis' which means force. Usually 'violence' denotes great force, excessive or constraint. The first two meanings : force and excessive force are taken from the stand-point of an agents's activity. The third meaning : constraint is taken from that of a passive principle affected adversely by the activity of the agent.
2. Psychological violence is the weapon of the strong ones to subdue the weaker ones by causing a type of fear in them. This kind of violence is much more harmful than the physical violence. Black mailing, tarnishing the good name of some one in public, fear of loosing ones name and fame, psychological pressure at work place, fear of family status being lost are some of the psychological violence which takes place in the society. It is an excessive fear of the unknown things to happen and people become psychotic cases due to mental depression and some times go mad due to such fear.

Check Your Progress II

1. The psychology of the youth in the consumerist world runs like this: ' I can imagine it, therefore I want it. I want it therefore I should have it. Because I need it, I deserve it. Because I deserve it, I will do anything to get it'. Very often the youth is not able to reach the height of their expectation and they are prone to engage in some evil method/s of raising the needed money usually through violent ways. The present trend of a nuclear family where in the only

child is pampered with such a lot of goods, makes the child/children right from the start to develop this consumerist mentality. The kids markets are enormous and there are many products and foods geared towards them. Parents are on the one hand find it hard to raise the children in the modern society and children on the other had grow increasingly towards consumerism. It is quite natural for the children to get attracted to anything that is colourful and wonderful and out of curiosity they just wish to have it for sometime in their hands not knowing at all, the costs and effects of it. Companies and advertising agencies make use of this tendency in them to the maximum.

2. Value based Education, Pro-life movement and respect for life, A stable Government, Religious and cultural Tolerance, and Ahimsa- as a way of life



UNIT 5

TERRORISM

Contents

5.0 Objectives

5.1 Introduction

5.2 Origin and Definition of Terrorism

5.3 History of Terrorism

5.4 Causes of Terrorism

5.5 Consequences of Terrorism

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5.7 Let Us Sum Up

5.8 Key Words

5.9 Further Readings and References

5.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

5.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit, we are going to review one of the world's challenging situations of today, namely, terrorism. We examine the general aspects of terrorism to have a better grasp of the meaning, history, causes, consequences and the ethical aspects of terrorism.

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- Understand the concept of terrorism, especially its definition and origin
- Comprehend the history of terrorism
- Identify the causes and consequences of terrorism, and
- Recognize the link between terrorism and social ethics.

5.1 INTRODUCTION

We are living in a world that is intimidated by belligerent forces that cannot be entirely attributed to any one particular region or country, or any specific religious or ethnic identity. Terrorism builds a kind of psychological state of extreme fear, insecurity and anxiety, besides the physical damages it causes in terms of loss of life and material goods. A terrorist activity is able to cause massive impairment to an individual and the society at large due to its surprise and shock tactics. The target is selected at random to produce the maximum panic among the innocent people. The perceptible cruelty of the act adds to the elements of shock and fear. Terrorism seeks above all to create a sensation within the ranks of the enemy in the public opinion and abroad.

5.2 ORIGIN AND DEFINITION OF THE TERM 'TERRORISM'

There are several opinions regarding the origin of terrorism. According to one theory, the term terrorism comes from the French word *terrorisme*, which is based on the Latin verb *terrere* (to cause to urinate), and which refers to a kind of violence or the threat of imminent violence. It is noted that the terrorism as a concept was first used by the British statesman Edmund Burke. He used it in the context of the Reign of Terror during the French Revolution. In those days, terror was understood to be a tool of dictatorship and as a symbol of power.

However, the word terrorism assumed a slightly different connotation in the 18th century A.D. with the arrival of Immanuel Kant who wrote about it in 1798 to describe the destiny of humankind. He indicated terrorism as a kind of loss of trust and hope for a joint way out to the problems of life. It is also indicative of the frightening experience of extreme loneliness in one's struggles for liberation.

The term terrorism assumed a revolutionary meaning in the 19th century when it tried to identify both the perpetrators of violence and their victims or objectives. Any terrorist attack at that time was seen as a special sort of violent behavior against the state. It was an attack aimed at disturbing the general running of the society to achieve some political goals. Terrorism involved itself with a variety of violent means starting from arbitrary bombing, through politically motivated kidnappings, assassination, and destruction of property, both governmental and individual.

Nationalism and nationalistic interests were brought into the fray of terrorism in the second half of the 19th century. Terrorism began to be symbolizing a kind of desire to rid a country of colonial powers through violent means. Nationalist terrorism implied the perception that there were no innocent non-combatants. Immediately after that the world wars brought about a distinctive meaning to terrorism. During this time terrorism came to be linked with the methodologies of Fascism in Italy and Nazism in Germany. Since then, the terms terrorism and terrorist carry a strong negative undertone. These terms are often used as political labels to condemn violence or to rationalize the torture and even the execution of those who are labeled terrorists. But the so called terrorists and their supporters use terms such as separatists, freedom fighters, liberators, revolutionaries, militants, paramilitaries, guerrillas, rebels, jihadists, mujaheddin, and fedayeen etc.

Though we are living in the midst of terrorism and similar activities, it is difficult to define accurately the phenomenon of terrorism. However, it can be defined as an organized violence

against the State or individuals with some political and personal objectives. Again, it can be said that terrorism is the unlawful use or threat of violence against a person or property to further political or social objectives. It is sometimes used as a means to intimidate or coerce a government, individuals or groups to modify their behavior or policies.

The *Oxford Advanced Dictionary* defines terrorism as the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims or to force a government to act. The *Encyclopedia Britannica* describes terrorism as the systematic use of terror or unpredictable violence against governments, public or individuals, to attain a political objective. It can be broadly defined as violent behaviour designed to generate fear in the community or a substantial segment of it for political purpose. It is the use of violence on the part of non-governmental groups to achieve political ends. According to the *Encyclopedia of Social Sciences*, terrorism is a method whereby an organized group or party seeks to achieve its vowed aims chiefly through the systematic use of violence.

The terrorists use various methods to cause panic and fear among people. Some of these methods include hostage taking, hijacking, political assassination, kidnapping, bombing, and explosions.

Terrorism has several objectives, such as, to advertise the movement or to give publicity to the ideology and strength of the movement; to mobilize mass support and urge sympathizers to greater militancy; to eliminate opponents and informers and thus remove obstacles to the growth of the movement; to demonstrate the inability of the government to support the people and maintain order; to destroy internal stability and create a feeling of fear and insecurity among the public; and to ensure the allegiance and obedience of the followers.

5.3 HISTORY OF TERRORISM

Terrorism as it is today has a long historical evolution. It has evolved into the present form due to various factors and events. Another distinct form of dehumanization is seen in the thoughts of Frederick Nietzsche who classified people according to their intelligence and spoke of a master and slave morality. It is also a fact that there existed various other forms of dehumanization based on gender, colour, creed, false belief, employment, power, and myths etc.

This eventful history can go as far back as the recorded history of the world. The Old Testament section of the Bible advocates terror, murder, and all type of callous practices on rivals. The assassination of kings by enemies, and the brutal suppression of loyalists afterwards, has been an established pattern of political ascent since Julius Caesar (BC 44). The Zealots in Israel (100 AD) wrestled against the Roman occupation in numerous ways. If terrorism can be understood subtly as the process of dehumanization, it can be recalled that such a scenario existed in ancient Rome in the form of the man-beast fight. The Assassins in Iraq (1100 AD) fought the Christian Crusaders with suicide tactics. The Thuggees in India (1300 AD) kidnapped travellers for sacrifice to their Goddess of Terror, Kali. The Spanish Inquisition (1469-1600 AD) dealt with Heretics by systematized torture, and the whole medieval era was based on terrorizing countryside. The Luddites (1811-1816 AD) destroyed machinery and any symbol of modern technology. A Serb terrorist (1914 AD) started the World War I. Hitler's rise to power (1932) involved plans for genocide. Nations like Ireland, Cyprus, Algeria, Tunisia, and Israel probably would have never become republics if not for revolutionary terrorist activities. Based on the

above findings, the long and eventful history of terrorism can be further divided into the following periods:

Terror in the Ancient World: The terrorist movement in Palestine during 66-73 AD is considered to be the first terrorist movement in the recorded history. The earliest known organization that exhibited aspects of a modern terrorist organization was the Zealots, a group of Jewish nationalists, who put up resistance to Roman rule in Judaea. Known to the Romans as Sicarii, or dagger-men, they carried on an underground campaign to root out the Roman occupation forces, as well as some Jews they thought had collaborated with the Romans.

Terror in the Middle Ages: From the late 13th century to the 17th centuries, terror and barbarism were widely used in warfare and conflict. Until the rise of the modern nation state after the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, the sort of principal authority and organized society that terrorism attempts to influence barely existed. Moreover, terrorism as we now understand it was not possible until the invention of gunpowder and subsequent explosives and incendiaries. In the late middle ages, the concept of terrorism was introduced during the French Revolution. It is said that in order to establish law and order in the State, the Committee of Public Safety killed more than 17,000 people. These severe measures of the government came to be known as “The Reign of Terror.” The agents of the Committee of Public Safety and the National Convention that enforced the policies of “The Terror” were referred to as “Terrorists”. This is regarded as the origin of the word terrorism, though extra-legal activities such as killing prominent officials and aristocrats in gruesome spectacles started by the Parisian mobs long before the guillotine was first used.

Terrorism in the Modern and Contemporary Era: The terrorists have become more destructive in the backdrop of modern complexities. During the 19th century, some nationalists in small European countries wanted to break free from the rule of larger empires. Known as Anarchists, they found they could get what they wanted by committing acts of terror. Revolutionary groups working to overthrow the Russian rule and the Irish nationalist groups also understood this. So they adopted terrorism as a method in Western Europe, Russia, and the United States. They believed that the best way to effect revolutionary, political, and social change was to assassinate persons who are holding responsible positions. From 1865 a number of kings, presidents, and prime ministers were killed by the Anarchists.

If early terrorism targeted those in power, in the twentieth century, the terrorists have begun targeting the innocent civilians who have no link with the actual cause they are fighting for. In the twentieth century there were many instances of terrorism. The Tamil Tigers in Sri Lanka, the Sikh and Kashmiri militants in India, the PLA, the government of Libya, Taliban and Al Qaeda in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and the Irish Republican Army were all involved in terrorist activities in the 20th century. Today’s terrorists are techno-savvy. They are skilled in the use of chemical, biological, nuclear and conventional weapons and modern communication systems, which makes them more terrifying.

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What is the meaning of the term 'terrorism'?

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2. How do you define the term 'terrorism'?

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3. Briefly describe the historical development of terrorism.

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5.4 CAUSES OF TERRORISM

Terrorism has several causes which can be related to social, historical, cultural, religious, economic, and psychological aspects. The following could be seen as some of the causes of terrorism:

The Reality of Persistent Disputes: Terrorism has its breeding ground in conflicts. Reasons for conflicts, however, can vary widely. Basically, it is the differences in objectives and ideologies that show the way to conflict. Some of the historical examples to this effect are: dominance of territory or resources by various ethnic, linguistic, religious or cultural groups; aspiration for freedom from foreign regimes; imposition of a particular form of government, such as democracy, theocracy, oligarchy, or dictatorship; economic deprivation of a population; and real or perceived instances of injustices.

Dearth of Reasonable Redressal Procedure: The absence of a systematic and proper redressal system can cause continued terrorist activities. If such a system were to exist, people will have recourse to it and thus solve conflicting situations. When such systems are not available due to their nonexistence, sloth, corruption; or unaffordable cost, the socially and culturally wounded people will get tempted to seek solution by themselves. Terrorist activities thus can arise from a sense of denial of lawful right of a certain group of people, for which they have been demanding determinedly.

Weakness of the Distressed People: When there are violent discords coupled with the absence of a genuine redressal system, there could be attempts to find solutions to the problems by force. This could result in various kinds of organized violence like communal riots and war. However, violence takes an ugly form through terrorism when the distressed people realize their inability to

influence the dominator, due to their weakness. In such a situation, they are unable to face the oppressive forces face to face or in a direct manner. Therefore, they go underground and fight for their cause.

Misguidance: When children and youth are not brought up responsibly by their parents or guardians, there is a high risk for them to get involved with violent groups or militancy. There are vested interested groups who indoctrinate young minds to take up arms to right for their causes which are sometimes fabricated. Often, an ideology of hatred in the name of religion, ethnic loyalty or nationalism are injected into the minds of people. These youngsters are trained to cause destruction and are armed with deadly weapons. Their misguidance becomes complete when they are taught to regard the death and destruction of their enemies as a glorious achievement and their own possible death in the process as heroic martyrdom.

Influence of the Mass Media: Mass media are showing keen interest in terrorism and in the issues related to it. We find radio stations, television channels, newspapers, and Web pages often discussing this subject. These broadcasts reach a large portico of people in the world, especially those in the West and intensify the fear that the threat of terrorism generates. The terrorists make use of this effect of the media, thus turning them into an unwilling ally. The wide coverage given in the media motivates a terrorist organization to go ahead with their plans, since they know for sure that their action will be made known to the whole world and thus draw greater attention to the cause. Often, the live coverage of the terrorist activity helps the perpetrators of violence to get away from the site of the violence in an easy manner. In such cases, the mass media can become an unwilling ally of terrorism.

Democratic State: Though it is opined by researchers that democratic nations are generally less vulnerable to terrorism, however, they too are not free from terrorist activities. There is a complex relationship between terrorism and democracy. Though in one sense democracy diminishes the risk of terrorism by undercutting some of its reasons, in another sense it often contributes to its prevalence. The open nature of democratic societies makes them vulnerable to terrorism. In such societies, civil liberties are protected, and government control and constant surveillance of the people and their activities are kept to the minimum. Taking advantage of such restraints by the government, terrorists have stepped up their activities. Studies done on the relationship between liberal societies and terrorism suggest that concessions awarded to terrorists have increased the frequency of terrorist attacks. By contrast, repressive societies, where the government closely monitors citizens and restricts their speech and movement, have often provided more difficult environments for terrorists.

It should also be noted that in democratic societies the risk of terrorism is compounded if the law enforcement is slow or inefficient. In such democracies the aggrieved people, having lost faith in the ability of the legal system of the country to deliver justice, are seen to take law into their own hands, and if they are weak, they do it clandestinely.

Globalization: It can be said that globalization, though not a direct cause of terrorism, it can often contribute to the menace of terrorism. The situation brought about by the linkage, even fusion, around the world of communications and financial systems has contributed to the promotion of global terrorism. Again, new communications such as the Internet and satellite phones have

made it possible for the extremist terrorist and political organizations to build large organizational networks, exchange information, and combine resources.

Psychological Factors: Many psychologists believe that the key to understand terrorism lies in understanding people. According to this perspective, terrorism is purely the result of psychological forces, not a well-thought-out strategy aimed at achieving rational, strategic ends. Therefore, psychologists emphasize the study of the mind of the terrorists. Accordingly, various attempts have been made to gain knowledge of the hidden psychic dynamism which incites a person to perform such acts without any qualm of conscience. There is another psychological view which says that the terrorists are normal individuals, who due to their deep emotional need and a high order of motivation on the grounds of nationalism or religious sentiment forces him to take up the path of violence. Another reason for taking up terrorism could be due to the desire to overcome loneliness. They claim that many terrorists are people who have been rejected in some fashion by society and tend to be loners. Since it is in human nature to be part of a group, an alienated loner is naturally drawn towards any group that will accept him, give him a sense of mission, and provide him the ways and means of accomplishing it, along with monetary gains too.

5.5 CONSEQUENCES OF TERRORISM

The causes of the growing terrorism in a State are many. Mostly the terrorists are motivated by religious and political consideration, but there are also economic factors.

Environmental Consequences: Terrorist activities can paralyze the entire cosmos with its vulnerable activities. It can be said that every terrorist attack is a way of demeaning the entire universe. The cosmos, which is the habitat of life, is dishonored into a place of death and doom. The very fact that a human being is a cosmic reality, he/she is automatically dehumanized in the wake of every terrorist activity. Anything that is done against the cosmic *rta* is going to affect all the living and non-living beings of the universe. Sowing the seeds of disorder, disharmony and discontent has turned to be the work of a number of psychosomatics.

Political Consequences: Terrorism builds up both direct and indirect pressure on the government to weaken it physically and psychologically. The function of terror can also be to discourage the people from cooperating with or giving information to the government. The deepest anxiety amongst ordinary people arises when they fear a collapse of law and order. Terrorism works towards a collapse of the social order and terrorists exploit this situation by trying to project them as a better alternative. In this state of fear and anxiety the essential services may not function properly. Terrorism grew out of political anarchy.

Terror incorporates two facets: first, a state of fear or anxiety within an individual or a group and second, the tool that induces the state of fear. Thus, terror involves the threat or use of symbolic violent acts aimed at influencing political behavior. Following World War II, political terrorism reemerged on the international scene. During the 1960s, political terrorism appeared to have entered into another phase. Perhaps the two most significant qualitative changes were: first, its transnational character and second, its emergence as a self-sufficient strategy, namely, operating independently of the larger political arena.

Political terrorism occurs as the result of a conscious decision by ideologically inspired groups to strike back at what their members may perceive as unjust within a given society or polity. The answers to contemporary political terrorism, therefore, would have to be found within this larger social, economic, political, and psychological context.

Economic Consequences: Terrorism aims at maximizing economic impact in the world at large. The destruction of the twin-towers on that Tuesday of 11th September, 2001 has caused much confusion and disarray in the global economic scenario. Since each act of terrorism is designed in such a way as to have an impact on the larger audience, its reverberations and after effects are largely seen in the economic area. Nations and government machineries are forced to equip themselves with latest technologies to combat the network of terrorism. All those involve the bifurcation of national funds which could be made use of other purposes. Terrorism, in other words, deteriorates the economy of a nation. The economy of a nation does not include its financial conditions alone. It deals with all forms of wealth such as human resource, natural resource, intellectual power, aesthetic power, creative power, money-power and so on. Therefore, economic consequences of terrorism affect all forms of wealth without which human life would be impossible.

5.6 TERRORISM AND SOCIAL ETHICS

Terrorism has turned out over the years to be a method of dehumanizing the entire spectrum of human beings. The principles of the terrorists are rooted in destruction and dehumanization. Consequently, they take control of the ethical supervision of a society and fabricate the citizens of a substandard conscience and a splintered morality. Terror is not merely a rational phenomenon. It envelops people, body, mind, and spirit. It leaves people paralyzed by anxiety and fear.

Terrorism in all its forms is always wrong. Terrorism violates human rights, including the basic right to be treated as a moral person. Art. 3 of the United Nations' *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states, among other things, that everyone has the right to life. The importance of our acknowledging such a universal human right is evident: the protection of human life is the sine qua non of the individual's capacity to realize anything and everything – any and all values – a human being is capable of realizing in relation to himself or herself and others.

Terrorism as a phenomenon does raise a few ethical questions for our study and reflection. The growing hate campaigns against groups, regions and countries affect the normal morale of the society. Terrorism can thus be a threat to the civilization of the world. For, behaving ethically is a part of being civilized. The terrorists, however, are devoid of any love and benevolence and are disinterested in truth of life. They do not like to cultivate any art, literature and music. They prefer darkness of nights to the light of the day. They like their hiding places more than one loves one's home. They often kidnap children for claiming ransom. They have no qualms of conscience to make married women suddenly widows even after a few hours of marriage.

In the ancient time, there was more respect for the human life. Whenever there was any war or battle, it used to be the rule that you had to take precautions not to injure innocents. In any battle that took place, it was the custom that the people should be protected from the effects of the

battles. Very often people were cleared from the battle area prior to the commencement of war. But unfortunately in today's world, human life has become worthless. The terror attacks are mostly carried out in places where the people gather in huge numbers such as places of worship, market places, transport stations etc.

Broadly speaking, a distinction can be made between two major traditions within the ethical thought: absolutist theories, which give prominence to moral duties which are obligatory in nature, and utilitarian suppositions, which hold the view that behaviour is right if it maximizes the happiness or welfare of the majority. The former points out the fact that we should uphold those rules which would maximize the general welfare if everyone followed them, even though they may not seem to do so in a particular instance; while the latter gives the possibility of maximizing the general welfare at the expense of minorities.

Universal pacifists are morally opposed to all kinds of violence, not just to killing. Many universal pacifists derive their views from the Christian Gospels. Certainly the most interesting and defective pacifist of the twentieth century was Mahatma Gandhi. He developed his doctrine of non-violence which proved to be very effective in the Indian freedom struggle which he led from the forefront. As world citizens, everyone should be encouraged to follow the example of Mahatma Gandhi who had a philosophy of life blended with the jewels of truth and non-violence. He led a bloodless struggle for the freedom of a nation, and of love, peace and everlasting joy in the hearts of millions of humans. *Sarvodaya* (welfare of all) was his secret. He believed in the culture of inter-human and intra-human relationship and love was the powerful weapon he used. Inter-human relationship is build upon the principles of love and respect and it exists between or among the humans. Intra-human relationship is also based on love and respect but it exists within the humans alone. It is centred on the principle of sacredness of one's own life and that of the other. That is to say, intra-human relationship never permits one to become a suicide-bomber, which causes destruction to oneself and one's own fellow humans. Likewise, intra-human relationship paves the way for a person to respect the other as a person and not as a thing or means for one's end. Gandhi believed in truth and love.

Terrorist groups must establish and follow ethical codes which should govern the conduct of their struggle. Insofar as possible, these standards should follow international laws governing warfare. The orbit of terrorism should not be allowed to violate humanization process of the individuals.

Check Your Progress II

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What are the causes of terrorism?

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2. Briefly describe the consequences of terrorism.

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3. How do you understand terrorism in the context of ethics?
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5.7 LET US SUM UP

Terrorism is the biggest threat to the security of the world at the present scenario. It begets a sense of repugnance and disgust deep in the people's mind. It can destroy world peace with its indiscriminate attacks. Terrorism does not observe any code of conduct concerning the value of life. They dedicate themselves to the destruction of the innocent people. As members of the world community we need to work toward a set of ethical standards in the wake of the growing menace of terrorism in the world today.

The fight against terrorism can be effective only if governments cooperate more closely especially through the exchange of relevant information concerning the prevention and combating of terrorism, identification, arrest and prosecution or extradition of terrorists. People should be educated for international thinking. Peace education should be encouraged in all the educational institutions.

Every human being and society should respond positively to the tragic situations arising from terrorist activities, so that our collective human involvement would enhance the prospects for a better tomorrow. All such agencies need to function under a moral framework, so that everyone involved would respond morally to the evils committed in a manner that is strictly human in character.

5.8 KEY WORDS

Psychosomatics: Psychosomatics relates to a disorder having physical symptoms but originating from mental or emotional causes.

Fascism: Fascism is a political ideology that stands for radical and authoritarian nationalism. The fascists advocate the creation of a single-party state. They forbid and suppress openness and opposition to the fascist state.

Nazism: Nazism is the totalitarian ideology and practices of the Nazi Party or National Socialist German Workers' Party under Adolf Hitler. It is a form of fascism.

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5.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1. The term 'terrorism' comes from the French word *terrorisme*, which is based on the Latin verb *terrere* (to cause to urinate), and which refers to a kind of violence or the threat of imminent violence. Immanuel Kant referred to terrorism as a kind of loss of trust and hope for a joint way out of the problems of life. In the 19th century it assumed revolutionary meaning in as much as it tried to identify the perpetrators of violence and their victims or objectives. It was an attack aimed at disturbing the general running of the society to achieve some political goals.

2. *The Oxford Advanced Dictionary* defines terrorism as the use of violent action in order to achieve political aims to force a government to act. *The Encyclopedia Britannica* describes terrorism as the systematic use of terror or unpredictable violence against governments, public or individuals, to attain a political objective. *The Encyclopedia of Social Sciences* defines terrorism as a method whereby an organized group or party seeks to achieve its vowed aims chiefly through the systematic use of violence.

3. The history of terrorism can be traced back as to very time when history began to be recorded. In the ancient world we see the first terrorist movement led by the Zealots, a group of Jewish nationalists, who put up resistance to Roman rule in Judea. In the middle ages, beginning from 13th century to 17th century we get to see especially during the French Revolution. Terrorism in the modern and contemporary era we see several revolutionary groups popping up all across Europe, Russia and United States. The main means that are being used are assassinations and bombings.

Check Your Progress II

1. The causes of terrorism can be several. Ideological and Objective differences can lead to conflict, which if not resolved amicably can lead to terrorism. If there is no system by which there is no systematic and proper redressal, then it could lead to terrorist activities. Violent discords together with the absence of a genuine redressal system, attempts could be made to find solutions by force. Militants are other extremist groups could indoctrinate the minds of people, especially that of young people making them vulnerable to terrorist activities. Mass Media with their wide and in-depth and sometimes live coverage of the terrorist activities can become an unwilling ally of terrorists. Contrasting democratic and repressive societies it has been noticed that in democratic societies there is an increased frequency of terrorist activity. Terrorists have also been greatly helped by globalization the reason being the availability of financial systems and sophisticated communication system. Terrorists are basically lonely people who have been rejected at some time or the other. So they undertake this form of violence to have a sense of mission and provide them with the ways and means of accomplishing it, along with monetary gains.

2. Some of consequences of terrorism are: a) Environmental – In the wake of a terrorist attack or activity the personhood of the person is dehumanized; b) Political – This happens when there is a conscious decision by ideologically inspired groups to strike back at what their members may perceive as unjust within a given society or polity; and c) Economic – Terrorism without any doubt deteriorates the economy of a nation. Here economy includes human resource, natural resource, intellectual power, aesthetic power, creative power, money power, etc.

3. In the context of ethics, terrorism can be surely said to be a threat to the civilization of the world. Terrorists just do not care about human life. Within the ethical thought one can say that there are two major traditions, one that of absolutist theories and utilitarian suppositions. Both have its drawbacks. In this scenario one needs to follow the example of *Savodaya* (welfare of all) of Gandhiji. Intra-human relationships and intra-human culture must be promoted.

