

**Director : Professor Harsh Gandhar**  
**Course Leader : Dr. Shivani Sharma**

**B.A. SEMESTER- IV, SUB. : PHILOSOPHY  
PAPER : II (WESTERN ETHICS)**

**CONTENTS**

- Introductory letter i
- Syllabus iii

<b>L.No.</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Author</b>	<b>Pages</b>
<b>UNIT-I</b>			
1.	Introducing Ethics	Dr. Veena Kapoor	1
2.	Ethics and its Relations with Aesthetics, Psychology & Religion	Dr. Veena Kapoor & Dr. S.N. Gupta	8
3.	Moral Notions	Sh. Sudhir Baweja	19
4.	Development of Morality	Dr. Usha Chandana	28
5.	Object of Moral Judgement: Actions, intentions, Situations and Characters	Dr. Veena Kapoor	39
<b>UNIT – II</b>			
6.	Virtue Ethics: Aristotle	Sh. Kewal Ramani & Sh. Sudhir Baweja	47
7.	Categorical Ethics : Kant	Dr. Raj Khanna	56
8.	Concepts of Love, Sin and Freedom in Christianity	Dr. V.T. Sebastian & Sh. Sudhir Baweja	66
<b>UNIT – III</b>			
9.	Teleological Ethics	Dr. Raj Khanna & Dr. Usha Chandna	74
<b>UNIT – IV</b>			
10.	Moral Rights of the Foetus & Female Foeticide	Dr. Veena Kapoor	87
11.	Sexual Harassment & Gender Justice	Sh. Sudhir Baweja	96
12.	Environmental Ethics	Sh. Sudhir Baweja	107

**Vetted by : Dr. Shivani Sharma**

<b>E-Mail of Department</b>	-	<b>coordphil@pu.ac.in</b>
<b>Contact No. of Department</b>	-	<b>0172-2534331</b>



(i)

## INTRODUCTORY LETTER

**Dear Student,**

**Greetings once again**

Last semester you studied Indian ethics. This semester your course becomes more interesting and engaging. As you glance through your syllabus you will notice that some themes are very interesting and sound familiar too. Global warming, pollution, sexual harassment and rights of foetus are some topics which figure in our daily - discourses and you can rejoice to learn that they are a part of your syllabus.

Then there are topics like good, right, virtue, and character which seek our closer attention whenever they are used in our regular discussions and interactions. Usually we simply mention such concepts or use them casually without understanding their deeper meaning. Ethics goes a step further; it takes up the task of understanding these terms deeply so that we can make better use of them in our discussions. A better clarity of meaning of such concepts will definitely help us to live a better life also.

You listen to a lot of public debates on certain issues of a larger public interest. Any talk of **Work place violence, Global warming, Female Foeticide, Sexual harassment, Corruption, Suicide, Rape, Love and Virtue** etc. in fact brings you closer to your subject of Ethics which you will study this year. But first let me introduce you to some themes which will be covered this year.

The course includes a study of ethical theories propounded by some Western thinkers like Aristotle, Kant, Mill and Bentham. However you will begin by gaining an insight into the nature of Ethics and its relationship with other subjects. Then we will draw your attention to some foundational moral notions like good, right, obligation and virtue. Having done that we will acquaint you to three subtypes of Ethics **i) Virtue ethics, ii) Deontological ethics and iii) Teleological ethics.** Later Concepts of Sin, Love in Christianity will also be discussed before we finally expose you to certain issues of applied ethics viz., Pollution, Gender Justice, Sexual Harassment and Right of foetus.

We hope the course will prepare you to face the fast-changing world of today which has started looking a little strange to everyone. Human society blessed with the faculties of rationality and endowed with morality is driven more by savage dispositions these days uncharacteristic of a good human society. The honest and the truthful suffers while the dishonest and the liar is highly respected. Moral and human values do not

(ii)

count for us while money has taken precedence over other desirable values. Customs and Ethos do not matter to us any more and conscience of human beings seems to have been smothered. On the contrary media (social media included) matters a lot to everyone today and it is making vulnerable minds yield to some biased public opinions serving vested interests. Poor common man really wants to learn after all what is morality and how can it really be studied. The recent exposes of scams, scandals, pollution, violence, corruption and wrong doings of the political leaders, rich, mighty and well connected leave nothing to imagination. With such a gloomy scenario painted all around, can we really talk of Morality? One may well ask. But we dare say it will be more opportune to talk of morality now.

Ethics is an enterprise which is an important branch of philosophy which devotes itself to the study of morality and undertakes the critical tasks of understanding the real meaning of moral notions and their significance in our lives. I can not elaborate any more than this here, however I can definitely invite you to first of all study and understand ethics and to do that start working on this unit.

Wishing you an engaging learning journey.

Course Leader & Co-ordinator,  
Philosophy, CDOE

Phone: 0172-2534331

(iii)

## **B.A. SEMESTER-IV**

### **Paper: WESTERN ETHICS**

<b>Max. Marks</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Theory</b>	<b>: 90 Marks</b>
<b>Internal Assessment</b>	<b>: 10 Marks</b>
<b>Time</b>	<b>: 3 Hours</b>
<b>Lectures</b>	<b>75</b>

#### **Aims and Objectives**

This paper gives an in into the nature of Ethics moral notions aid basic moral theories as propounded by Western Ethical philosophers. This paper al s deals with problems of applied ethics.

#### **INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PAPER-SETTER AND CANDIDATES:**

- (i) The syllabus has been divided into four units.  
There shall be 9 questions in all. The first question is compulsory and shall be short answer type containing 15 short questions spread over the whole syllabus to be answered in about 25 to 30 words each. The candidate are required to attempt any 9 short answer type questions carrying 18 marks i e. 2 marks of each. Rest of the paper shall contain 4 units. Each unit shall have two essay type questions and the candidate shall be given internal choice of attempting one question from each unit-4 in all. Each question will carry 18 marks.
- (ii) For private candidates who have not been assessed earlier for internal assessment, the marks secured by them in theory paper will proportionately be increased to maximum marks of the paper in lieu of internal assessment.  
The paper-setter must put note (ii) in the question paper.

#### **Unit-I**

1. The Nature of Ethics: Virtues and Goodness, its concern Relation of Ethics with Aesthetics Psychology and Religion.
2. The notion of Truth, Beauty & Goodness Reflective Customary Morality.
3. Object of Moral Judgement: Action, Intentions Situations aid Character.

(iv)

## Unit-II

4. Virtue Ethics: Aristotle
5. Categorical Ethics : Kant
6. Concepts of love, sin and freedom in Christian Tradition.

## Unit-III

7. Teleological Ethics:
  - (i) Hedonism
  - (ii) Utilitarianism
    - (a) Mill
    - (b) Bentham

## Unit-IV

8. Moral Rights of Foetus and Female Foeticide.
9. Sexual harassment and Gender Justice.
10. Environmental Ethics: Pollution, Land Degradation and Organic Farming and Global Warming.

### Essential Readings:

1. Aristotle : Nicomachean Ethics, Dordrecht D. Reidel, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 2001.
2. Peter Singer : Practical Ethics (Second Edition), Cambridge University Press, 1995.
3. Ved Parkash Verma : Neeti Shastra (in Hindi), Allied Publishers (New Delhi, 1987).
4. William Lillie : An Introduction to Ethics (London, Matheun, 1957).

### Suggested Readings:

1. J.D. Mcbbott : An introduction to Ethics, London: Hutchinson, 1966.
2. John Hospers : Human Conduct: An Introduction to the Problems of Ethics, N.Y., Harcourt, 1961.

## **ETHICS- ITS NATURE, SCOPE AND CONCERNS**

### **Structure**

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Nature of Ethics
  - 1.2.1 Ordinary Sense of Morality
  - 1.2.2 Descriptive Ethics
  - 1.2.3 Normative Ethics
  - 1.2.4 Meta Ethics
- 1.3 Scope of Ethics
- 1.4 Concerns of Ethics
- 1.5 Value of Ethics
- 1.6 Summary
- 1.7 Glossary
- 1.8 Further Readings
- 1.9 Model Questions

### **1.0 Objectives**

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand and state the nature of Ethics.
- explain the concerns of Ethics.
- critically appraise the value of Ethics.

### **1.1 Introduction**

Ethics, as a major branch of Philosophy takes up the task of understanding some key ethical concepts like right conduct, good life, right, wrong, good virtue, duty and obligation. This lesson would open by giving a sense of morality and go on to explain the three distinct ways in which morality can be understood. They are:

- 1) Descriptive Ethics

2) Normative Ethical Theory and

3) Meta Ethics.

Here we shall attempt to give you an idea of the scope of Ethics, mention some of its concerns and state the value of Ethics.

## 1.2 Nature of Ethics

Ethics is a major branch of philosophy which deals with understanding right conduct and good life. It analyzes the meaning of 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad' and other related concepts concerning human conduct. The central issue of ethics is what is *good life or life worth living*. Life worth living does not mean satiating one's desires and fulfilling one's wishes. Man is a social and rational being and his actions may be evaluated to be good or bad in relation to each other in a consistent and coherent way. Human nature is such that a man is capable of deciding, judging and evaluating actions. He is curious to know what sort of life is worth living. He does not merely live a life as other living beings do, but intends to lead a morally esteemed life. Socrates rightly said that the unexamined life is not worth living, As a matter of fact it may be experienced and observed that human beings usually change their track of moral standards for expectancy and profits or ego satisfaction. The path of moral goodness is very slippery and one is likely to slip down very easily towards evil. In ordinary words it is not possible for us to give one single and precise definition of morality. Human problems are confronted by a moral philosopher and ordinary men alike. 'What ought to be done?' is a practical problem faced by all in their course of life and in relation to other. However, an ordinary man is bothered about the immediate problems faced by him and finding solutions to them best suited to him in the given situations; whereas a moral philosopher is concerned with formulating those basic principles and finding ultimate goal of human life which are justifiable and acceptable to all human beings. A philosopher goes beyond immediate and time bound actions and endeavours to offer solutions to them. He investigates for the reasons for the actions to mark that they ought to be performed by all rational beings irrespective of caste, creed, religion, time and space. Thus, we may say that ethics is the study of rationally justifiable principles of human conduct.

### 1.2.1 Ordinary sense of Morality

Some people by mistake regards Ethics as a system of such principles which prohibit people from having fun; i.e. ethics restricts persons from doing those actions which they desire most. They believe that ethical principles are imposed on them and their freedom is curtailed while deciding, acting and judging. Ethics cannot be treated as an ideal system that is noble in theory but no good in practice. On the contrary, we may find that if an ethical principle does no good in life than it must be having an inherent defect. *Ethics deals with judgments which guide practical life in a consistent manner.*

A moral philosopher brings to clear consciousness and expresses the principles which are implicitly intended in our dealing with the familiar practical problems. An ordinary person may envy and admire a wealthy person leading a comfortable life doing



nothing and may still like to be friendly with him, whereas may condemn a poor and lazy person of the same sort. In common sense we hold double standards in life to act and judge actions. We believe that truth ought to be spoken but, recognizing the delicacy of situation and as per the demand of the time we think it wise to tell lies. Because we feel it most convenient to do. Under these judgments lie the principles pronounced by the personal view and cannot be trusted because they cannot be generalized. Such rules prevail because of subjective tastes and interests and preferences. They have temporal relevance to the individual-being alone at a particular time. An ordinary man may believe that ethics does not suit to the complexities of life. In unusual situations simple rules like, 'do not tell lies', 'do not kill', 'keep promises', conflict and might even lead to disaster. It may normally be wrong to tell a lie but while being captured by the enemy a soldier's speaking the truth by disclosing secrets of country may prove to be most disastrous. But does it follow that speaking the truth is wrong ? Some more specific moral rules may be formulated as exceptions to universal rules which may be practiced while keeping the sanctity of universal moral rules intact.

A moral philosopher is not concerned with giving such a definition of morality which could accord with its ordinary usage. In ordinary usage morality cannot be given a consistent and precise definition because many principles, attitudes and problems which some people would agree in calling moral while many others would disagree to call them moral. Ordinary usage of 'moral' and 'immorality' can be asked for its suitability and unsuitability and not for its goodness or badness. But something is not good or bad, unless some working definition of morality is given. We cannot judge each others actions if standards remain underground and we act the way we want to. Suitability and unsuitability of a principle suggests that different definitions of morality can be given depending upon the convenience of the agent. But Ethics must distinguish itself from the matters of tastes or preferences, matters of convenience and expediency on the one hand and from law and legal issues, etiquettes and social norms on the other. *Ethics is an attempt to find the essential and defining characteristics of morality and moral issues which distinguish them from political views, moral beliefs from religious beliefs; moral judgements from legal or aesthetic judgements.*

Thus, morality may be examined in three distinct ways:

### **1.2.2 Descriptive Ethics :**

Morality is usually understood either in social, political and religious sense or psychological sense. Both these different uses narrow down the scope of ethics. This kind of morality is based on the descriptive empirical enquiry-historical or scientific, such as is done by anthropologists, historians, psychologists and sociologists. Social, political and anthropological sense of morality consists of those ways of behaviour which each member of the community learns habitually. Social norms are imbibed by the man by being the member of a particular community, society or a state. Such norms include the idea of sanction and set patterns of conduct. Such norms rule out motives and intentions involved in doing a free action. Such morality consists of habitual Voluntary conformity

with the conventions and has its impact on the social, political and religious life. Conventional morality does not allow the views of the particular agent and comes forth as the collective point of view which may give rise to many conflicts and disputes. Social base of morality is important but not absolutely correct and complete. On the other hand psychological view of morality describes the individual view of the agent. According to this view morality consists not in what other people insist or teach 'what ought to be done' but in what the agent intends or is motivated to do by his feelings and emotions. Man is motivated to do actions by his instincts which may be questioned by reflective thinking because they may lack consistency and coherence. Individual views again may give rise to disputes and disagreements. Thus, descriptive view of morality whether in collective or individual sense may prove to be incomprehensive of those actions which may be adjudged to be good for all. In social or psychological sense of morality, the goal is to describe or explain the phenomena of morality or to work out a theory of human nature which influence human actions.

### **1.2.3 Normative Ethical Theory :**

According to this view ethics is the study of basic principles to judge human actions as good or bad, right or wrong. It is the normative study of human conduct in a systematic and coherent manner. Such a human conduct is not the sociological or psychological expression of conventions or emotions but is based on reasons acceptable to all rational beings. Human conduct is the sum total of voluntary actions which can be justified to be good. Behaviour of the man is either socially or psychologically determined, whereas human conduct originates in reason and is the result of human volitions, the deliberate choice that one makes. The agent wills and intends to act with a commitment and sense of responsibility. The agent consciously wills the action and therefore cannot escape responsibility. Human conduct would include motives, desires and intentions (will be discussed in lesson no. 5). It, thus, becomes clear that ethics deals with moral principles and their application in human conduct. Ethics is limited to theorising the moral reflections on moral actions and providing with a minimum number of principles to judge the rightness or wrongness, goodness or badness of human actions. Normative ethical thinker is always ready to give reasons for his decisions judgements and actions. He assesses what is good or right in a particular case or as a general principle. Normative ethics is concerned with such general statements like, "Contemplation is the best way of life" or "Happiness is the ultimate end or standard of good life, the life as it ought to be led." An ethical theory has been interested in finding a set of valid ethical principles which are complete in the sense that all justifiable ethical statements could be deduced from them. Answering to the practical problems of life is merely, a process of deduction, i.e. starting with a few valid ethical principles and judging human actions through their application on concrete issues.

#### **1.2.4 Critical or Meta Ethics :**

It asks and tries to answer logical, epistemological or semantical questions as also studies the problem of moral reasoning, moral knowledge, truth in ethical judgements and so on. It deals with the validity of moral judgements, truth in ethical arguments, meaning and use of ethical concepts. It is an enquiry about moral theorization and not about how life ought to be led.

To theorize is to give a systematic and coherent account of human reflections by reducing them to minimum number of principles. Such basic principles consist of some basic concepts like, good/bad/right/wrong, virtue etc. in moral sense. (These concepts will be defined in Lesson No. 3). These principles articulate what is morally good or virtuous through their application.

#### **1.3 Scope of Ethics**

With regard to scope of ethics it can be said that Ethics is primarily and directly concerned with normative questions, such as that of right and wrong, good and evil. responsibility and freedom, moral principles and judgements. Besides these problems it is related with social, political and psychological problems also. As it may be pointed out with some of the descriptive ethical theorists say that the nature of moral goodness is intimately connected with pleasure and the state of pleasure is a psychological state of mind. Motive, intention and situations have a strong impact on making decision regarding principles. It is true that the function of a moral philosopher is not to tell people what moral principles they should adopt or what type of life they ought to choose but gives certain basic standards as guide to one's actions in their social, political and psychological problems. Moral philosophy is theoretical having repercussions on practical life. Problem of freedom is a central problem in ethics as it is the pre-requisite for making decisions to lead a particular type of life under the guidance and directions of moral standards.

A moral philosopher is neither a preacher nor a reformist. He does not administer any particular principle on a particular group of people, rather speculates about the basic standards of good life. Moral theory presents a picture of moral life. It is about what kind of life one ought to live. It is like concerning a theory about practice. To accept a moral theory is to accept a way of life that commits one to live by. If a theoriser expounds a theory sincerely then it includes commitment on the part of the expounder of it. There is a logical inconsistency in developing one theory and acting in accordance with another. A moral theory suggests a way of life. The study of Ethics makes a person distinguish between moral issues and other kinds of issues.

#### **1.4 Concerns of Ethics**

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Moral philosophy considers and treats problems of moral life which are intimately connected with psychological and biological factors. In practical life decisions regarding actors-factual and empirical. They are mixed with social, political, cultural and humanistic activities of life. Thus, such issues-civil rights, political activities, racial and class conflict are associated with moral problems of duty and responsibility. Such problems are discussed in concrete settings.

**Check your Progress**

1. Give your understanding of the ordinary sense of Morality.  
 .....  
 .....
2. Give a brief introduction to all the three distinct ways in which morality may be understood.  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
3. State the slope of Ethics.  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....

**1.5 Value of Ethics**

Ethics has its relevance in religions as well. Can we think of a religion without morality. Without morality religion would be reduced to some rites and rituals which make people rigid and fanatic. Indian Ethics is primarily metaphysical and spiritual in nature and shows a path towards self-realization-the ultimate goal of human life. The study of Ethics disciplines human life for the good of humanity as a whole; however the nature of Ethics is speculative and theoretical.

**1.6 Summary**

In this lesson we tried to understand that the central issue of ethics is to understand what is good life. It is also a study of rationally justifiable principles of human conduct. After examining, the three different forms of Ethics having an idea of the Indian approach to Ethics we further studied the scope, i.e., the issues, the problems and the concerns of Ethics.

**1.7 Glossary**

**Ethics** : a major branch of Philosophy which studies morality, its nature and its grounds. It is a study of good, bad, right, wrong, ought, duty, moral conduct and obligation.

**Morals** : (from Latin *Moralis* meaning manners, customs, way of life) they are codes of conducts of societies and individuals which regulate people's conduct to be good and to be right.

### **1.8 Further Readings**

1. Sahakian.S, William (1974) *Ethics: An Introduction to Theories and Problems*, New York: Barnes & Noble Books.
2. Ewing. A.C, (1973) *Ethics*, London: St Paul's House Warwick Lane.
3. Harold H.Titus and Morris T.K Keeton (1972); *The Range of Ethics*, New Delhi: Affiliated East West Prios Pvt Ltd.
4. Jadunath Sinha (2004) *A Manual of Ethics*, Kolkata, New Central Book Agency.
5. Paul W, Taylor(1975) *Principles of Ethics: An Introduction*, California: Dickenson Publishing Company, Inc.
6. J.S Mackenzie(1956) *A Manual of Ethics*.

### **1.9 Model Questions**

1. Introduce Ethics and discuss its nature.
2. Define Ethics and discuss its scope and concerns.



# ETHICS AND ITS RELATIONS WITH AESTHETICS, PSYCHOLOGY AND RELIGION

## Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Ethics and Aesthetics
  - 2.2.1 Similarities between Ethics and Aesthetics
  - 2.2.2 Difference between Ethics and Aesthetics
- 2.3 Ethics and Religion
  - 2.3.1 Ethics
  - 2.3.2 Religion
  - 2.3.3 Similarities between Ethics and Religion
  - 2.3.4 Differences between Ethics and Religion
- 2.4 Ethics and Psychology
  - 2.4.1 Ethics
  - 2.4.2 Psychology
  - 2.4.3 Similarities between Ethics and Psychology
  - 2.4.4 Differences between Ethics and Psychology
- 2.5 Summary
- 2.6 Glossary
- 2.7 Further Readings
- 2.8 Model Questions

## 2.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand the relation of Ethics with other sciences.
- explain the differences and similarities of Ethics with other sciences.
- critically evaluate how Ethics can grow on account of these relations.

## 2.1 Introduction

This lesson gives you a very interesting introductory account of Ethics, Aesthetics, Psychology and Religion and how each of these disciplines are related to Ethics. Ethics and Aesthetics have some similarities like both with normative branches and they study areas which are related to practice. Ethics and Religion both concern life, while Ethics is concerned with human life, religion relates to matters of faith in some super natural power. Ethics and Psychology both examine human conduct, behaviour, actions and they have so much in common.

## 2.2 Ethics and Aesthetics

A righteous or a virtuous life is considered as an art of living a good life. Good life is learnt by conscious effort and practicing certain sort of actions in accordance with some principles of general nature. Aesthetics is the study of nature of beauty and form and content of art. An artist learns to make a work of art in a consistent and harmonious order. Understanding of basic principles and what is good and bad in Ethics help a person choose what is right and wrong just as an understanding of beauty may help an artist in art activity. Both moral and art activities are calculative and deliberative. Both are practical in their application.

Ethical study and art creation both influence human actions. Both are evaluative and influential in nature. They may bring changes in the world outside of us. Good people make good society. Though reflection and deliberations a moral philosopher may resolve conflicts among people which arise because of their subjective approaches. An art work, like wise may arouse us to have a look on a certain way of life. Its aim is action and not knowledge. An artist conveys his message to society through the medium of art-work.

We commend morally good actions as we appreciate good works of art. Moral conduct satisfies human self and gives happiness. Like wise an artist gets a kind of aesthetic pleasure by creating art work. Enjoyment is not only the outcome of art-work; rather it accompanies it. The efficient cause of a moral action and art work is in the agent himself. A moral agent and an artist both are responsible for what they do because they deliberately choose and decide to act. Their actions originate in themselves. Both act voluntarily.

Both moral actions and art-works cannot be proved to be true or false. They are not matters of fact for which empirical evidence could be given. A moral action is good and an art work could be beautiful. Moral judgements and aesthetic judgements are not made on the bases of external world known to us through observation. Both moral judgements and aesthetic judgements are neither true nor false: they are good or bad and beautiful or ugly respectively. They are evaluative and non-cognitive in nature. Ethical statements and aesthetic statements do not constitute a body of knowledge. Scientific statements are descriptive in nature which explain matters of facts and are capable of being proved empirically. But Ethical and aesthetic statements reflect the

freedom of the individual in their expressions, therefore, they cannot be proved by giving an evidence, however they may be justified.

Art work and moral action both have something to communicate though the level or content of communication may differ. As moral action, judgement and principle affect other's attitudes, likewise art-work, judgement and statements may affect others attitudes. What the moral theories cannot do to change the corrupt practices, an art work in the form of literature, drama or a musical creation may have a moral message to convey.

Although aesthetic and ethics and their application have some similarities, yet they are different from each other and very well treated as two separate fields of study.

### **2.2.1 Similarities between Ethics and Aesthetics**

An artist himself may not be moral in his course of life necessarily. His art work may be judged by aesthetic standards but his conduct is open to judgement by moral standards. An art work may influence the attitudes of spectators badly and the outcome could lead to an evil influence on our society. To illustrate our point we can always put the blame of rampant violence, insensitivity to and falling standards of family values on, films, T.V. serials, song videos, internet and social media. An art work may influence public and collective consciousness and be influential but it is created not necessarily to influence and affect human conduct.

An artist is free to create and need not get involved in it through out life but moral goodness requires one to practice goodness throughout life. There cannot be a break or escape from doing good actions. We expect from a morally upright person to act good always. We cannot expect from him that on some days he is good and on other days he indulges in immoral actions. It's true that in order to be good musician the artist must practice his art work but it has nothing to do with moral goodness.

Moral goodness is a deliberative and reflective activity which presupposes mutual and general acknowledgement. It is an intended activity and human action is judged to be good in terms of doer's intentions. But an artist's work is not judged by his intentions but by the work itself what he creates. An art work depends mainly upon the imagination of the artist which has expresses through different mediums. By his work of art he does not become good or bad but by his intentions involved in moral actions in life. A person may be judged by the intentions with which he acted though desirable results might not have taken place. Reasons for the actions are looked into before making moral judgements. The good effort made by a person may be a good reason for evaluating his conduct morally good even when he fails to materialize his intentions. For example a doctor sincerely operated upon the patient to save his life but failed, will not make the doctor a on immoral fractional bad person. His intention was good irrespective of the consequences. Criterion of judging an action is not the effects it produces. But in the case of art-work it is the effect that matters most. There is no doubt that in judging in



ethics we do take more account of the motives and intentions of the doer of the action than we do in judging works of art.

### **2.2.2 Difference between Ethics and Aesthetics**

An artist is concerned with creating an art creation. Virtuous actions are like craft which one learns to act in similar way as and when occasion arises. But an art work is an imaginative activity which takes a new form every time. Moral goodness lies in the disposition that a person acquires by conscious effort and gets accustomed to perform a sort of actions. A man can be called morally good if and only if he practices good actions as and when the opportunity arises. An athlete is evaluated good if he displays his capacities and disposition in the field in the best form.

The business of every art is to bring something into existence. Both articles manufactured and actions done are liable to change but are quite distinct activities. Rational activity exercised in doing is quite distinct from that which is exercised in making. Moral action is doing, whereas art-work is making. However in both the fields efficient cause lies in the agent. Conclusively it may be said that art and good life have something in common but they have many differences too. In arts one has to learn on art form, do a lot of practice to polish his skills, apply a lot of creativity to create an accomplished work of art, likewise in morality a person has to train his emotions reflectively to be disposed to act in the right way. Both artist and man are supposed to prove themselves in their respective fields by showing their skills whenever the opportunity arises. Both are related with practice than pure theory and knowledge.

## **2.3 Ethics and Religion**

### **2.3.1 Ethics :**

Ethics is the study of the moral ideal involved in human life. This ideal which is the supreme good of man, serves as the guiding principle for not only evaluation of each and every act of man but also moulding his life according to it. It becomes the source of inspiration of moral effort. In the words of Plato, the patterns of good life are laid down in the heaven, those who have the eyes to behold, let them behold and mould their lives accordingly. In simple words the problem of good life is the main concern of Ethics. This connects Ethics with religion.

### **2.3.2 Religion :**

Religion means faith in some supernatural being (God) with whom man establishes relationship in order to make his life good. This faith is first revealed by a prophet who is usually a man of extraordinary intelligence. He preaches the lenient of faith to the people. His teachings are recorded in a book which is regarded as the final authority in matters relating to faith and is respected as the holy scripture. For example, Bhagavad-Gita for Hindus, Guru Granth Sahib for Sikhs, the Quran for Muslims, the Bible for Christians etc. Every religion starts some definite religious order of priests who spread the faith and propagates a mode of worship. Every religion also believes in a

definite philosophy of life which is based on its conceptions of the universe, God, man and the supreme goal of human life. It is clear that the basic problem of religion is how to lead a good life which brings it closest of Ethics.

### **2.3.3 Similarities between Ethics and Religion**

It is very natural to think that Religion and Ethics have deep affinity. For the common man it is very difficult to make a distinction between the two. In the ancient times, morality was so much mixed up with religion so that for the layman, the holy man was really a good man and a person who was morally good was considered to be religious, pious. It was some historical accidents which helped people to distinguish between faith and morality, for example, in England persons were burnt in the name of religion. The conscience of everybody rebels against this brutality which was approved of on the basis of faith, it is in the modern times that Ethics and religion are kept apart, and question of their relationship arises.

Sometimes a question is asked, "Does religion help morality?" The answer to this question leads us to various points of relationship between the two :

(i) Morality needs a philosophy of life as the basis for itself. It is very difficult for the layman to have an access to the subject of Philosophy which is beyond his comprehension. He also has no time to devote to thinking and solving these fundamental problems for himself such as what is the origin of the world? What is the ultimate end of life? He needs readymade answers to such questions. They are provided by religion which makes available to him a definite point of view to look at the world and man makes it easy for his understanding too. Religion thus fulfils the need of the common man by providing him with a readymade philosophy of life.

(ii) Morality is a normative account of life it maintains some ideals for human life. Man devotes his life for the realization of those ideals. But the question is : What is the reality of those ideals? Are they objective or purely subjective and imaginary? If they are proved to be mere figments of pure imagination or ideal dreams not made of stuff of reality, then the entire moral life becomes meaningless amounting to hunting mere shadows and not realities. How to prove the objectivity of moral ideals and values? How to prove reality of human goals? Ethics may fail to come up equal to the task. Religion comes to the rescue of morality. According to faith all values are lodged in God who embodies them and moral ideals are as real and as objective as God is. God is Truth, Beauty and goodness. Realization of God means realization of the highest values of life. In this way religion proves the values of life and helps the cause of moral life.

(iii) Religion supports morality in another way. There is a constant struggle between good and evil forces in the world and human mind is pestered with the fear lest evil should triumph ultimately and moral life should end in a big tragedy. There is nothing in Ethics to assure man of his coming out victorious in face of Devil and to dispel his fears regarding the final tragedy; man needs some support from a Friend in the Cosmos that it is not evil, but Good shall be victorious in the end. Religion gives him this moral

support that he is on the right path and victory will be on the side of the good forces in the end. Since God is on the side of the Good and He is Almighty, Devil will be vanquished finally. This moral support provides encouragement to the flagging spirit of man and he is doubly assured of his moral progress. Religion thus is a source of inspiration to the moral effect of man and provides a sustaining ground to his moral progress.

(iv) Religion can help explain the final goal of human life. We know that the problem of Ethics is how to make life good and what is the ultimate aim of life so that it may be realized and it tries to explain the meaning and goal of human existence on the basis of whatever can be known through sensory experience, reason and intuition. But this naturalistic explanation fails to account for the final goal which lies beyond the human intelligence. Here religion helps morality to complete the picture by giving an account of final destiny of man. For example, when Spinoza, says that the goal of man is intellectual love of God (*amor dei*), he is resorting to a religious explanation of human life. Religion fills the gap whenever it breaches the citadel of moral life.

#### **2.3.4 Differences between Ethics and Religion**

We have seen that religion can help the cause morality in many ways but it should not leave an impression on us that morality cannot do without the help of religion for there have been ethical movements like Buddhism in India having no grounding in religion in their original form. Even in the present day world, there are many thinkers and individuals who maintain that morality does not need any external support of supreme power or God. Immanuel Kant sounds a note of caution when he declares in quite unequivocal terms that morality does not need the help of religion. The two may be connected, but one is not to hinge on the other.

Every student has to bear in mind some important points of differences between morality and religion which are confused usually :

(i) Both religion and morality are concerned with the problem of good life; but they deal with its different aspects. Ethics is concerned with its theoretical side as provides the intellectual understanding of the goal of life, the various moral standards and the system of duties, and virtues, but Ethics never gives the guide-lines for the practical execution of these ideals in actual life. Religion, on the other hand, provides both the theory and practice of morality, it gives the philosophy of life and also guides the people in order they may come up to put in practice. Through religious order and priestly sermons, it promotes the cause of practical life. Hence, religion is more wholesome for an ordinary man than a mere knowledge of moral principles through the study of Ethics.

(ii) The bases of Religion and Ethics are different. Religion is based on reason and intuition. In the former case, a prophet or a genius arrives at certain truths about human life and preaches them for the good of other people who accept them and practise them of faith. This process is based on authority. The articles of faith, enshrined

in the scriptures are also accepted on the authority of faith. Human intelligence is allowed a role subservient to authority so far it can understand it or interpret it but is never permitted to challenge it which amounts to blasphemy or sacrilege. A person who criticizes faith, is branded as an infidel. But morality allows human intelligence to play its full part in grasping the truths of life. In fact, true morality is based upon a light from within one's own conscience. It is against all external authority, because it cannot be imposed upon the man against his will. Ethics gives full room for the exercise of freedom. A person should do whatever he thinks as right and not what the prophet or the scripture says. In short, the authority in moral life is internal, while in religion it is external.

(iii) Religion is static while morality is dynamic. Since religious truths depend upon faith and are not thought out by the person himself but derived from the scripture, they are not going to change with the changing conditions of life. We find that old religions preach the same old truths about God, Universe and man. Although human understanding about these issues have undergone a tremendous change due to the progress in Science and Philosophy. But since morality depends upon native resources of human nature, on reason and intuition, it keeps on changing with the changing conditions of life. It is not bound down to any set principles or systems of virtues as is the case in Religion.

(iv) God is the centre of religion while man is the centre of morality Religion is faith in God with whom man seeks adjustment. He establishes relationship with God to make his life happy. Hence religion takes into account the relations of man with God. All religious activities such as worship, prayer, rituals, observances etc. are directed towards God, everything flows in the direction of God. So Religion is God-centered. But morality is born out of social context, it governs the relations between man and man. The hero in the moral drama is man and not God. Hence morality is man centred.

(v) Religion enjoins a set of duties on man which is quite different from that of moral duties. The duties from the religious point of view are worship, prayer, fasting etc. which are not morally binding on man. Religious duties are directed towards God. Such duties fall to regulate the relations between man and man. Moral duties are concerned with social relations of man. For example, if a person breaks his promise made with another, it hardly disturbs his relation with God, but it is going to affect his relations with others, hence moral duties, are going to be different from religious duties. There are some moral duties which have been given the religious garb. But a student of Ethics should distinguish between what is purely religious and what is purely moral, however close both might be.

(vi) Religion instills feelings and sentiments different from those experienced in the moral life. Religion gets conformity on its discipline through fear of God or awe, and it inspires feelings of self-submission before the mighty will of God and a sense of humility as a devotee thinks himself a mere humble instrument of God. On the other hand, humility may not be appreciated in moral life. If a man has done something noble

and exalted, he should have a feeling of self-assertion rather than self-submission, the credit of good acts should go to him if the discredit of his bad acts cannot be shifted to somebody else. Fear or awe has no place in moral life in which self-confidence, initiative, freedom and courage are considered laudable.

(vii) Religion gives a super naturalistic explanation of human life while Ethics confines this to the natural realm. Religion explains the visible world and human life in terms of the observables, the tangibles and the intelligibles. The real problem of morality is : given one day life, how can we make it good. Ethics does not go into what precedes human life and what happens after it. It tries to explain life as it is found here, so far as it is possible to do so in naturalistic terms and leaves that which goes beyond their reach to religion and metaphysics.

## **2.4 Ethics and Psychology**

### **2.4.1 Ethics**

Ethics is concerned with human conduct. It is interested in standards and criteria of good conduct and in the light of such norms of morality it seeks to judge human conduct in terms of its goodness and badness, rightness and wrongness. Ethics is a normative science which approaches human conduct from the point of its goodness. This goodness constitutes the ideal for man. Conduct is behaviour of man which is also the subject matter of another science - Psychology. It is, therefore, natural that Ethics is related to Psychology.

### **2.4.2 Psychology**

Psychology is the science of mind and behaviour. The word Psychology is made of two Greek words. (i) *Psyche* which literally means soul but generally means mind and (ii) *Logy* which may mean science. Therefore from the derivative meaning of the word, 'Psychology' should mean science of mind. But now the question is what is mind? Mind is defined as the name of all those activities which the individual performs as one unit and not as parts of groups. These activities are both inner which are known as mind and they may be outer which is called behavior such as talking, walking etc. Now mental processes are of three types; viz. (i) Cognition or knowing (ii) Affection or feeling and (iii) Conation or willing. For example, a person sees a flower, feels pleased with its beauty and plucks it. Here seeing is conative. All conative processes or tendencies lead to outer behaviour. As a matter of fact, mind always expresses itself in external behaviour and it is through the study of external behaviour that mind can be known. Therefore the study of behaviour is as important as that of the mind in Psychology. Mind and behaviour are found in the life of both man as well as animals, therefore, both constitute the subject matter of Psychology. Now we are in a position to define Psychology. It is a positive science of mind and behaviour of both men and animals, in its individual as well as social aspects. This behaviour together with its mental counterparts connects Psychology with Ethics.

### 2.4.3 Similarities between Ethics and Psychology

Both Ethics and Psychology meet at human conduct. Man is the subject matter of both of them. Hence Ethics is naturally related to Psychology. Some important points of their relationship are discussed here below :

(i) Ethics is interested in passing moral judgement on human conduct, but before evaluating it in moral terms or extolling it or condemning it, it will be proper to know thoroughly the circumstances and conditions under which it is performed. We will have to look to Psychology for help in this matter. It is Psychological analysis of the matter which can let us know the exact motives and intentions of the person in doing a particular act. There may be both conscious as well as unconscious motivation behind a piece of conduct which will reveal the true story of the case. The moral judgement which is not based on the proper Psychological analysis of the person, may be wrong and will have to be revised when we gain a true insight into the character of doer. In a French proverb 'to understand means to forgive'. When we condemn a person for his wickedness; we may not know him thoroughly and when we come to know him well, we are in a position to forgive the poor fellow for his peculiar circumstances under the influence of which he acted wicked. Much of so called immorality is the child of circumstances and criminal tendencies have also been found on Psychological research to be the result to heredity sometimes a criminal is punished for faults of his parents in our society. Psychological research and knowledge can go a long way in helping us in arriving at fair moral judgements.

(ii) Ethics aims at good life and tries to build a pattern of ideal life. It is concerned with a system of duties and virtues for men..But before knowing what man should be it is necessary to know what man is. All moral systems must be built on the Psychological foundations of actual human nature. In words of Kant ought must be followed by man. The former refers to duty and the latter to man's natural capacity. If a man cannot do an action, it cannot be his duty. That is what some rigorous moral disciplines, like Jain's virtues have been doing in imposing as well night impossible tasks on man who could not come up to them inspite of his efforts. Butler did well in following the natural constitution of human nature to build up his conception of morality. Psychology provides the basis of morality.

### 2.4.4 Differences between Ethics and Psychology

However close relationship between Ethics and Psychology may be there, but there are some very striking points of differences between the two sciences which every student should bear in mind. Some of them are as follows :

(i) Psychology is a natural science whereas Ethics is a normative science. Both of them study the conduct of man but the difference lies in their points of view. Psychology investigates in activities of a man as they take place.. It is interested in describing them in terms of facts and it explains them on the basis of natural laws of mental life. Psychology does not sit in judgement over the behaviour of a person; it will

simply describe it as it is. Hence Psychology is a natural science. But Ethics on the other hand, is not a natural science, because it tries to judge human conduct in moral terms so far as it is good or bad, right or wrong, Ethics is based on some moral standards derived from the ideals of human life in the light of which moral judgements are passed. Such ideals are called norms. Ethics is, therefore, a normative science.

(ii) The scope of Psychology is wider than that of Ethics. Psychology is concerned with all those activities which an individual performs as a whole. Now these activities include both mental processes like knowing, feeling and willing as well as external behaviour which includes conduct. In other words we have seen that Psychology is the study of both mind and behaviour of both man as well as animal. So it has a very vast scope. But Ethics on the other hand, has very limited scope because its study is only confined to human conduct. Now we know conduct comprises only voluntary activities. Involuntary actions are excluded from the purview of Ethics. But behaviour includes both voluntary as well as involuntary activities. If Ethics confines itself to conduct 'Psychology extends its study to the whole of behaviour. Besides behaviour, mental activities are also included in the scope of Psychology. Again conduct which is morally judged in Ethics is of human beings, animals and their behaviour are excluded from Ethical jurisdiction, but included in that of Psychology. In short, Psychology has a wider scope than that of Ethics.

(iii) Psychology is concerned with the process of conduct while Ethics is concerned with the product of conduct. As a matter of fact, both deal with conduct but with different aspects of the same. So long as a person forms an idea of doing a particular action and makes up his will to execute his mental plan, the entire process is purely psychological and as such falls within the scope of Psychology. But when the plans, volitions, decisions, motives and intentions are expressed in outward action, then comes the direct concern of Ethics, because unless the will is expressed in deed, it cannot be judged morally. There is no doubt that the object of moral judgement does not consist of only external movements of a person without their mental factors, but whereas Ethics is directly concerned with the product of will and indirectly concerned with the process of willing. Psychology on the other hand, it directly concerned with the process of willing and indirectly concerned with the moral outcome of such as process.

### Check your Progress

1. Define Ethics.

.....  
 .....

2. What is Religion?

.....  
 .....

<p>3. State the differences between Ethics and Psychology.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>4. How is Aesthetics different from Ethics?</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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**2.5 Summary**

The lesson gave you introductory accounts of Ethics, Religion, Aesthetics and Psychology. By going through their similarities and differences you must have got an idea how Ethics as well as these independent disciplines grow their interdisciplinary interactions. A better understanding of these disciplines will help Ethical Scholars to have a better idea of their concepts which overlap with these disciplines.

**2.6 Glossary**

**Aesthetics-** a branch of Philosophy which studies art, beauty, aesthetic experience and taste.

**Psychology-** is a science of behavior and mind in humans and animals.

**Religion-** a system of faiths, beliefs practices and worship of a superhuman controlling power or God or gods.

**2.7 Further Readings**

- 1. Titus. H. Harold & Keeton Moris (1973) Ethics for Today (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) New York: D Van Nastrand Company.
- 2. Lillie William (1957) An Introduction to Ethics, London: Matheun
- 3. Mackenzie, J.S. (1956) A Manual of Ethics

**2.8 Model Questions:**

- 1. Introduce Ethics and discuss its relationship and differences with Aesthetics?
- 2. What is Psychology? How Ethics and Psychology are related to each other?



## **MORAL NOTIONS**

### **The Notions of Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Virtue**

#### **Structure**

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Truth, Beauty and Goodness
  - 3.2.1 Truth
  - 3.2.2 Beauty
- 3.3 Moral Notions
  - 3.3.1 Goodness
  - 3.3.2 Right
  - 3.3.3 Duty
  - 3.3.4 Obligation
  - 3.3.5 Virtue
- 3.4 Summary
- 3.5 Glossary
- 3.6 Further Readings
- 3.7 Model Questions

#### **3.0 Objectives**

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- comprehend some notions like Truth, Beauty, Goodness and Virtue.
- explain the nature of these moral notions.
- have a critical estimate of the significance of these moral notions.

#### **3.1 Introduction**

Human beings are essentially social animals but they are moral agents too. While being moral they follow certain norms, values & principles. All of them involve moral concepts like Right, Wrong, Ought, Good, Obligation and Duty, etc. This

lesson deals with some key ethical notions like Truth, Beauty and Goodness along with Virtues. To have you a comprehensive idea of these notions. This lesson will also introduce you to some other key notions like Right, Virtue and Obligation also.

### 3.2 Truth, Goodness and Beauty

Truth, Goodness and Beauty which stand for Satyam, Shivam and Sundaram have been, almost universally considered as the most fundamental universal values. The entire life of man has been deemed as a pursuit of these three prime-values. Known as Platonic Triad-transcendentals these three also become three fields which are keenly studied by Philosophers. Logic studies truth, goodness is the key concern of ethics and Beauty is studied by Aesthetics. Ontologically they are considered as one only. If any thing is Truth, it is a Beauty too if it is a Beauty it is good too. Studying these three eternal values together will let us form a better understanding of moral notions, especially good.

### 3.3 Moral Notions

Man, the crown of creation, has been always interested in identifying the ultimate good, the '*Summum bonum*' of his life. In this persistent search he invoked Gods, sought advice of the wise-men and even penanced hard. Intuition, experience and reflection, almost every source of knowledge has been employed by him to comprehend the ultimate purposes and goods of his life. However Ethics, the philosophy of morals, originated in one of those reflective moments of those learned few who refused to concede to the testimony of wise-men and yield to the revelations of divine sources.

Human beings are essentially social-animals but their social bindings, their commitments, their obligations, their concern for the community, welfare and their benevolent dispositions make them essentially moral-agents. In their social-interactions, business transactions and interdependences they follow certain norms, values principles and regard their rights and duties.

Let us review the following statements :

1. Children *ought* to obey their *parents*.
2. Blood-donation is a *good habit*.
3. Speaking truth is a *virtue*.
4. Sexual Harassment is *immoral*.
5. It is the duty of every citizen to help the Government to maintain law and order.
6. Sexual Harassment has become almost rampant.
7. Female foeticide is unethical.
8. It is the obligation of every citizen to *protect environment*.

9. Corruption is always deplorable.
10. One should not use unfair means in Examination.

These statements and many similar statements, frequently using terms like 'Right' 'Wrong', 'Ought', 'Good', 'Virtue', 'Obligation', 'Duty' etc. pertain to moral issues. These moral issues and their related moral arguments need thorough assessment and minute analysis. Ethics, undertakes this job of analysing the moral-concepts and evaluation of moral-arguments.

Moral Philosophers had focussed their attention on some very fundamental moral terms viz. 'Good', 'Right', 'Duty', 'Obligation' and 'Virtue' but they are far *from being unambiguous thereby urging* Moral Philosophies to undertake their thorough analysis. In what follows, we shall try to introduce these fundamental ethical concepts to you.

Let us start with 'Good'

### 3.3.1 Goodness

The most fundamental ethical notion '*good*' has been derived from a German word 'gut' which means *serviceable for some end*. If an object serves our purpose, it can be assessed as good: a particular book would be good if it is valuable for some end; a particular person's conduct would be good if it is valuable for the attainment of an ideal. But by being useful towards the attainment of some end the thing cannot be termed as good until the ideal or purpose itself is good. '*Good*' has been used in a variety of ways. In the moral context also it has numerous usages. Many moral thinkers have tried to define Good in their ways. In what follows, we shall refer to only three significant attempts at its definition.

David Hume defined '*good*' as *worthy of approval but he did not clarify whose approval we should seek and what constituted the approval*. Aristotle defined '*good*' in terms goal, purposes or aims to which something or somebody moved. Hedonists defined 'good' as that which brings forth pleasure. But the most interesting treatment of '*good*' came from G.E. Moore who with his subtle arguments literally closed this issue. In his '*Principia Ethica*' he wrote : "*If I am asked 'what is good? My answer is that good is good and that it is the end of the matter'*". He advocated that good is just a simple notion which can neither be analysed nor defined, it can however be cognized. Yellow or blue is a simple notion, too, can we define what is 'yellow' it has to be experienced and any attempt of explaining or defining it to other would be making the other experience it. To know the good we must experience it and any attempt at its definition is just fallacious.

### 3.3.2 Right

'*Right*' has a variety of meanings in a variety of contexts, even ethical thinkers use 'right' in a variety of ways in their moral arguments. They speak of Right action, Right attitude, Right Opinion, Right Speech, Right Choice, Right Livelihood etc. Even its etymological meaning which means 'straight' (from Latin root Rectus) does not render any significant help.

'Do the right' is the commonest injunction whenever we sit to work under someone's guidance. What do we do when we receive this injunction? Let us consider the following two concrete examples : *A senior doctor enjoining his Junior 'Do the right' (in case of a serious patient) expects that he should put to use his entire medical knowledge. In other words he is expected to do his best.*

A charitable organization selecting needy candidates for its Educational Scholarships, does 'the right' by following the constitutional guidelines and doing the most befitting job.

Thus, whenever one does right he follows certain norms, he does his best and he does the most befitting. An action would become a right action if it conforms to the moral law and does the most appropriate job. 'Right' becomes the means for the realization of the 'good' it is always employed in connection with actions an action, if it follow the norms, fits a situation and is the best then it has the right to become the right action.

'Good' and 'Right' share a very close relationship. No action would be treated as good if nothing but had results only are expected of it. An action which brings good results, is in conformity with certain norms and is considered as the best possible attempt, can be assessed as right.

'Right' is also used in the sense of a justifiable claims on legal moral or social grounds, to have or obtain something or to act in a certain way. A right becomes a legal right if the court of law enforces it or it becomes a moral right if it lies beyond the scope of jurisprudence.

Right to property or right to seek education are legal rights of individuals whereas right of a child to have a fair deal from his parents and of the parents the right of filial obedience are moral rights.

A moral agent works for the 'common-good' of the society. He performs his duties, in turn the society sanctions him certain claims or entitlements. Rights of different members of the society are determined by keeping in view the General Good of the society. Some of those rights which render significant help to society in attaining its aims, are given legal and political sanctions and the rights are considered as legal or political rights. There are some more rights where authoritative forces of the society are unable to extend their sanction there they are classified as Social or Moral rights. '*Ten Commandants*' of the Christians are one of the earliest attempt of determining the fundamental human rights. Rights to freedom, Right to Property, Right to Education, and right to life etc., are some very fundamental rights which have been adopted by many nations as the '*Fundamental Rights*' of their citizens.

Morality depends on a sort of 'social contract' between the individual and society. Individual agree to perform certain actions (duties) thereby acquire certain rights. Duties and rights always go together.

### 3.3.3 Duty

Each society frames its own definite set of rules which its members must adhere to. Although man as '*moral agent*' does regard the rights of his fellow beings and contribute his share towards the common good yet the elders of the society, in order to ensure the good of all and welfare of the humanity assign determines some duties to its members. A duty may be defined ".....as the obligation of an individual to satisfy a claim made upon him by the community, or some other individual member of that community, in the name of the common good."<sup>1</sup>

We have already observed that 'duty' and 'right' always go together. If a right is a justifiable claim in a society, a duty is the obligation to fulfil that claim.

If I have got the right to recover my debts, I have got a duty to pay my debts also. If it is the duty of the parents to bring up their child, it is the duty of the grown up child to take good care of his elderly parents. Duties are the prescribed actions of a particular community. They are special and specific action and they are not just befitting actions but obligatory actions too. Two actions, could be right to realize an objective but duty would be the only right action at a particular moment and the only obligation one must fulfil. G.E. Moore in his *Principia Ethica clarifies* that Duties are such actions.....

- i) ..... which excite moral approval, or of which the omission excites moral disapproval.
- ii) ..... which a considerable number of individuals are strongly tempted to omit.
- iii) ..... of which the most obvious effects, commonly considered goods, are effects on other people.<sup>2</sup>

Kant's treatment of 'Duty' is very remarkable. The idea of adopting 'duty' as the central moral concept is attributed to him. He maintained that moral agents act either according to their own conviction or because they are morally obligated to do so. Those who follow the latter principle realize that, 'what is done from a sense of moral obligation is meritorious', Kant observed.

Duty, thus for Kant was the conscientious conduct of the moral agents. He held that only unqualified good is the 'good will' and that to have a good will is always to act from a sense of duty. Since duty involves the recognition of 'moral law' which normally runs counter to the dispositions and habits of moral agents, the law, the moral law has to be expressed as a categorical imperative. Every society perfects its own system of right and duties. We in India had a very comprehensive system of duties. Moral and religious duties were closely related to each other. Each person had to fulfil his self regarding duties, other regarding duties and duties to gods as well.

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1. Lillie, W. An Introduction to Ethics p. 263

2. Moore, Principia Ethica, p. 168

Manu's classification of duties of man is one of the earliest attempts at a systematic treatment of the subject in India. Manu maintains that man has to perform broadly two types of duties (Dharmas) : i) Relative Duties (Varnashramdharmas) i.e. duties pertaining to his position, status and age of life. These duties are further divided in to social duties of man which depend on the fourfold division of society (*Varnadharma*) and Individual duties which are derived from the four-stages of life (*Ashramdharma*), ii) Universal Duties (Sadharana Dharmas) duties which each one irrespective of his age, creed and caste ought to follow. Manu enumerates the following as Sadharanadharmas : *Steadfastness (Dhairya) forgiveness (Kshama) cleanliness (Sauche) leaning (Vidya) Restrstraint of Anger (Akrodha) Repression of sensuous desires (Indriya nigraha)* etc.

Indian tradition upholds that each individual (Jiva) is born with three debts. (Rinas) Debts towards sages (Rishi Rina) Debts towards Gods (Deva Rina) and Debts towards one's ancestors (Pitri Rina). One has to perform these duties also besides fulfilling one Varnasharmadharma and Sadharana dharmas.

Human beings, naturally shirk their duties, because it is not in line with their tendencies and inclinations, it is compulsive and sometimes an act of its omission would earn a great deal of social-wrath and firings. Then there are some situations where the conflict of duty can be seen where man is unable to make his choices. Many German professors working under Hitler were put in the agonizing position of having to decide whether their duty lay in the direction of the safety of their families or in speaking out against his barbarous injustice. Sartre talks of a young man torn between his duty to join the Army and serve his country or to fulfil his obligation to take care of his ailing mother. Although many moral philosophers will not even recognize such '*conflicts of duty*' problems, yet contemporary moralists have started realizing that there are 'moral problems of this kind.' In such a case, may be we can take recourse to another synonymous moral term 'moral obligation' which has relatively wider connotations.

### 3.3.4 Obligation

'*Obligation*' and 'Duty' are so closely related that sometimes we use them as synonyms. The term obligation has been derived from a latin root *Legal meaning* tied or bound with Ob as a prefix meaning 'towards' 'to' etc. Its dictionary meaning includes the following 'to bind morally or legally', 'to pledge, to commit' indebtedness etc. The language of moral obligation use words and phrases like 'law', 'necessary', 'a must', 'essential'. Some of these terms are used in the context of logical entailments and casual necessity also. But by doing so attempts are made to establish that moral obligation is like a logical or a casual necessity which is contrary to the very fundamentals of morality.

In our everyday world we often use such phrases "It is obligatory" "I would be obliged" "He felt obliged". Most of the times the term "obligation" is used in moral terms with a sense of compulsiveness and commitment." Actually we, as moral agents, are brought up in an environment where we have been conditioned to obey certain laws and principles. It is a part of this moral education that we suffer remorse when we disobey the rules and feel satisfied when we obey them.

Moral obligation, values, rights and duties always go together. When new rights and new values come into being, they bring new obligations. Sometimes a list of right is sufficient to conjecture the moral obligations. For example, "If the Employer has the right to extract maximum work from his employee it becomes obligatory for him to release the settled payment to his employee."

Like human rights, obligations are relative and functional", maintains Titus<sup>3</sup>. My right would be someone's obligation and someone's obligation would be some one else's right in case there is a conflict between the two then matter should be resolved keeping in mind the " ....greater values of human welfare."<sup>4</sup> These days we are talking about our collective obligations towards environment.

Normally all 'obligatory instances' indicate the lack of 'free choice' although they are voluntary. Like the bitter 'Quinine Pills, we voluntarily swallow them but with a strong distaste and a lack of freedom. Circumstances which oblige us are normally unusual and uncommon. A sort of compulsiveness and disinclination is most of the times associated with them.

Obligations or duties or the moral codes are framed in order to motivate the people to do what they normally do not gladly do but they ought to do. *Speaking the truth is a duty or keeping the promise* is an obligation only because people are in general, not inclined to speak the truth and not really willing to fulfil their promises. Although it appears that people who perform their duties act unwillingly but none the less they choose so. However, the choice may not be in tune with human capaciousness.

### 3.3.5 Virtue

Etymological meaning of 'Virtue' conveys the sense of an excellence of physical strength. However, 'Virtue' is more often used as an 'excellence of characters. We regard a person 'Virtuous' who performs good actions and fulfil his duties without any ulterior motive.

Virtues are, habitual organisation of impulses and desires around some aim of social welfare. They are always intended to produce the best possible results. Society assigns us a few responsibilities and duties and we are bound to fulfil them, if we fail we earn the wrath of the society and if we fulfil we are just being dutiful. Our disinclination and distaste in many cases is very obvious. Virtues, on the other hand are those 'good actions' which our society expects us to perform but does not assign them to us. If we perform these acts we are appreciated but if we do not or cannot we are neither punished nor condemned. We are simply motivated to adopt these 'would be duties' and not forced to adopt them. They are 'no man's duty' and any one can perform them if they he wishes so.

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3. Titus, Ethics for Today, New Delhi-1, p-220.

4. Loc.cit..

Virtues always possess some '*intrinsic-value*'. Something is considered to possess intrinsic value' if it is sought only for itself and it is desired for no other purpose than itself. Truth is cherished for its intrinsic value, that means we value truth for its truth and not for any other attribute, on the other hand *Money* does not have any intrinsic value. We wish to earn and retain money because it can 'buy' for us things which we desire-most. Money possess '*extrinsic value*' only because it earns its worth from outside.

Virtue is distinct from other excellences of character because of its '*Voluntariness*'. It is capable of being realized at will when an occasion arises. Unlike a duty, a virtue is neither binding nor its nonfulfilment earns social condemnation. Virtues are universalizable and look for higher aims than other excellences. Virtues vary according to the conduct, position, community, age, time and place of a moral agent. Each society frames its own set of virtues.

All traditional schools of Indian Philosophy regard the inculcation of the following virtues :

Non-injury (*Ahimsa*), Purity (*Shuacha*), Truth (*Satya*) Self control (*Atmavinigrha*), Humility (*Amanitva*), Absence of egoism (*Anahamakar*) Contentment (*Tushti*), Charity (*Dana*) Compassion (*Karuna*) love and Friendship (*Maitri*).

Greeks saw excellence of character in cultivating Wisdom, Justice, Courage and Temperance. For Plato these were four Cardinal Virtues. Aristotle advocated his principle of golden mean to select the mean of two extremes is to select a virtue. Courage is virtue which falls in between two extremes foolhardiness and *cowardiceness*, temperance is the mean of licentiousness and repression.

With the emergence of Christianity faith, hope and love were incorporated into the list of virtues. Medieval Philosophers added humanity, abnegation and self mortification to the list of virtues. Present day society regards industry, initiative, benevolence, economy as its virtues.

With the passage of time, Moral a steme of community become obstete, their ethos gets eroded necessitating a fresh review of moral system and selection of new virtues.

Contemporary society should give a serious thinking to this issue. Besides recognizing the age -- old traditional virtues should be made to cultivate new virtues like Peaceful co existence, cooperation, open-mindedness, initiative, thrift, willingness to accept responsibility etc.

Moral values, virtues, ethical notions of a community change, with the change of time. They are relative to .the aims and objectives a particular Community at a particular time. For those communities who are still fighting the alien rulers, Freedom and Courage would be highest values and virtues but for a third world country reeling under the impact



of famines, floods and depression, economy, Prudence would be the most sought after virtues.

Moral notions and ethical concepts do not carry a univocal meaning. Each age reads its own relevant meaning in them. Rules of Conduct, the meaning of 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'ought' change with the change in society. Each community has its own meaning of moral terms.

Are moral values absolute or relative? or Are all moral standards and values universal or just culture bound (applicable only to a particular culture only)? These questions are debatable issues and Ethics is all about these debatable issues.

### 3.4 Summary

This lesson gave you a background in which human beings use moral notions like good, virtue, duty and obligations. These moral notions and some other key notions like Beauty and Truth together give a complete value orientation to human life. Later you learnt that notions do not carry univocal meanings. Ethics is all about trying to explore the nature and meaning of these moral notions.

### 3.5 Glossary

**Beauty-** an aesthetic category, a combination of qualities such as shape, harmony, form which pleases aesthetic senses. It embodies work of art and yields feeling of aesthetic joy.

**Goodness-** a leading ethical category on which conduct of people is assessed, It is what a society approves and accepts to be worthy of imitation.

### 3.6 Further Readings

1. Titus. H, Harold, Keeton Moris (1973) Ethics for Today (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) New York: D Van Nostrand Company.
2. Lillie, William (1957) An Introduction to Ethics, London: Matheun
3. Mackenzie, J.S. (1956) A Manual of Ethics

### 3.7 Model Questions

1. Discuss the three key notions of Truth, Goodness and Beauty.
2. Write short notes on any two of the following :
  - a) What is Truth?
  - b) What is Virtue?
  - c) What is Beauty?

## DEVELOPMENT OF MORALITY

### Structure

- 4.0 Objectives
- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 The Evolution of Morality
  - 4.2.1 Levels of Morality
- 4.3 The level of Instinct or Instinctive Morality
- 4.4 The level of Custom or Customary Morality
  - 4.4.1 Means of enforcing customs
  - 4.4.2 Merits and Demerits of customs
- 4.5 The level of Statutory Law
- 4.6 The level of Reflection or Reflective Morality
- 4.7 Transition from Customary to Reflective Morality
- 4.8 Conclusion
- 4.9 Summary
- 4.10 Glossary
- 4.11 Further Readings
- 4.12 Model Questions

### 4.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand the idea of development of Morality.
- describe different levels of the development of Morality.
- have a critical estimate of the concepts of Customs and Reflection.

### 4.1 Introduction

To understand the real nature of Morality it is essential to study how it evolves in a society. In fact it also grows with the growth of consciousness of a particular society and this happens on a long term basis.

This lesson will give you an understanding of the four levels of the evolution of morality. At the level of instinct the morality of a society is directed by some basic and inherent needs. The levels of customary morality is a level of uniform standards of morality mostly fixed by customs of a society which hardly involve any reflection on the part of the members of a society. The level of Statutory law is an intermediate state where societies frame laws to enforce moral codes. The level of Reflective morality is the ideal ultimate stage of moral level. Here the standards of morality are chosen by an individual on the basis of one's own reflection.

## 4.2 The Evolution of Morality

For a clear understanding of the nature of morality it is essential to study the growth or evolution of morality. The study of the evolution of morality reveals that 'morality' is not something artificial or apart from the problem of living but as growing out of the conditions of life itself. It is the product of long period of development and of adaptation to changing environmental conditions. Its development is closely connected with general development of social life and social institutions. Conduct, like other aspects of human life, seems to have undergone a gradual process of development. Moral standards vary at different levels of morality through which society has been passing. This dynamic, progressive nature of morality can be grasped vividly if we trace the actual development of moral conduct and moral judgements. The moral standards of man depend upon the stage of social development, upon the level of intelligence, and upon the knowledge which is available at a time.

Before tracing the growth of conduct the meaning of the term '*conduct*' in Ethics must be specified. In loose sense, the term 'conduct' refers to 'all sorts of vital activities which are directed to an end'. But in Ethics by 'conduct' we mean a purposeful activity not merely directed to an end but as Kant puts it, directed by the idea of an end. Mackenzie would state that conduct refers to definitely-willed acts.

Although conduct in the above mentioned strict sense can be discovered in man at a very late stage of his development yet its germs can be found in the lower animals as well as in savages. Some of the rudimentary social virtues like self-sacrifice, sympathy, co-operation, loyalty, even courage and persistence may be observed in some of the animals. Mother bird collecting eatables for baby-bird, persistent attempt to build nest and loyalty in dogs are some such examples. However, the animals are not conscious or aware of the ends for which they strive. Most of the times they are guided by natural impulses and instincts. Among savages too the moral consciousness is in germ form. Their actions are primarily impulsive and exhibit no sign of forethought. But being members of a tribe, they are more guided by customary modes of behaviour. Their behaviour is determined by suggestion and imitation. The influence of custom continued to be immense even after man had risen above the stage of savagery.

Gradually a custom was enforced and turned into a positive law. Customary observances were made more definite and enforced as positive laws. Their violations

were severely punished. When positive laws were made and enforced people began to reflect. Laws often come into conflict with one another and with customs. So people were led to reflect on the principles (spirit) underlying the laws. When people started reflecting upon the spirit behind moral laws they superseded the level of customary morality and reached the level of reflection. Their actions were no longer governed by directions and imitation but by their own moral consciousness.

This leads to consider the distinction between 'moral ideas' and 'ideas about morality' made by Bosanquet. A person may be guided by moral ideas though he is not clearly conscious of the moral principles involved in them. In such case he is guided by moral ideas which are unreflective. When he reflects upon morality, he clearly defines an end and consciously strives for the achievement of it, he is guided by ideas about morality. Every idea can be analysed by the intellect and turned into an idea about morality, which is called by Mackenzie as an "*ethical idea*". Every *ethical idea* becomes a source of moral idea.

#### 4.2.1 Levels of Morality

The above account reveals four levels of morality.

1. **The Level of Instinct** : In which conduct is determined purely by the fundamental needs and instincts viz. innate tendencies.
2. **The Level of Custom** : In which the conduct is purely guided by the prevailing customs of the society.
3. **The Level of Statutory Law** : In which conduct is guided by definite rules of the society.
4. **The Level of Conscience or Reflection** : In which conduct is ruled by an individual's own judgment and reasoning.

An observation made by William Lillie is worth mentioning here. The distinction between these levels is logical. Because even in the most primitive societies we get examples where individual judgement provided the standard of rightness and wrongness and even in advanced societies in most of the matters even conscientious individual is likely to follow customs of his group without reflection. Detailed analysis of different levels of morality follows.

#### 4.3 The Level of Instinct

At this level the conduct of the agent is primarily determined by some basic needs or inherent urges. Researches in the realm of modern psychology have revealed that man like other animals have certain inherent tendencies (technically called instincts) which have a great propelling force in them. For example, very few people can resist the destructive force of anger if aroused by any situation. Same is true of instincts of sex, hunger, gregariousness (tendency to live in flock and herds), combat etc. The inherent force very often defies the control of reason over them. A life guided by such instincts,

without a control of reason, will represent the stage of instinct and the moral behaviour that will result thereby will represent the stage of instinctive morality.

Two apparently contradictory pictures have been given of primitive man: The French philosopher Rousseau held that the primitive life of man was a life of peace, harmony, goodwill and happiness. On the other hand, the English philosopher Hobbes held that man seeks only *'that which pleaseth him and is delightful to himself'*. He is selfish, brutish, egoistic and therefore, quarrelsome. Primitive people knew nothing about morality and lived in a condition where there was no place for industry, art and society.

Both these pictures of primitive human nature are one-sided. Modern psychologists have, of course, discovered some such instincts in man as instinct of pugnacity, self-assertion and acquisitiveness but at the same time there are some good tendencies like gregarious instinct, parental instinct, to feel sympathy with others which save man from such as depicted state as depicted by Hobbes. Rousseau, on the other hand, neglected the aggressive side of human nature altogether. It may be observed that a society entirely at the level of instinct may never have really existed in the human or in the animal world. What has been discussed above are the tendencies which must have been at work at some time or other during the earlier stage of development of human conduct. William Lillie suggests that the development of conduct in primitive society must have been taking in two directions. Firstly, it tended to become more social and co-operative. Man is social by nature. Instincts such as gregariousness, sex, imitateness, suggestibility and sympathy imply the existence of other people and having relations with them. Besides, man has many needs which he cannot meet by himself. For the gratification of his needs he requires the co-operation of other people and a social life. This leads to division of labour and specialisation. Secondly, conduct becomes more rational. Man tends to use his intelligence more and more in satisfying his needs. He invents various tools which assist him in various fields. This takes man towards a rational planning and management.

#### **4.4 The Level of Custom : or Customary Morality**

At this level only those actions are considered to be right which are approved by the social group to which an individual belongs. The primitive man identified himself with a group or tribe. Greater importance was given to tribe or group than the individual. Man's rights and responsibilities were fixed by the group of which he was a part. A wrong done by a member of a tribe is wrong for which the whole tribe is held responsible and a wrong done to a member of a tribes is a wrong for which all its members must avenge. Uniform ways of actions were approved by the group. These are called 'customs'.

At this level of morality good action is one which has 'always been done' and a bad action is one which is always avoided. What is custom in a group becomes habit in a man. Customary morality is instinctive in the herd or gregarious instinct and the innate tendencies of sympathy, imitateness and suggestibility, Group ways of action are instinctively followed by the members of the group. Suggestion and imitation work in

individuals. They are motivated by common sympathy, resentment and fear of punishment if the group customs are challenged. Besides instincts, customs arise out of needs of human life under specific conditions. Since most needs are common needs, there is considerable similarity among people living at any level of culture. Regulations grow up regarding the food supply, clothing, contact between sexes and social life in general. Some customs arise because of special incidents, historical accidents or peculiar conditions. For example, the custom of '*purda*' arose to protect beautiful Hindu girls from Muslim rulers. Sometimes customs arise from many religious or moral truths. For example we worship animals, natural forces and even plants as a part of our cultural ethos.

These customs are transmitted from one generation to another through elderly people, the priests, various religious and ethical thinkers. They are the guardian of these customs. Hence, customs acquire superhuman authority and continue to be followed by succeeding societies and over countries.

#### 4.4.1 Means of Enforcing Customs

Dewey and Tufts mention the following means of enforcing customs.

- a. **Public Opinion** : Public approval and disapproval, praise of some actions and blame of others; are the means of enforcing customs. Our natural tendencies of sympathy, imitativeness and suggestibility make us wish to do what our neighbours approved and to shun what our neighbours dislike. Press, T.V., Radio and the internet especially social media are some of the common means through which public opinion is expressed and formed. Everybody wants to be a respectable member of a society and he cannot be indifferent to the public opinion and perception. Hence, it becomes obligatory on the part of an individual to follow the approved mode of conduct.
- b. **Taboos** : Taboos are the negative guardians of the customs of a social group. The individual always has a fear that if he does something which is forbidden by custom, supernatural powers will inflict a punishment of illness, accident or even death upon him. Taboos are based on the dread of the unseen powers. Sometimes they are used with conscious purpose. In order to have adequate supply of ripe coconuts the headmen may place taboos upon green coconuts to prevent them from being consumed before they are quite ripe. Taboo is a powerful agency to compel respect for the authority of the group. It is a sad truth that despite the opening up of our society, dark forces still continue to inflict Taboos on us.
- c. **Religious Rituals**: This is a positive agent to enforce certain customary modes of behaviour in society. The authority behind the observance of religious ritual is supposed to be some divine powers. Rituals are observed on the occasion of birth, death, marriage or any religious ceremony. There are certain rituals associated with agricultural operations such as sowing

and harvesting of crops. The ritual often indicates that the group as a whole has an interest at stake in the life of the individual.

- d. **Physical Force** : The group is generally prepared to use physical force if an individual refuses to follow the traditional ways of living. The Head of the group does not hesitate in compelling people to be good. Customary morality demands rigid solidarity. Any deviation from the customary mode of conduct is severely reprehensible. It can even lead to isolation from the group by use of physical force.

#### 4.4.2 Merits and Demerits of Customs

- Customary morality provides uniform standards of morality. These standards may be having certain limitations but they have a sense of universality. They bind all the people in a social blend. These standards directed towards the welfare of the people. These are not arbitrary rather these have been proved useful by the collective experience of the group.
- Customary morality inculcates in the public the spirit of co-operation, sympathy and raises man above the level of such natural instincts as self-assertion, combat etc. it furnishes the raw material for morality and prepares for a higher moral life. Man, till he is mature, requires a guideline as to what is right and what is wrong which is provided by customary morality. But customary morality has certain limitations too.
- Customary morality leaves no scope for individual freedom. Right is 'What has always been done'. Customary morality is rooted into two motives, fear and resentment. Any deviation from the traditional ways of working will arouse severe resentment from the public. Thus it is out of fear that man obeys the moral law. Thus, morality is imposed from without i.e. due to social, political, religious fear and not from within.
- Customary morality is based on irrational grounds sometimes. It is true that some of customs are directed towards public welfare. But most of these customs have outlived their utility. William Lillie says that distinction is to be made between customs based on reasoning and experience and those of superstitions.
- Customary morality is too rigid and too stringent and therefore unprogressive. It does not take into consideration the individual circumstances. Besides, a slight error may be regarded as very serious and severe action may be taken against the doer in order to prevent other individuals. Thus, it uses man as a tool for the so-called social unity or harmony.
- Customary morality is unprogressive and ill-adapted to the needs of life and social conditions. Social conditions are always changing. Customary morality fails to keep pace with the rapid changes that are taking place in the world.

### Check Your Progress

1. What is evolution of Morality

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2. State the levels of Morality.

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

d. \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4.5 The Level of Statutory Law

As population increases and society becomes more complex, it is desirable that the simple customary observances be made more specific. Laws are then formulated, These laws may modify previous customs or may change them to some extent. Distinction between right and wrong is made more precise and a more definite condemnation is attached to the violation of that which is recognised as right. A standard of action is set up. Those who do not follow it are condemned. The law consists of those regulations which are laid down and enforced by the rulers or the government. When the law is clear and reasonable in its demands most persons demand it and support it. The law makes 'definition of the situation\*' and aims at making conduct uniform on the part of all members of society. In Democratic society, law tends to follow the growing moral consciousness and the opinion of the majority in the society.

In fact morality is not a matter of strict enforcement. Man is ought to be a moral agent, and he is injected to do good to others or atleast avoid causing harm to others. But on the contrary man has become so self-centred and societal interests does not concern him much. Indiscriminate violence, domestic violence, child abuse, cruelty to animals, terrorism, female infanticide, corruption, Rapes, Sexual Harassment, shoot outs in public places, Pollution, over exploitation of natural resources, social discrimination, marital violence and anti-national activities etc and many similar undesirable immortal tendencies and social practices leave states with no choice to institute specific strict laws to enforce strick compliance and observance of moral discipline. One may say that such enforcement of public morality will take out the very essence of morality - voluntarity, but the matter of the fact is states are more driven by their practical concerns and obligations to enforce strict law and order in the societies.



Under simple conditions there is not much of a moral conflict. In primitive societies each man's duty is comparatively obvious. There is little division of labour and the way in which the welfare of the tribe is to be promoted can seldom be doubtful. But when law is added to custom and when a man finds himself occupying different positions within his society (being for instance, at once father, soldier, judge, husband etc.), the right thing to do on a given occasion is not always apparent. Law may conflict with custom or one law with another. A man's duty as a father may conflict with his duty as a soldier, his duty as a judge may conflict with his religious obligations. Conflicts such as these led man to search for some principle or standard of judgement. This leads man towards reflection or appeal to conscience.

#### **4.6 Level of Conscience or Reflective Morality**

At the level of custom, even law, the authority and the moral life is outside the individual. He must do what is approved by his group. At the level of convenience the moral authority is inside the individual. It is the inner voice which directs him. Man is free to make choice of action. Conscience often forbids man to follow the customs of his group, but sometimes it does not and at this level the deciding factor is always what the man himself regards as right. Lillie mentions that transition from the level of custom to that of reflection takes place in three directions.

- (i) The standards of morality are chosen by the individual himself after great amount of deliberation. He makes a critical enquiry into the prevailing customs and discovers that some of the customs which are formerly useful are no longer useful rather detrimental to the welfare of the society. He discovers that customs vary greatly from one another in their importance. He also discovers that some customs are not justified by his own moral intelligence. So, he drops out the irrational customs which have outlived their utility and are not in tune with the present social conditions.
- (ii) There is a personal interest in morality. At the level of custom man is guided by the forces of limitation and suggestion and he unconsciously accepts group morality. But at the level of reflective morality appeal is more to individual's own opinions and beliefs, his own independence and interest against group standards, authority and interest.
- (iii) At the level of reflection man comes to understand what morality is. He is able to distinguish morality from superstitions to separate the spheres of ethics and politics. Morality is not imposed from without but from within.

#### **4.7 Transition from Customary to Reflective Morality**

At the level of custom there is no room for progress or development as observed earlier: Customary morality is stagnant and ill-adapted to the changing social conditions. Moral advance or moral reflection arises out of two types of conflicts.

- (i) The conflict between group welfare and the private interests of the individual, and
- (ii) The conflict between order and progress, habit and critical reflection.

The social and individual both are rooted in human nature. The individual unconsciously identified himself with the group, shares common emotions and acts in accordance with custom. And yet he has self-assertive impulses and desires and revolts against group and asserts his independence. Thus the collision between group authority and the individual independence and the collision between social order and individual progress bring about many changes in morality and prepare the ways for reflective personal morality.

William Lillie states that in man there are two opposing tendencies viz., 'hormic' and 'mnemic' the tendency to be always seeking something new and the tendency to cling firmly to the old. The mnemic tendency by itself favours the continuance of the level of custom and the hormic tendency may lead to adopt new ways of conduct. It is the struggle between the two tendencies within the individual which arouses in him individual reflection and so raises him from the level of custom to that of conscience. Following are the factors responsible for transition from customary to reflective morality.

**i. Economic Factors :** Complexity and variety in the needs of the people led to mobilization and growth of various economic forces which are responsible for disruption of group life of Joint family and the rise of individual morality. The needs of the primitive men were simple so long as they lived by hunting, fishing and small scale agricultural operations. But with the advance of agriculture, industry, commerce they became more conscious of individual ownership. Competition in all these fields increased which required the use of intelligence, skill, shrewdness, efficiency and labour. There was a competition between individual and individual. This individualistic trend led to the demolishing of customary modes of life and the growth of reflective morality.

**ii. Progress of Knowledge, Media, Science and Arts :** Progress in knowledge, media, science and art does not simply means progress in materialistic tools but it also means progress in outlook. Critical and rational outlook makes man question the irrational grounds of customs. Certain rituals and religious ceremonies based on superstitions are discarded. Scientific knowledge regarding natural phenomena such as disease, floods, pestilences makes man disbelieve the supernatural agencies. This gives severe blow to customary morality which requires blind obedience and faith, 'thus reflection or critical outlook creeps into the field of morality.

**iii. Religious Forces :** A new religion disintegrates group morality and is conducive to the development of reflective morality. New religion brings a new conception of morality. judaism emphasized outward conformity to external law. Christianity emphasized purity of inner-motives and intentions. In India rise of Buddhism questioned many customs of moral life advocated by Hinduism. Rise of various religions and conflicts among them leads man to think of relative merits and demerits of different

religions and hence reflection. Thus religion also is one of the powerful forces of morality.

**iv. Psychological Forces** : Sex-instinct, desire for private property, struggles for liberty and mastery, desire for honour and social esteem are the individualizing tendencies. In the primitive society the individual was largely submerged in the social group. One step in human progress was emancipation of the individual from group control and his consciousness of his dignity and respect as a free, creative personality. Man has certain latent qualities and reflection. While animals can form percepts man can form concepts. The power of reason enables man to distinguish between truth and falsity and to make comparisons. Besides, man has the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. The power of ethical discrimination means that he is responsible for his deeds. Further, man is not only conscious but self-conscious. He is the judge of his own deeds a 'moral connoisseur'.

**v. Military Forces** : The group can preserve its customs and traditions so long as there is unity and peace in it. When there is conflict between groups this would require some higher organization. Higher organization needs leadership. Leadership in the hand of one man which is in collision with the group morality. This becomes a potent factor in the breakdown of group morality.

Thus the sociological agencies such as economic forces, progress of science and art, military forces, a new departure in religion globalization, immigration, urbanisation, new media and the psychological agencies are responsible for the breakdown of customary morality and ushering of reflective morality.

#### **Check Your Progress**

1. State some means of enforcing Customs.

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2. Give your understanding as to how a moral agent shifts from **Customary Morality** to **Reflective Morality**.

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#### **4.8 Conclusion**

Despite the fact that the young generation today has become quite independent minded but morality, even today, is primarily a matter of custom. Even the most reflective persons follow traditional code of conduct. Reflection is needed only when a person finds some inconsistency in the standards of his group. It is a social gain that most of men should abide by the standards of group without question, otherwise there

will be a lack of stability in the morals of a community. Many of the standards which prevail at the level of custom must have originated in the reflections of some individuals in the past. Customary morality provides a schematism, a framework or a guideline to an individual till he is mature enough to discriminate between right and wrong. 20th century philosophers (particularly the existentialists) leave no-scope for ready-made moral norms rather they make individual to be the best Judge. It may be argued that some guideline is to be needed in the beginning; that guideline too is the reflection of some experienced individuals. Customary morality gives the content to reflect upon. Synthesis of the old and new is needed. One retains what is consistent in old values and can easily drop out what is contradictory and not in tune with the present circumstances, and new values can be formulated wherever needed. This would make morality dynamic in character.

#### 4.9 Summary

This lesson gave you a clear understanding of how societies morally grow from the basic level of instinct to the ultimate level of Reflective morality. You must have learnt that the level of instinct is determined by innate tendencies. The level of custom, called customary morality is driven by the prevailing customs of a society, fixed and also made to follow by society itself. After that you learnt that at the level of Statutory law a society is guided by laws and rules enacted by society itself. The Final stage is reached when the individual takes the final decision on the basis of one's own reflection, discrimination and judgement. The Final Stage is called Reflective Morality.

#### 4.10 Glossary

**Instinctive Morality-** a form of morality that is based on some basic needs or inherent urges or instincts

**Customary Morality-** a form of Morality where it is based on a set of customs and traditions of a particular society which are accepted without reflection.

**Reflective Morality-**an evolved form of morality where the agent acts on one's own notions of right, wrong, good or bad arrived at after self reflection.

#### 4.11 Further Readings

1. Titus. H., Harold, Keeton Moris (1973) Ethics for Today (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) New York: D Van Nastrand Company.
2. Lillie William (1957) An Introduction to Ethics, London: Matheun
3. Mackenzie J.S (1956) A Manual of Ethics

#### 4.12 Model Questions

1. Discuss the levels of Instinctive and Customary Morality.
2. What is Reflective Morality? How it is different from Customary Morality?

## **OBJECT OF MORAL JUDGEMENT : ACTION, INTENTIONS, SITUATION AND CHARACTER**

### **Structure**

- 5.0 Objectives
- 5.1 Introduction
- 5.2 Moral Judgement
- 5.3 Object of Moral Judgement
- 5.4 Character
- 5.5 Actions
- 5.6 Intentions
- 5.7 Situations
- 5.8 Summary
- 5.9 Glossary
- 5.10 Further Readings
- 5.11 Model Questions
- 5.12 Answers to check your progress

### **5.0 Objectives**

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand the concept of Moral Judgement.
- estimate what could be the best object of Moral Judgement.
- evaluate Actions, Intentions, Situations and Character as objects of Moral Judgement.

### **5.1 Introduction**

Moral judgements and judgements through which actions are evaluated as good or bad on account of some object. These objects could be a fact, a circumstance, a motive, an intention or the character of the moral agent. A moral judgement can be formed as the object of the character of the Moral agents. Even an Action could object of moral judgement. Even those actions can further be evaluated on the basis of the intentions of those Action. In a way moral judgements would not consider the

consequences but the intention of the actions. Finally the objects of moral judgements could be situations. There could be some unavoidable situations which could limit or influence our moral choices. But you will learn that situations are only conditional factors in making a choice or a judgement. Moral Judgements, we must know that they are steps towards one's self improvements.

## 5.2 Moral Judgement

Moral judgement is a kind of value judgement which finds expression in evaluation of actions which constitute human conduct. The term moral judgement is often used in a very loose sense by being identified with value judgement which has a wider connotation. An action, a person or a thing may be valued for different purposes other than moral purpose. All value judgements cannot be reduced to moral judgements, for instance, valuing by grading fruits as good or bad, or assessing an instrument or a painting good or bad, is certainly not to make a moral judgement : however, they are value judgements. Approving of something for its functional value or taste is not necessarily to make a moral judgement, for moral judgement is specifically made to evaluate human conduct. All that is valued, as a matter of sociological or psychological sense, is not necessarily moral. Because of the vagueness of terms value and moral, that one is constantly tempted to step into the error of supposing that what one morally ought to do is either apprehensible in terms of 'what society approves of' or 'what we feel like doing'. The judgement in either of these two senses is a value judgement but not a moral judgement. A moral judgement, that such an action is morally *right/wrong* or *ought/ought* not be done, is an evaluation of the action in the light of principles universally applicable.

All ethical terms irrespective of their differences function judgementally, in virtue of which they have a similar status. *A judgement is a decision or conclusion reached after deliberation and consideration of facts circumstances motive intentions etc.* Man is bound, to act for this sustenance, and in this course of action he is to discharge obligations towards the environment his family, his society and his fellow beings. He finds himself indebted to natural surroundings and is subject to the execution of acts to the good of humanity as a whole. A moral agent is an autonomous-responsible person. Stimulus – response theory cannot structure human actions. There are various alternative ways, under consideration of the person, to act in a rational manner. A moral agent judges the best course of action after deliberating about the means to the end in view. A moral judgement is made by a rational person. A person is one who is able to judge the rightness and wrongness of an action in relation to others besides himself, situations under which actions take place and the reasons for which they are performed.

Moral judgement is not purely a logical or an arbitrary decision or conclusion. Moral actions cannot be reduced to a casual explanation or mechanical articulation of human relations. Moral judgements have to be consistent and acknowledge by all rational beings. Ethics studies the problems like ethical reasoning cogently. We are not only expected to know why people behave the way they behave, the causes of their

behaviour but with the sort of conduct they ought to hold; and how it is possible for us to reason cogently about moral questions like, "Why should we lead a moral life?' and, what way a person ought to act?" Moral judgement should, also be distinguished from guesses conjectures, hypothesis, assumptions, suppositions which are verbal pictures of imagination, because they lack universal ability and rationality. Certitude of moral judgements cannot be ascertained as true or false like scientific judgements. Nor they are just reactions or spontaneous responses. Moral judgements are not emotive responses or expressions of emotions. Moral judgements do not affirm or deny rather they condemn or command. The nature of moral judgement is not subjective; for self-love, sympathy and personal gains cannot be given objective status they cannot be the criterion to judge and evaluate moral actions.

### **5.3 Object of Moral Judgement**

Moral judgements are contextual and refer to relation between man and man. Moral issues have relevance only when they are evaluated in terms of situations to be affected human beings, intention of the agent and so on. Human conduct is subject to commendation and condemnation on the basis of principles deliberated about by the autonomous agent, and possible consequences that may follow the action in the give in situations. Social conduct is the earliest basis of moral judgement. Human conduct is the sum-total of voluntary actions that a person deoes while being a member of an institution. The agent as such wills, conscientiously decides and-acts in a particular context. When a person makes a deliberate choice he commits himself to that and prepares himself to face the result by keeping it open for judgement. Moral judgement is specific and objective in nature because of rationality. A moral judgement is a reflection and decision regarding moral principles which are used as reasons to evaluate rightness or wrongness of actual and possible actions. Moral judgement is an activity to judge. "Why ought I do to this rather than other alternatives?" Decision regarding principle is subject to specific situations persons, objects or events. Thus, moral judgements are different from assertive judgements. The elucidation of principles is the task of moral philosophy, in the light of which we judge-that our duty is to do **X** rather than **Y**. Even legal and social systems are based on the morally sound principles. The problem of obligation is common to morals, law and politics, however, they appear in different context and are dealt with differently.

Moral judgement brings out the moral quality latent in the actual or possible alternatives of action. Some basic factors, may be pronounced to understand moral judgement in the absence of which it is not cogent and intelligible to judge actions, as follow -

- (1) An agent and his character.
- (2) Action-as the objects of moral judgement.
- (3) Intention or decision regarding principle whereby the goodness or badness of an action is judged.

- (4) Situations which provide the agent with justifying reasons to judge the action.

Let us understand these facts with clarity.

#### **5.4 Character**

The agency can be explained in the light of action and character of an individual. An agent is the person who decides regarding principles and works out his decisions in action as per the requirement of occasion. The agent is judged as good or bad for the way he does his actions, that is, the character that he holds. The very act of decision is to judge the rightness of the action in advance by calculating the situations and the consequences which might take place if the action is performed according to decision. The character of an individual is determined by acquiring certain dispositions by conscious effort. The agent must be free, conscious of what he is supposed to do, and should will the action. Action that a person performs so and his character are complimentary to each other. The character of an agent is the expression given to the dispositions that he acquires voluntarily, consciously and willingly. An agent or the doer is held responsible for what he does. Moral judgement is concerned with goodness or Badness of actions which constitute human character. Human character is constituted of habituated actions. We get accustomed to perform actions in the like manner time and again on several occasions. As such the character of an individual is conventional and customary. The doer finds himself as a part of a system, and along with the enhancement of his interest he also looks forward to the good of society as a whole. His character is the outcome of practical reasoning within the system. In view of customary morality the character of an individual is judged to be good or bad in the light of social goodness. But such a picture of human conduct is partial; for the character of an individual is determined not only by society but by his own will and psyche also i.e. the way he feels, desires, wills and acts. Indisputably man is a social being but besides this he is a willing, feeling and rational being too. Man is capable of training his feelings while interacting with others and thus his character is marked out. Sociological, psychological and rational factors work together in shaping the character of an individual. The implication is that the moral judgement is formed on the basis of what he thinks, feels and what he intends to do under specific sort of situations. The character of an individual is not determined just by chance or casual laws of nature. Moral character is not realized in a wish or imaginative goal, which cannot be achieved. "What ought to be done" is always apprehensive of "what can be done". Moral Character is not merely the outcome of our desirous objectives. Man cannot grow to his full potential in isolation from others. His character, therefore, is conditional to some extent. While judging actions he should be conscious of what he is judging and under what limitations. He finds himself surrounded by situations which affect his decisions; his actions and decisions are limited by his own nature and frame work of mind and that of others. While encountering and coping with the situations and others, he acts freely and thus his character is formed. Human character is the unity of conflicting virtues and thus is subject to value judgements; and in the light of which man judges his or other's actions as well.



## 5.5 Actions

Human character is a sequence of particular acts done in the situations voluntarily and willfully. Right or wrong actions can be done knowingly and voluntarily or impulsively. Deliberately done actions are right or wrong so long as they originate in the agent himself : e.g. actions consciously inspired by anger or desire are equally typical of human beings and can be an object of judgement. Morally good action implies calculation of an action in appropriate measure of right occasion, right person, right time, right way etc.; failing which it may be judged to be wrong. Involuntary action is one which does not originate in the agent himself, i.e., if a man is compelled to act in a certain way which he could not control or decide to do otherwise, or if his action is done in ignorance, then the agent cannot be blamed or praised for his action. Therefore, moral judgement presupposes human conduct based on conscious, free and willed actions. Moral actions, worthy of judgement, are voluntary and deliberately chosen by the agent. Moral judgement implies actions intended by the agent in the given situations. To human mind in the given situations, there are various alternative courses of actions in the light of their calculated consequences which might follow after their performance, moral standards, inclinations etc. All these factors often complicate moral issues while judging them. Some actions may be judged to be good or bad following certain consequences they bring about, whereas on other cases they may be judged to be good or bad because they are done for the sake of duty or a principle irrespective of their consequences.

The actions which are the object of judgement may be most specific but universal in nature. It is for the sort of actions and in the way we perform them, that we are accountable and not for the circumstances under which they are done. Actions are not caused rather they are rational determinants of human character and are rule-governed. Morality is self-imposed, however, the nature of moral action is contextual, but it is not subjective. Any recommendation and suggestion cannot become a rule unless it could be justified and justification has to be rational and acceptable to other rational beings as well. An action done in respect to such a rule is capable of judgement. There are some actions which are necessarily bad under all circumstances, for example, adultery. They are simply bad. There is a controversy over the issue that what should be the criterion of judging an action's rightness or wrongness. It is the intention or motive, emotion or reason? Whether the action which is done with an intention to bring about certain desired consequences good or when it is done with a good will. It becomes difficult to discard one, or base our judgement either on the intended consequences or on the will.

## 5.6 Intentions

We cannot judge an action as good or bad on its face value, as we are required to know the reasons for which it is done. It is argued that the object of moral judgement to human conduct and conduct must refer to the agent's attitudes and attitudes must include his motives besides what he intends to bring about as a result. Some argue that only intention is the object of moral judgement which is reflected in the consequences of the action, goodness of an action is the result of the goodness of the intention. On the

other hand, a motive, e.g. good will may produce a good action (e.g. when the action is done for the sake of duty) but may not necessarily produce good results or intended results in such cases, howsoever, may be the result of an action if it is done for the sake of duty then it is necessarily good. A moral judgement is not made necessarily in terms of consequences of an action but with the motive of the agent too. It is not the case that all actions are either right or wrong rather they are judged to be so because the agent motivated the action to take place in certain manner. We may refer to Immanuel Kant's well known statement that there is nothing in the world or out of it that can be called good without qualification except good will (you will study Kant's concept of Goodwill in Lesson No. 7). The will and what one wants or desires to do are the motives. Wants and desires are necessarily result oriented and have an impelling force in man which may be without any moral import. But good will is the motive that a rational being puts into practice by sound understanding of moral law. To have an intention, on the other hand, is to deliberate about the means to attain a goal. It is primarily concerned with the consequences which make an action good or bad. A good motive, though it produces a good action, need not produce good results always, i.e., we judge an agent good or bad for his motive, e.g. if someone gives money to a beggar, to satisfy his hunger, which the beggar spends to satisfy his lust for alcohol, will certainly result in badness. The motive of the agent is good he is helping a person in need. In another case, if a person gives money to a poor person in order to be honoured by others in the society or to rid himself of black money then his action cannot be called good because of his bad motive, howsoever, the person in need might spend the money in noble acts and bring goodness to the society. Motives are the effecting causes to certain objects or activities, e.g. duty as an effecting cause of right action, i.e. an action is right because it is done for the sake of duty or will which motivates a person to act.

The utilitarians emphasize the fact that a man is responsible not only for the motives or desires but also for the means and results that follow the action. They contend that the notion of responsibility is more closely to intention than motive while judging an action. An intention is good if it normally leads to a good action. The proof of a man's intention is his character that he has shown through his actions. Commonly it is believed that the goodness of an action lies in the intention to bring about desired results. On the other hand, a good motive, e.g. good will, might produce most good actions but may not produce most desired actions or results. Various causes make a result possible of which the will of the agent is only one. It is rather difficult to generalize the fact that whether the goodness of an action is rooted in the consequences that the action bears or the motive with which it is done. Both the views, that the actions are to be done either for intentions or motives of the agent are exclusive of each other, may not give a complete account of moral judgement. What motivates us to act is an end to be attained by making a deliberate choice of means. Task of ethics is not to provide a fixed pattern of actions which a man must perform mechanically and necessarily, however, situational limits do not let the decisions cross its boundaries.

## 5.7 Situations

We have argued that the possibility of various alternative courses of actions call for choices. Unlike animals, man is not restricted to fixed responses to the given situation : however, situations cannot be neglected either. The unavoidable situations limit our decisions regarding principles and judgements. The content of moral judgement is not situations, although we perform actions in situation. It is only in these situations that we are required to choose between alternative courses of action. The circumstances can never be held responsible, blameworthy or praiseworthy, rather, it is the agent who chooses and acts under these circumstances, is held responsible. It is for our way of life and attitudes that we are accountable. We might have been brought up in particular situations and particular group of people and. have acquired dispositions of certain sort, out ultimately we are praised or blamed for our actions. Of course, the acquisition of our particular sort of attitudes may be explained by the circumstances in which we are brought up and the persons who have affected our upbringing, but they in no way can help in explaining our moral beliefs. Moral judgements cannot be reduced to the conditions and situations in which they are made. Situation is a conditional factor in making a choice and judgement. Doubtless we can never escape all irrationalities but that does not imply that we are never free to act or all our actions are caused. Situations are the necessary conditions but not the efficient ones. Actions originate in the agent, the doer. Agent is the efficient cause of his actions and therefore, is responsible for what he does.

## 5.8 Summary

Moral judgement presupposes full awareness of the relevant circumstances in advance and the result that might follow. However, relevant circumstances and the result cannot be fully exhausted. It is only because of the changing nature of situations that there is always a flexibility and openness in moral judgements. The non-spelled circumstance may keep on giving new perspectives to decide. Thus Moral Judgement presuppose knowledge of the relevant situations which are prevailing and also of those which may prevail in the coming future. Moral judgements rest upon experience and maturity of mind. However, Moral judgements do not refer to stereotypes only, but primarily to spontaneity and deliberations. They are concerned with human nature, the agent, his deliberations and decisions regarding principles and analysis of the situations and consequences. Moral judgements are the non-mechanical articulation of human relations and are to be recognized as consistent, rational, plausible and universalizable. Moral judgements are nothing but constitutive of man himself and man himself is nothing but a judge and constitutive of values. Moral values are prescriptive in nature for which we have to make decisions and intend to do something in the given situations. Moral judgements are a step towards our individual and autonomous self-improvement.

**Pause and Reflect**

Imagine a situation that a very close friend/relative of yours has done something which resulted in harming you. On what you will form a judgment regarding his/ her act. Reflect deeply considering all the possible factors which might have influenced his/her decision to act the way he/ she did.

**Check your Progress**

Fill in the blanks

1. A Moral judgment evaluates our \_\_\_\_\_
2. An agent is the \_\_\_\_\_ cause of his actions.
3. Mention four objects of moral judgment
  - i) \_\_\_\_\_
  - ii) \_\_\_\_\_
  - iii) \_\_\_\_\_
  - iv) \_\_\_\_\_

**5.9 Glossary**

**Moral Judgement** – it is the mental act of assessing an action to be right or wrong, or good or bad on moral grounds.

**Character** – consists of a set of enduring moral attributes of persons.

**5.10 Further Readings**

1. Titus. H. Harold, Keeton Moris (1973) Ethics for Today (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) New York: D Van Nast and Company.
2. Lillie William (1957) An Introduction to Ethics, London: Matheun
3. Sinha Jadunath (2004) A Manual of Ethics, Kolkata, New Central Book Agency.

**5.11 Model Questions**

1. What is a Moral Judgment? Discuss character and intention as the object of Moral Judgment.
2. Discuss any three objects of Moral Judgement?\

**5.12 Answers to Check your progress**

- 1) Conduct
- 2) efficient
- 3) i. Character      ii. Actions      iii. Intentions      iv. Situations

# VIRTUE ETHICS: ARISTOTLE

## Structure

- 6.0 Objectives
- 6.1 Introduction
- 6.2 Aristotle
- 6.3 Virtue Ethics
- 6.4 Aristotelian ethics
- 6.5 The Soul and its functions
- 6.6 The Doctrine of Mean
- 6.7 Critical appraisal of the Doctrine of Mean
- 6.8 The Virtues
  - 6.8.1 Courage
  - 6.8.2 Temperance
  - 6.8.3 Justice
- 6.9 Intellectual Virtues
  - 6.9.1 Practical Wisdom
  - 6.9.2 Philosophic Wisdom
- 6.10 Summary
- 6.11 Glossary
- 6.12 Further Readings
- 6.13 Model Questions

## 6.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand the concept of Aristotlian Virtue ethics.
- explain the doctrine of mean.
- have a critical estimate of Aristotle's Virtues.

## 6.1 Introduction

The lesson begins by giving you an introductory account of Aristotle who was not just an eminent philosopher, he was also known for propounding a profound ethics.

Aristotle though offers a teleological ethics but his ethics is also called virtue ethics which takes a character building approach to morality and instructs humans to acquire virtue by observing strict practice. The lesson will introduce you to Soul and its functions and in this context. We will understand Aristotle's famous doctrine of the Mean. This doctrine makes us learn the importance of avoiding extremes and adopting moderation is life which in fact also lead us to virtues. We will also see some cardinal virtues like Courage, Temperance, Justice and Intellectual Virtues like Practical wisdom and Philosophic wisdom.

## 6.2 Aristotle

After serving as tutor to Alexander, Aristotle came back to Athens and hired some buildings to open his world renowned institution *Lyceum*. Each morning, he used to deliver lectures on abstruse issues to his pupils in this institution, while in the evening, he discussed issues which generally concerned the masses. It is in this latter group he discussed certain moral issues which have been brought out under the name of '*Nichomachian Ethics*'. He considered "the good for man" to be the aim of mankind and morality. According to him it consists in performing certain acts which brings us nearer to our goal. However the first questions which occur to us are "What is the good of our life?" and "Which science deals with it?"

## 6.3 Virtue Ethics

The good for man is happiness and Ethics is the subject which deals with it. Happiness is an activity of soul in accordance with virtue and the best and most perfect in the complete human life. Unlike Plato, Aristotle was not chasing Utopian ideals, as he was down to earth practical and adept in making practical suggestions. Good, for him, was a realization under all circumstances.

## 6.4 Aristotelian ethics

Aristotle's Ethics is undeniably teleological\*\*. According to Aristotle morality consists in performing certain acts, not because we recognize them as right in themselves, but because we see that will bring us nearer to our end or goal or purpose viz., "The good for man" which according to Aristotle is happiness. Aristotle was an empiricist by temperament and was more interested in actual details of life than in abstract principles. He, therefore, developed his ethical doctrine and his conception of virtue not on the basis of a description of an ideal community, as Plato did in his 'The Republic' but on the basis of an extensive study of the various aspects of the virtuous life as he found in the Greek society of his times.

The problem of ethics according to Aristotle, was to discover the nature of the end at which men ought to aim. But for Aristotle the ends that men ought to aim at are

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\* Nichomachian, son of Aristotle had edited this book, hence the name.

\*\* Teleological ethics talks of purposes, ends, goals and justifies ethical values by reference to these ones/purposes.

not different from the ends that men actually do aim at. And he held that the single end which all men pursue is *eudaemonia*. The Greek word "*eudaemonia*" is usually translated as "happiness" because that is the nearest equivalent in English language. This, however, is misleading, for Aristotle made it quite clear that *eudaemonia* is not just a state of feeling but a certain kind of activity which is accompanied by a feeling of happiness. According to Aristotle *Eudaemonia* consisted in the fulfilment of one's function. What Aristotle is probably suggesting is that *Eudaemonia* is not to be identified with enjoyment of external goods and chance pleasures, but it consists in the satisfaction of having performed one's functions well. According to him true happiness comes only from living a good life, and doing one's duty well. And, therefore, the problems of discovering the nature of *eudaemonia* and finding happiness boils down to the problem of discovering what one's function is. Aristotle also described *eudaemonia* as exercise of a man's soul in accordance with his virtue, Aristotle, like Plato, defines, virtue in terms of functions. Virtue stood for "fitness" for Aristotle, which meant the proper functioning of a thing. Accordingly a man who performs his function in society is a virtuous man as he alone will experience true happiness. This brought Aristotle to examine the nature of the human soul and its characteristic functions and virtues.

## **6.5 The Soul and its functions**

The soul, according to Aristotle, has a rational part and an irrational part. The irrational elements in human nature oppose the rational elements but, in a man, who is capable of exercising self control and moderation, even the irrational appetitive elements of the soul listens to and obeys the rational parts. Corresponding to this distinction between the appetitive, desiring element and the rational element in the soul, virtue also is distinguished by Aristotle into two kinds, namely, the moral virtues which are concerned with the rational control of desires, and intellectual virtues which are concerned with knowledge.

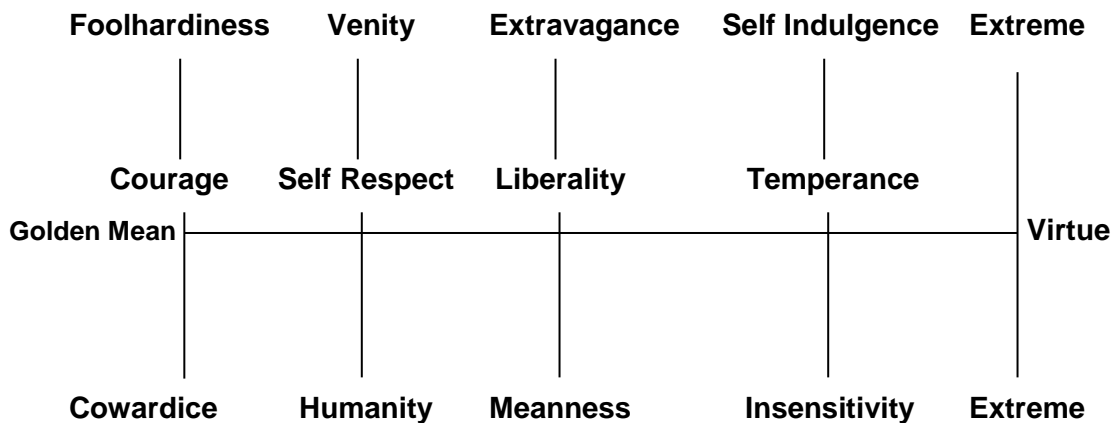
The intellectual virtues according to Aristotle, are products of education and experience, while moral virtues; he tells us, come about as a result of our habit. Moral life, in other words is a matter of forming good habits. However, by habit, Aristotle did not mean mere blind obedience to customs. Habits which have a moral significance are habits of deliberate choice based on an understanding of the distinction between right and wrong. Virtuous actions must therefore, be based on knowledge. Actions done from ignorance or from unthinking obedience to custom may produce good results but they cannot be judged as virtuous because they are not chosen deliberately. A virtuous action in other words must be the result of free and deliberate choice based on an understanding of circumstances and consequences. Moreover virtue, according to Aristotle, is to be judged in a complete life, for virtue practiced occasionally or for a short time does not make one virtuous. The action chosen must proceed from a firm and unchangeable character. Hence Aristotle's emphasis is on the forming of good habits. Thus an occasional act of courage does not make one courageous. But when the choice

of what is right, in the face of pain, becomes habitual and enters into one's character, it is rightly called the virtue of courage. And so with other virtues.

## 6.6 The Doctrine of the Mean

Before discussing specific virtues, Aristotle pointed out that no precise account could be given of what specific actions are virtuous. No rules to guide us in choosing how to act virtuously can be laid down. The decision depends on perception of individual circumstances. As Aristotle explained, matter concerned with conduct and questions of what is good for us have no fixity, any more than matters of health. Just as the suitability of a medicine depends upon the individual and his clinical history and his circumstances. So also virtue is relative to the individual, his social background, and circumstances in which he has to act. Thus, Aristotle pointed out, the courage which is required of a statesman is not the same as the courage we expect from a soldier. Taking risks is a virtue of a soldier, but not of a statesman. The courage required of a soldier is nearer to rashness than the courage required of a statesmen. Similarly, liberality is a virtue, but if I give money to a person who does not deserve it, or when I do not have sufficient funds even for the basic needs of my own family, then giving charity is not a virtue. And this, Aristotle believed, is typical of all moral situations.

However, all moral virtues have one thing in common they all involve following a mean course between two extremes which are vices. A courageous action, for example, is a mean between the two extremes of timidity and recklessness; a generous action, between those of meanness and extravagance; while due modesty is a mean between grovelling humility and over-weening arrogance. A mean, however, is not an exact midpoint between the extremes. Its precise position relative to the extremes will vary, as we have seen, with the individual and his circumstances and must be determined after rational evaluation of the specific situation. Aristotle therefore, defines virtues as a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, that is the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, and by that the principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it.





What Aristotle is emphasizing through his doctrine of the mean is that our passions and emotions are not bad in themselves, they become evil only when they become excessive and so overpower the individual that he forgets his own good. Thus, fear or confidence, anger or pity, pleasure or pain, are all natural emotions and to feel them at the right time with reference to the right objects, towards the right people, with the right motive, and in the right measure is both a mean and the best says Aristotle. It is only the extremes of these emotions that are evil.

The doctrine of the mean, Aristotle pointed out, applied only to the moral virtues which are concerned with passions and desires and in which there is scope for excess or extreme deficiency which are both evil. According to Aristotle the doctrine of the mean did not apply to intellectual virtues because there cannot be such a thing as too much of wisdom or too much of knowledge. Moreover, every passion, and every action arising there from does not admit of a virtuous mean. Certain passions such as jealousy and shamelessness, and action like adultery and stealing, and murder are bad absolutely. We cannot say that a little shamelessness or a little jealousy is good or that a moderate amount of thieving or occasional adultery is desirable.

## **6.7 Critical appraisal of the Doctrine of Mean**

In propounding the doctrine of the mean, Aristotle did not create a novel theory of virtue. He has simply taken over the old Greek notion of moderation or temperance and developed it into his **doctrine of the mean**. In fact, the truth of Aristotle's doctrine is a part of the popular folklore all over the world and finds expression in such statements as "Nothing is too much", "Wisdom consists in knowing where to stop", and their equivalent expressions in different languages. C.E.M. Joad also points out that, the doctrine constantly recurs in one form or another in the writings of ethical philosophers of all ages and peoples and figures prominently in Chinese philosophy. In India also the doctrine of the mean has always been accepted and practised by virtuous men under the name of (Sanyama). Gautama Buddha also recommended avoidance of both extremes of total self denial or asceticism and over indulgence. He also and regarded virtuous life as the life of moderation. We hope you still remember his middle path.

Incidentally, Aristotle's own ethical theory may be described as a mean between the extreme positions of Plato and the Sophists. Plato held that the good is something permanent, unchanging, to be sought by all men alike. The Sophists held that there is no objective good or right at all, Aristotle maintained that although there is no universal good and that although goodness or rightness of actions is relative to the individual and his circumstances, nevertheless, the virtue for each individual is to be determined not by one's personal whims but by reason and by the consensus of wise men. If fact, like Plato, Aristotle also believed that in all matters of conduct the ordinary individual should be guided by the practical wisdom of the legislator. In the political system envisaged by Aristotle it is the object of the wise legislator and the educator to frame the laws and mould the pupil through education in such a way that the citizen who has been properly

educated and who acts habitually in accordance with the laws will always choose the mean which is appropriate to his position and function in society.

## 6.8 The Virtues

Aristotle has given a long and exhaustive analysis of moral and intellectual virtues in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. Among moral virtues he has listed *Courage* (the mean between cowardice and foolhardiness), *Temperance* (the mean between profligacy (being shamelessly vicious) and insensibility), *Justice* (the mean between two extremes of inequality), *Pride or Self respect* the mean between vanity and grovelling (fearful) humility, *Liberality* (the mean between prodigality and meanness with regard to giving of money), *Magnificence* (the mean between vulgar display of wealth and niggardliness), *Friendliness* (the mean between flattery and surliness miserliness), *Truthfulness* (the mean between boastfulness (expression of pride, bragging) and mock modesty), and a few others. Among the intellectual virtues he lists Scientific Knowledge, Art (the knowledge of how to make things), Intuitive Reason, Practical Wisdom, and Philosophic Wisdom. Discussion of all these virtues is beyond -the scope of this lesson. However, a brief examination of the four cardinal virtues will be useful for it will help us to understand Aristotle's point of view and will show how it relates to Plato's conception of virtue.

### 6.8.1 Courage

Aristotle describes courage as a mean between cowardice and rashness or between the feelings of excessive fear and excessive confidence. People generally think of fear as a sign of cowardice and define a brave man as one who is fearless. Aristotle however, makes it clear that only a mad man or an insensible person can be absolutely fearless fearing "neither earthquakes nor the waves". He points out that it is sometimes right and noble to fear certain things. For example a person who fears insult to his wife and children is not coward. The truth is, Aristotle points out, that even a brave man will feel a tremor of fear when he is about to be flogged though he will not, therefore, flinch from the path of righteousness. In contrast, a person who feels excessive confidence ever in the face of things that are really terrible, is probably insensible of the risks involved and is rash rather than brave. Aristotle therefore asserts that the brave man is one who faces the right things from motive of honour, in the right way, and at the right time and who feels confidence with respect to the right thing in the right way, and at the right time.

### 6.8.2 Temperance

Temperance, according to Aristotle, is a mean between self-indulgence and its opposite which may be described as insensibility to-pain and pleasure. Insensibility to pleasure or total self denial, is not a virtue according to Aristotle. In fact he points out, it is rare for a man not to feel pleasure in the satisfaction of his desires and appetites, for such insensibility is not human. The other extreme of excessive self-indulgence or craving for all sorts of pleasant things is also evil for such a man is led by his appetites to choose what is pleasant even at the cost of everything else. In fact according to

Aristotle, there is an inherent contradiction in the behaviour of a person who is a slave to his appetites. For, craving, which implies want of something, is always painful and when a person fails to get what he craves for he again experiences pain. The truth is, says Aristotle, that appetites are insatiable, and the more we try to gratify them the more they grow in force and violence so that the more we gratify our appetites, the more unhappy, we become. A self indulgent man is thus being irrational in not keeping his appetites under check.

The temperate man occupies a middle position with regard to these extremes. For, as Aristotle puts it, "he neither enjoys the things that the self-indulgent man enjoys most but rather dislikes them nor in general enjoys the things that he should not, nor anything of this sort to excess, nor does he feel pain or craving when they are absent, or does so only to as moderate degree, and not more than he should, nor when he should not, and so on, but the 'things that, being pleasant, make for health or for good conditions he will desire moderately and as he should, and also other pleasant things if they are not hindrances to these ends, or contrary to what is noble, or beyond his means'. A temperate man thus always keeps his desires to the necessary minimum and establishes harmony between the appetitive and the rational elements of his soul.

### **6.8.3 Justice**

Aristotle distinguishes two senses in which the word justice is used. One is the sense in which the just means what is according to law. Aristotle calls it universal justice. The other is the sense in which by justice we mean equality or fair distribution of things. Aristotle calls it particular justice.

According to Aristotle, all laws are just, therefore all lawful acts are just acts and a law-abiding man is a just man. This is because all law bids us to practice virtue and forbids wicked acts. Thus, for example, law bids us to do the acts of a brave man (e.g. not to desert out post nor to take flight in a battle and so on), and to do the acts of a temperate man (e.g., not to gratify our lust). Justice, therefore, holds Aristotle, is a complete virtue under which every other virtue is comprehended. Justice is also a complete virtue in the sense that a just man exercises his virtues not only in himself but also in his relations with other men. Justice, therefore; is not just one virtue among the virtues, but virtue entire. Aristotle, however, cautions that law is not to be obeyed blindly. Although law is just, nevertheless there is always the possibility of error in the application of law to particular cases. Law may, therefore, need to be corrected in specific cases where it is not applicable. Of particular justice, one kind, says Aristotle, is distributive justice. This consists in distribution of honours, wealth and other good in an equitable manner and according to merit. The other kind of a particular justice is what Aristotle calls - *rectificatory justice*. This consists in restoring equality where inequalities have entered in human relations. Rectificatory justice also includes punishing of the wrongdoers because, argues Aristotle, wrongdoing is also a kind of unequal relationship between the wrongdoer and the person who has been wronged or on whom unjury has been inflicted. A judge, therefore, tries to equalise things by means of punishment, thus

taking away from the gain of the offender. Particular justice, like other virtues, is also a mean between the two extremes of inequality where some have too much or too little of things as compared to others.

Metaphorically, thinks Aristotle, we can also speak of justice within the individual, or rather between the different elements of his nature. For there are certain just relations that ought to obtain between the rational principle and the irrational part, the just relationship being of course that the irrational appetites must accept guidance of the rational part of the soul.

## **6.9 Intellectual Virtues**

The states of mind by which the soul possesses truth are called intellectual virtue by Aristotle. And these, he says, are five, namely Art, Scientific Knowledge; Intuitive Reason, Practical Wisdom, and Philosophic Wisdom. Of these we shall consider only practical and Philosophic wisdom.

### **6.9.1 Practical Wisdom**

Practical wisdom, according to Aristotle consists in adjusting means to ends; it consists in the knowledge of how to secure the ends of human life. A practically wise man is one who can deliberate well about what is good and useful for himself and what sort of things conduce to good life in general. A practically wise man, therefore, is capable of determining the mean and of judging what kind of action is appropriate and ought to be done in certain circumstances.

However, Aristotle presumably, thought like Plato, that practical wisdom is a rare virtue possessed only by the legislator and the educator. The ordinary man in Aristotle's state, therefore, as in Plato's ideal state, is expected to do good not as a result of any personal insight into the nature of virtue but as a result of habits formed by education, reverence for laws, and the influence of public opinion.

### **6.9.2 Philosophic Wisdom**

According to Aristotle the highest good of man is to be found in the complete development of his nature and his capacities. Now the capacity that distinguishes man from plants and animals is his capacity for thought and contemplation of truth i.e. reason. The highest function of man, and therefore his highest virtue consists in a life of contemplation of universal and of unalterable truths of science and philosophy. Aristotle refers to this activity of the soul as theoretical or philosophic wisdom. Aristotle goes further and suggests that man is capable of theoretical reasoning because there is something divine in his nature, for according to Aristotle, the activity of God also consists in the contemplation of those very truths which we pursue in science and philosophy. Aristotle also points out that since the exercise of our highest faculties is the source of our greatest pleasures, the life of contemplation is also the most pleasant life imaginable for man.

## 6.10 Summary

This lesson began by introducing you to a great pioneer of ethical thinking who was also a tutor to Alexander. He was of the view that morality has to have a purpose. Declaring that "good of man" is the aim of mankind he advocated that good of man lies in happiness (eudemonia) that made his ethical theory as teleological. Because of his emphasis on inculcation of virtues his theory came to be known as virtue ethics. Virtue, he declared as fitness which meant proper functioning of a thing. His Virtue was not Absolute rather relative. It was a state of character giving as a mean between two extreme positions later we studied in Doctrine of Mean. This was followed by a detailed discussion on some key virtues like courage, Temperance, Justice, and Intellectual virtues like Practical Virtues and Philosophical wisdom.

### Check Your Progress

Read this lesson carefully and consult relevant texts from the further readings to understand the significance and deeper meaning of the following concepts/ doctrine in the context of **Virtue Ethics of Aristotle**.

1. The Soul and its functions
2. The Doctrine of Mean
3. The Moral Virtues

## 6.11 Glossary

**Virtue Ethics** – an approach of ethics which urges people to live a moral life by cultivating moral habits

**Doctrine of Mean**- Aristotle defines virtue as a mean between two extremes or excesses. Doctrine of means advocates that the right act or a virtuous act happens when a person of practical wisdom chooses to avoid extremes and takes a middle path.

## 6.12 Further Readings

1. Lillie, William (1957) An Introduction to Ethics, London: Methuen.
2. Harold H. Titus and Morris T.K Keeton (1972); The Range of Ethics, New Delhi: Affiliated East West Press Pvt. Ltd.
3. Sinha, Jadunath (2004) A Manual of Ethics, Kolkata : New Central Book Agency.
4. MacIntyre, Alastair (1966) A Short History of Ethics. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

## 6.13 Model Questions

1. State and explain Aristotelian concept of virtue. Discuss Courage and Temperance as two key virtues.
2. Critically discuss Aristotle's Doctrine of Mean.

## **CATEGORICAL ETHICS: KANT**

### **Structure**

- 7.0 Objectives
- 7.1 Introduction
- 7.2 Immanuel Kant
- 7.3 Deontological Ethics
- 7.4 Kant's Rationalism
- 7.5 Two types of Normative Imperatives
- 7.6 Hypothetical Imperative
- 7.7 Categorical Imperative
  - 7.7.1 Goodwill
  - 7.7.2 The Principle of Universality
  - 7.7.3 The Principle of Humanity as an end –in-itself
  - 7.7.4 The Principle of Autonomy
- 7.8 Critical Assessment
- 7.9 Summary
- 7.10 Glossary
- 7.11 Further Readings
- 7.12 Model Questions

### **7.0 Objectives**

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- state the essential features of Kant's Categorical ethics
- analyse the three categorical imperatives of Kant
- critically evaluate the strengths and limitations of Kant's ethical doctrines.

### **7.1 Introduction**

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a professor of Philosophy at the University of Konigsberg in Germany. He had a religious and moral family background. He was greatly influenced by the rationalistic spirit and methods of critical analysis prevailing at that time in German Universities. He came into limelight when an atmosphere of

scepticism (a doctrine which looks at everything with doubt) was prevailing in the philosophical world. Hume, a British thinker, had questioned the objectivity of the external world on logical grounds and had rejected all supernatural and metaphysical support for morality. Kant sought to put physical sciences and the laws of nature on a sound basis as against the scepticism of Hume and he also sought to maintain the objectivity of moral law. This lesson will emphasize that Kant was a rationalist who maintained that moral endeavours must have conformity to reason. This comes from a Moral law which is to be found universally. This moral law is of the nature of Categorical imperative which further has got three forms – (i) *The Principle of Universality* (ii) *The Principle of Humanity as an end in itself* and (iii) *The Principle of Autonomy*.

## **7.2 Immanuel Kant**

Kant was a rationalist. According to Rationalism ethics contains some absolute truths and it believes that moral values have a foundation in the nature of the universe or in the nature of God, not simply in human nature as is advocated by ethical naturalism. Kant believed that there are certain preconditions of moral endeavour and the first among these is conformity to reason, He thought that reason is objective, impartial and requires logical consistency. Without objectivity ethical demands would carry neither authority nor knowledge and without impartiality we would have simply partisanship, caprice and whim but certainly not guides to conduct. Kant takes logic and mathematics as the model of knowledge where truth necessarily follows from the unchangeable starting points. Similarly solid foundations were needed, according to him, in the matter of right and wrong. Given such principles, it seemed clear that they would apply to all men every where just as the key principles of logic and mathematics applies every where. So the moral Judgements often are necessarily true. They differ from the data of perception or facts about human psychology which are only contingently true. By contrast, the Rationalists argue, that it is not a contingent matter that love is good and hate bad, that helping the weak is right and torturing people is wrong, that we ought to tell the truth and keep our promises. These things are necessarily true.

## **7.3 Deontological Ethics**

Moral thinkers normally hold their deliberations from two perspective-Deontological and Teleological. Teleological moral thinkers like Hedonists give more emphasis to the consequence or results or ends instead of the means motives. Like for a Hedonist an action is good if it results in pleasure. On the contrary Deontological moral thinkers like Kant maintain that actions are either good or bad, right or wrong not on the basis of the ends they bring or consequences they deliver but on the basis of some norms, rules, motives and principles. Kant holds that actions are right because they are performed as Duty for duty's sake or actions are right on account of the motive of the action when is right. Deontological ethics deals with normative ethical theories which propagate those actions which are morally good on the basis of some motives or law or goodwill rather than on the consequences they lead to.

## 7.4 Kant's Rationalism

This idea of the place of reason in ethics is in accordance with a view of all nature as capable of being understood as rationally ordered. Kant was impressed with the observation that all phenomena can be seen as if arranged according to some purpose. He says, "*Two things fill the mind with ever new and increasing admiration and awe the oftener and the longer we reflect upon them; the starry heavens above and the moral law within*". Kant has discovered a relationship between the moral law within the individual and the orderliness prevailing in nature. In other words, the laws of the nature are the laws of reasons and these laws of reason are reflected in the moral law which springs from man's inner most being.

Normally a distinction is made between *laws of nature, political laws and moral laws*. Mackenzie's analysis of laws in his '**Manual of Ethics**' is worth mentioning here. He says that laws of nature are unchangeable and inviolable. They are statements of fact and have an element of inevitability in them Political laws are unchangeable but cannot be violated. Because if we violat political laws we will be punished. Laws of morality are unchangeable but these may be violated. It is true that particular rules of morality may vary with different conditions of life but the broad Principles remain always the same and are applicable to all rational beings. Laws of nature are descriptive, but political laws and moral laws come to us in the form of a command. There is a difference between political law and a moral law. Political law is based on *mustness*, while moral is based on *oughtness*, i.e. (normative). Any violation of political law is punishable but violation of moral law may not be punishable unless it is a political law at the same time.

## 7.5 Two types of Normative Imperatives

Kant distinguished between two kinds of normative laws which he called imperatives or commands.

- I. **Hypothetical Imperative and**
- II. **Categorical Imperative.**

## 7.6 Hypothetical Imperative

Hypothetical Imperative is à command which holds only for a group of people who, under certain conditions, have certain ends in view. For example, if a person accepts the obligation to build a house he will have to follow laws of architecture. C.D. Broad states that a hypothetical imperative is a principle of conduct which is accepted, not on its own merits, but simply as a rule for gaining some desired end. Suppose a person does not tell a lie because it undermines human happiness. Here telling no lies is not accepted on its own merits (i.e. having intrinsic value) rather it is both contingent and derivative. It is contingent because conditions are conceivable in which lying would not reduce human happiness. A categorical imperative is a command that holds unconditionally and universally. It is a principle of conduct which is accepted on its own merits and not as a rule for gaining any desired end. It is a priority in the sense that it is



derived from reason itself. It is an absolute law and admits no exceptions. It is true for every rational individual irrespective of the conditions and the circumstances in which he is placed.

## 7.7 Categorical Imperative

According to Kant moral law is of the nature of a Categorical Imperative. The ground on which Kant asserted that moral law is a categorical imperative is that a hypothetical imperative is accepted only as a rule of gaining some desired end and that there is no end which all rational beings as such must desire. According to Kant only goodwill is of the nature of Categorical Imperative. To quote his own words :-

**"There is nothing in this world or even out of it that can be called good without qualification except a good will."**

Kant tried to prove this by taking other alleged intrinsic goods such as happiness, intelligence, courage. These will lead to evil consequences if there is no *good will* behind them. Intelligence and courage when used to carry out evil purpose may increase, evil. C.D. Broad (in his *Five Types of Ethical Theory*) comments that what Kant's example proves is that things which are intrinsically good, always contain goodwill" as one of element and not the only element. But Kant goes further in maintaining that a good will in itself is an intrinsically good whole, for it is good even when it exists quite alone. Kant wrote :

*"If with 'its' greatest efforts if (the good will) should yet achieve nothing and there should remain only the good will, then, like a jewel it would still shine by its own light as a thing which has its whole value in itself."* Of course, by good will Kant does not mean mere abstract wish but a definite purpose to action or as Kant puts it 'the summoning of all, means in our power.

### 7.7.1 Goodwill

Good will is one that habitually wills rightly. It is a will governed by reason. It expresses itself in the form of duty or obligation. Duty according to Kant, should be done for the sake of duty and not out of inclination or impulses. Distinction must be made between what Broad says, *Actions on impulse* and *Actions on Principle* : Suppose you want to relieve a person from distress because you happen to know him. This is an impulsive action. If you did not know him you might not have helped him. But another man who happens to be a member of a Charity Organization Society, gives relief even to a stranger because he accepts a general principle that he will help anyone in need. Moral action is always done on an principle. An action cannot be right unless one can give a reason for it. An action that is done on a impulse like the impulse of pity, may be right but the only ways of proving it to be right is to show that it is a reasonable action. An action cannot be right unless it is done on some general principle which the agent accepts.

Kant also held that the principle on which the good will wills its actions must not contain any reference to circumstances or results not to any personal tastes and inclinations of men. Otherwise it would bring in a contingent element in this principle. It seems evident to Kant that any action which, in a given situation its right or wrong at all must be right or wrong, in that situation for any rational being what-so-ever, no matter what his particular tastes and principles inclinations may be. Thus, Kant arrives at the conclusion that if there be any principles of conduct which would be accepted by all rational beings, as such, there must be accepted on they own merits and must, therefore, be categorical imperatives.

Categorical Imperative of Kant assumes three forms :

- I. **The Principle of Universality;**
- II. **The Principle of Humanity as an end-in-itself;**
- III. **The Principle of Autonomy.**

### **7.7.2 The Principle of Universality**

Kant states this principle as - "act in conformity that maxim only, which you constant the same time will be a universal law. The rightness of action depends on its generality i.e. that course of action is right which can be adopted and accepted by every body. If it cannot be universalized then it is a morally wrong action. C.D. Broad points out that Kant's first Principle is not really a moral law in itself; it is a principle by which other moral laws can be tested. Kant gave four examples to illustrate the Principle of Universality.

First he takes an example of suicide. Committing suicide is morally wrong because if everyone were to commit suicide this would lead to the elimination of the race itself. Second example which he considers is that of borrowing money. A man borrows money with a false promise to repay it within a definite time knowing fully well that he would not be able to repay it. Is it right? No, because if such promises are not kept this will put an end to the system of borrowing and lending money. Third, a talented man instead of developing his talent and being a useful member of society prefers to lead a life of ease and pleasure. Is it right? No, because if it becomes a general practice it will lead to the elimination of talent from the society. He must, therefore, develop his talent. Fourth, a prosperous man refuses to help the poor and needy in the society. This attitude is wrong because a society in which a rich man considers his own interests only and disregards the needs of others is not a desirable social order.

The principle of universality aroused a great controversy among the deliberative community which we shall take up when we come to the critical aspect of Kantian ethics.

### **7.7.3 The Principle of Humanity as an end-in-itself**

*'Acts so as to use humanity whether in your own person or in the person of another, always as an end, never as merely a mean.'* In this principle Kant puts

emphasis on the inherent worth of man. We should recognise the dignity of man and should not use anybody as a tool or an instrument. Some people have criticised this form by pointing out that we are constantly using other people as means, we use a porter as a means of carrying our luggage, a taxi driver as a means of transporting us to our desirable destination our-selves and a banker as a means of keeping our money safe. This criticism is wrong. Kant never stated that we should not use the services of others or they should not use our services. What he emphasized was that we should not treat them simply as means but should always give them their due respect. This principle states-slavery is morally wrong, because a slave is always exploited. Prostitution is wrong because it treats women merely as a means to man's pleasure. Drinking and gambling are wrong because it mars the respect of man. Hence, this principle stresses self-respect and respect for others. This sense of value and dignity of every body gives rise to a Kingdom or Realm of Ends. A society where everyone respects oneself as well as everyone else is a *society of ends*.

#### **7.7.4 The Principle of Autonomy**

'A principle of conduct is morally binding on me if and only if I can regard it as a law which I impose on myself.' This principle states that moral law is not imposed on man from without i.e. man does not obey moral laws to the fear of some external authority i.e. social political or religious: rather morality springs from within. It follows the dictates of reasons. Thus, moral principles are self imposed.

Kant draws a distinction between intrinsically good (*Summum Bonum*) and the complete good (*Bonum Consummation*). A will which habitually wills rightly is intrinsically good and that nothing else is so. Pleasure and pain by themselves are neither good nor bad. Nevertheless pleasure and pain are capable of adding to and detracting from the total. He also maintained that in a perfectly good universe a good will would be accompanied by an appropriate degree of happiness. Good will plus happiness constitute complete good Kant accepts, three postulates or morality: (i) existence of God, (ii) immortality of soul and (iii) freedom of will. The third principle is illustrated by the principle of autonomy. Kant postulated that existence of Good on the ground that virtue (i.e. good will) ought to be rewarded by happiness. He thought that the existence of an overruling god is a necessary condition of the universe being so organised as to secure that virtue is accompanied by happiness. So he concluded that God must exist. Kant considered human immortality to be another necessary postulate for morality. Human nature is sensuous to such a degree that it will require infinite time to become rational and so perfectly good.

#### **7.8 Critical Assessment**

The first change that has been generally laid against Kantian ethics is that it is simply formal. Mackenzie comments that Kantian principle of universality gives a safe negative guidance i.e. as to what is not to be done and fails to give any positive guidance i.e. as to what to be done: Stealing is bad because if every body starts stealing it would lead to insecurity. But on similar grounds certain common sense virtues will also

become morally wrong. For example, Brahmacharya is considered to be a virtue. But if everybody starts practising it, it will ultimately lead to the elimination of human race. Then of Kantian premises Brahamancharya should not be treated as a virtue. Similarly such virtues like service the effort for the moral improvement of society and philanthropy would lead to inconsistency. For if everyone were engaged in these actions, it would be unnecessary for anyone to engage in them. They are necessary because they are neglected by many and only a few in a society need these services.

Supporters of Kant say that there is nothing wrong in that because Kant provided a formal standard and no practical rules for guidance. Just at the logician provides, for example, the syllogistic form to which every argument of that type must conform, so Kant, in his first principle hoped to provide a rule to which every moral law must conform. C.D. Broad comments that Kant would say that it is no more the business of ethics to provide rules of conduct that it is business of logic to provide arguments. The business of ethics is to provide a test for rules of conduct just as it is the business of logic to provide a test for arguments.

The second charge that is levelled against Kant is that his ethics is too rigid and stringent. There are two grounds to which Kant's ethics is called too rigorous. Firstly, it puts too much emphasis on reason, respect to moral law and leaves no place for human inclinations and feelings. Certain actions if done with love and affection are more admirable than the actions which are simply done for the sake of duty. For example, a person gives aims to a man to accomplish will of God. On the other hand, a philanthropist helps peoples out of love for them. Common sense would call the second man to be morally better than the first man. Schiller criticised Kant in the following passage.

***'Willingly serve I my friends, but I do it, alas with affection.***

***Hence, I am cursed with the doubt.***

***Virtue I have not attained."***

This criticism of Kant again is based on misunderstanding. Lillie comments that truer interpretation of Kant's view is to hold that the presence or absence of inclination is morally indifferent. C.D. Broad comments that there may be many casual factors moving one in the same direction. What Kant wanted to stress was the action would be right if and only if it would still have been done for a principle even though other factors were absent. It is good to give aims to those in need from motives of pity and love provided that we would still do it from a sense of duty on occasions when these motives were absent from our minds.

Broad thinks that Kant is wrong in holding that a right action must always be right no matter what the inclinations of the agent are. There are some actions which would be right only if done by an agent with one set of tastes and inclinations and wrong if done in precisely the same situation by an agent with certain other tastes and inclinations. For

example, while selecting a man for particular profession or in proposing marriage to A or to B personal liking and disliking would be relevant. Thus Kant's ethics is incomplete.

There is another sense in which Kant's points of view is called too rigorous and that is it admits no exceptions. Many actions in ordinary life are right simply because they are exceptions. Many instances of heroic self sacrifice would be unjustifiable if every one were to perform them. Kantian principle of universality is too formal and does not take into consideration the particular circumstances. The man who tell a lie in order to save the life of other may not will that lying should, become the universal custom yet he may be convinced that in his own special circumstances to tell a lie was the best course of action. Hence, Mackenzie comments Kantian ethics is a form without any content says Jacobi, with same sarcasm -

"Kant's will is a will that wills nothing."

## 7.9 Summary

The importance of Kantian ethics cannot be undermined. It is one of the best presentation of the formalistic theories in ethics. Firstly, Kant stressed objectivity in moral judgement. Feeling is not essential characteristic of moral judgement. Feeling is always personal while reason is impersonal. Therefore, we must go beyond personal desires and feelings and search for a moral based on reason. Secondly, Kant stressed that morality is not to be interpreted in terms of utility or expediency that somewhere in our moral experience there must be an element of inherent or intrinsic value which he found in good will. Thirdly, Kant recognized the importance of man. He treated human personality as end-in-itself. Thus to live by reason and to be consistent and to respect the worth of persons are sound principles.

## 7.10 Glossary

**Duty-** The conduct or action which a person ought to do on moral grounds.

**Eudaemonia-** Happiness or flourishing it is the possible supreme good and behaving and faring well.

**Virtue Ethics-** Doing what is right habitually, it is a theory which maintains that being good is practice of a good behavior, Aristotles ethics is known as virtue ethics.

**Deontological theory-**advocates that morality of an action is not determined by its consequences but on the rightness or wrongness measured on a set of norms.

**Categorical imperative-** Unconditional command, actions which are good is themselves and can be willed as a Universal law Deontology is a theory of ethics dealing with duty, obligation and maintains that morality of an action is evaluated on its being right or wrong and not consequences.

**Goodwill**- that motive or intention which is acted upon as that duty which is done for duty's sake.

<b>KANT QUIZ</b>	
<b>We Ask</b>	
1	<p>Kant treats it as one of his key concepts of morality. Pick the right one from the following four:</p> <p>a) Happiness <span style="float: right;">b) A priori</span>            c) Goodwill <span style="float: right;">d) Moral law</span></p>
2	<p>Choose the odd man out of the following four options which does not fit with the ethical principle of Kant.</p> <p>a) Categorical imperative <span style="float: right;">b) Deontology</span>            c) Principle of universality <span style="float: right;">d) Eudaemonia</span></p>
3	<p>Kant's categorical imperative has three forms. Pick the odd man out which is not Kant's categorical imperative.</p> <p>a) The Principle of Autonomy            b) The Principle of Identity            c) The Principle of Humanity as end –in- itself            d) The Principle of Universality</p>

### 7.11 Further Readings

1. Sahakian.S. William (1974) Ethics: An Introduction to Theories and Problems, New York: Barnes & Noble Books.
2. Ewing. A.C. (1973) Ethics, London: St Paul's House Warwick Lane
3. Lillie, William (1957) An Introduction to Ethics, London: Matheun.
4. Frankena K. William (1999) Ethics (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited.
5. Sinha Jadunath (2004) A Manual of Ethics, Kolkata: New Central Book Agency
6. Mackenzie J.S (1956) A Manual of Ethics

### 7.12 Model Questions

1. Discuss Kant's doctrine of Categorical imperative.
2. Critically examine Kant's three forms of Categorical imperative.

**Kant Quiz- Your correct answers****3 Principles of identity**

This is a first law of thought which we studied in logic. It has nothing to do with Kant's ethics.

2 d) **Eudaemonia**. Aristotle and not Kant talks about eudaemonia which is usually translated as Happiness though its real meaning is much beyond

1 b) **Good will** is a virtue that is unqualifiedly good it's the only virtue which has its own intrinsic value

## CONCEPTS OF LOVE, SIN, AND FREEDOM IN CHRISTIANITY

### Structure

- 8.0 Objectives
- 8.1 Introduction
- 8.2 Concept of Freedom
- 8.3 Concept of Sin
  - 8.3.1 Suffering
- 8.4 Concept is Love
  - 8.4.1 The Master Vision: Love one another
  - 8.4.2 God is Love
  - 8.4.3 The two essential gifts of Love
- 8.5 Summary
- 8.6 Glossary
- 8.7 Further Readings
- 8.8 Model Questions

### 8.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- state and explain the concepts of Love, Sin and Freedom in Christian faith.
- comprehend the significance of these three concepts.
- critically assess the moral significance of the three concepts.

### 8.1 Introduction

This lesson gives you an overview of some very key concepts of Love, Sin, and Freedom in Christian Faith. In Christian faith it is believed that human beings erred by disobeying God which resulted in the introduction of Sin, Evil, Sickness and Death in the Cosmos. Christians treat sin as an attitude as well as will as the negation of good. Sins obscured the basic nature of man and pushed him into suffering. This suffering asks one to live with it, love the mystery of God and make a submission to faith in Christ.



The lesson discusses love as another key Christian concept. According to Christian faith. God is love and has created the human beings in an act of love. It has two essential Gifts. The first is the gift of self through self- disclosure and second one is the essential gift of love which lies in the affirmation of the other person's worth.

The lesson gives you a comprehensive significance and meaning of the key concepts of Christian Faith.

## **8.2 Concept of Freedom**

Freedom has always fascinated human societies . It has been recognized as an end-in-itself. Individuals not only cherish it they even fight for it; even die for it. States ought to ensure the freedom to its citizens. A philosopher would understand it as a possibility to act in accordance with one's volition without any binding. Freedom means one can act the way one likes; do whatever one wants without any restraints. This way, not all freedom will be good. That is why whenever freedom is discussed some mention of responsibility also comes. In Christianity the concept of Freedom comes time and again. Christianity maintains that perfect freedom which prevailed in the Garden of Eden was withdrawn from Adam and Eve on account of their rebellion and disobedience to the order of God. According to Christian notion of freedom the worldly freedom is not the real freedom. On the contrary Christianity considers that such a mundane freedom will eventually end up in giving more sorrows, more sufferings and bondage. Youth today caught up in this kind of freedom indulges in sense gratifications, material acquisitions, comforts and greed. The true freedom according to Christianity comes through God's power and grace. It is more of a spiritual freedom which is meant by the notion of freedom. First of all Christian notion of freedom will set us free from the oppressive system of the law. In the negative terms it means that a follower will be free from the power of sin and free from the poser of sin. One could say that Christian notion of freedom is a paradox in the sense that a follower willingly turns slave to Christ and by doing so he becomes a servant of righteousness. So freedom will set us free from the burden of sin and put us on the path of righteousness. The essence of Freedom according to Christianity can be expressed in the following key points:

1. Wordly freedom is a notion of false freedom.
2. Freedom in Christian faith is in fact spiritual freedom.
3. True Freedom lets us avoid sorrows, sufferings and distresses even in this worldly life.
4. Christian notion of freedom is more like positive freedom rather than the worldly freedom which is negative freedom.
5. Freedom in Christianity means humans are not free to the worldly law, they are not free to indulge and sin. It stands for freedom to serve others in love. Being free amounts to being slave of God, walk on the way of righteousness and good of others.

### 8.3 Concept of Sin

According to the Christian faith, the universe was good and perfect when God made it. But the sins of human beings have introduced abnormality into the cosmos. Sin, evil, sickness and even death are elements that the created beings have introduced into God's creation. Therefore, suffering is made understandable for a believer in Christ due to the abnormalities that have been brought into the world because of man's sins. The prophet Isaiah explained the problem thus: "Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear."<sup>1</sup> St. Paul has provided an answer to the Christian vision of suffering in the following way. The message about Christ's death on the cross is non-sense to those who are being lost; but for us who are being saved it is God's power. The scripture says, "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise and set aside the understanding of the scholars."<sup>2</sup>

**Sin** : Coming to the notion of sin with regard to Christianity, it can be understood in two ways: sin as an attitude as well as the negation of good. We are told in the Bible that Adam was robbed of the paradise as he sinned against the will of God. It was due to a false confidence, which deliberately willed to make the option and experiment of believing in a lie: the lie of Satan that lured Adam to make an experiment in order to become God. Again, it was based on an attitude, which reached forth to eat the fruit of 'the forbidden tree'. What was this attitude? To quote Thomas Merton "It was simply this: That Adam who possessed an existential, an experimental knowledge of all that was good and all that was real, and who was mystically united with God, the infinite source of all actual and possible reality, wanted to improve on this by knowing something else, which, he thought, would be something more. In desiring to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, he wanted, in fact, to add to the knowledge of good, which he already had, the knowledge of evil. To be more precise, he wanted to have an experience, an existential knowledge of evil."<sup>3</sup>

Such an existential knowledge of evil is made possible by human pride, the human pride of 'improving' his wisdom by negating the good. According to Christianity man is created in the form of God. The human pride that follows within it negates the goodness of God's form in man and thereby he wills something out of his desires, which is against the nature and form of God. It is the spiritual disaster of the human subject to content with his desires rather than the desires of his creator. Thus he is drawn to awareness, which is outside the basic nature of man. His basic nature is obscured in sins and thereby he loses his freedom that he enjoys with his creator. In other words, he loses his true nature.

#### 8.3.1 Suffering

The question of suffering is constantly explored and discussed in Christianity. Many sensitive people find it hard to believe in an all-knowing, compassionate and all-powerful God who allows innocent people to suffer, and seemingly, allows evil to triumph. The book of Genesis (Old Testament) struggles with the question of suffering in

the persons of Adam and Eve. In the same book, we see Cain killing his own brother Abel. (According to Christian belief, Cain and Abel were the sons of Adam, the first human person created by God) In the book of Job, when Job asked God to tell him the reasons for his sufferings, God's reply was seemingly a strange one. Job was asking the all powerful God as to why he had to suffer, so to say, Job was asking for an ethical explanation for his sufferings as well as the motives of God for allowing Job to be so tested. This question of Job and many others who ask for the 'why' of suffering has two distinct meanings. The first one is centered on as to what the causes of human suffering and the second points toward the purpose of human pain and suffering. If the first one is focused on an immediate answer, the second one is teleological in character. In the first sense, a Christian would answer that suffering is against God's will, whereas in the teleological sense, suffering is a part of God's sovereign will. Having experienced God in a kind of overwhelming presence, Job says: I know that you are all powerful: what you conceive, you can perform. I am the man who obscured your designs with my empty-headed words. I have been holding forth on matters I cannot understand, on marvels beyond me and my knowledge ... I knew you then only by hearsay; but now, having seen you with my own eyes, I retract all I have said, and in dust and ashes I repent."<sup>4</sup>

When we are asked by God to lie on the anvil of suffering, it is difficult to think clearly at that time. Suffering, no doubt, is deafening and distracting. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reflect clearly in times of suffering and pain. The powerful sight of God reminds Job to accept the insignificance of Job's suffering and his unworthy utterances. In other words, Job finds an answer to his question in a teleological sense. God responds to Job's complaint by asking his own question. "Where were you when I laid the earth's foundations? Who decided the dimensions of it, do you know? Who laid its cornerstone; when all the stars of the morning were singing with joy? Who pent up the sea behind closed doors; when it learnt tumultuous out of the womb? Have you even in your life given orders to the morning or sent the dawn to its post? Have you an inkling of the extent of the earth?"<sup>5</sup> Jeremiah, the prophet of the Old Testament, who did not want to be a prophet, in the first place could not understand as to why God called him to failure and rejection. In Jeremiah's words, "you have not made a prophet of me you have made a fool of me."

The Book of Job throws another indispensable perspective on undeserved suffering. The universe that we perceive and live in is not all that there is. That is to say that there is an unseen dimension to the reality; many of our perceptions and activities that follow therein are mistakenly understood as the real, which is not the case every time. Job's suffering was Satan's will, not God's. God allowed Satan to inflict suffering on Job for His own purposes. (The teleological way) Therefore for a Christian believer, suffering is basically a faith question. Suffering asks one to live with and to love the mystery of God whom one cannot fully understand. Suffering, in the Christian sense, urges one to make a submission of faith to Christ. This attitude is nothing but an enormous trust in a God and submission to his wisdom. May be this is a kind of a 'theology of suffering' which demands an attitude like that of Job. Job says: "I have been

holding forth on matters I cannot understand, on marvels beyond me and my knowledge". A theological understanding of suffering demands that one needs to postulate a life, which is other than the earthly life. To put the same in a different language, the context of an endless and eternal life must be in the background of any Christian exploration of suffering. Christian faith always under girded the idea that this life is a mere dot on the endless line of our human existence, which reaches from now into forever. St. Paul consoles the church of Rome with this truth: "I think that whatever we suffer in this life can never be compared to the glory, as yet unrevealed, which is waiting for us."

## **8.4 Concept of Love**

### **Love : The Beginning of Christian Love : Empathy**

"When the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they came together, and one of them, a teacher of the Law, tried to trap him with a question. 'Teacher', he asked, "which is the greatest and the most important commandment in the Law? Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength and with all your mind". This is the greatest and the most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like it: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

#### **8.4.1 The Master Vision: Love One Another**

In the master vision, provided by the message, life and person of Jesus, the Christians are called to be channels of love to one another. According to Christian vision, God is love and has created the human being in an act of love. In Christianity, these two commandments are inseparably linked together. I cannot say my 'yes' of love to God unless I say my 'yes' of love to each and every member of God's human family.

It seems that the key to success in so seeing and loving others is empathy. Empathy starts with an attentive listening and an intuitive reading of the uniqueness of the other as a person. Empathy asks only one question: What is it like to be you? Empathy is getting inside the skin of another, walking in his or her shoes, seeing and experiencing reality as it looks through the eyes of another. In the end, empathy offers not advice but only understanding. "Oh, yes, I hear you. "If the essence of empathy is listening to and living vicariously the life experience of another, the price of empathy is this: it requires, a temporary leaving of one's self, one's own thoughts and feelings, one's values and beliefs. When I empathize with you, I leave where I am and I go to be with you where you are."

The experience of most people would seem to indicate that there are not many really good listeners among us. When we try to share who we are, many others tend to leap in, reduce us and our sharing to a problem, and proceed to solve the problem. They volunteer to tell us what to do. At other times they may seem to question the sincerity of our communication: "You don't really mean that, do you? Or they go off into a, narration of their own lives. None of these reactions is a part of empathetic listening. I know you

are really hearing me only when the expression of your face registers my present feelings; only when your voice and body language say, "So that what is like to be you ... I hear you."

The empathetic listener does not judge, criticize, or direct, because in the act of empathy we leave our own positions, our perceptions, and most of all our prejudices. Our concentration is given totally to the vicarious experience of another's person. We break our fixation with self by getting out of ourselves and into the other's thoughts, feeling, and little situation.

When we have identified with another in this way, we are already supplying the primary need of everyone: to have someone who really understands what it's like to be me! 'All they need is a little understanding and a little love,' Only after immersing ourselves in the experience of empathy can we know what we might say or do nor be for another person's happiness and well-being. Loving is indeed an art. There are no automatic decisions or fixed and final formulas when we are trying to respond to the needs of another. We might have to be tough or tender, to talk or be silent to sit at another's side or allow that person the luxury of aloneness. Only the empathic person can master.

#### **8.4.2 God is Love**

The Apostle John chooses the dynamic rather than static words to describe and define god. God is like a light, like a roaring wind. God is love. We should be careful in noticing that John does not say that God has love but rather that He is love. It means love is the very nature of God, so to say, that love is the essential nature of God.

It is important to realize that God's love is a covenanted (a formal agreement or promise between God and His people) and not a contractual love. In a business contract, if one party fails to meet its commitment, the second party of the contract is released from all the bonding effects of that contract. For example, I promise to pay you 500 rupees to cut grass in my field for one day. However, you do not cut the grass and so I am not bound to pay you the promised 500 rupees. It is not this way in a covenant. A covenant implies a promise of unconditional love, a promise that is never cancelled. Covenanted love is not earned or won by the person to whom it is given. It is always a free gift. Covenanted love walks undemanded miles, goes far beyond the demand of justice and reciprocity. Covenanted love is forever.

#### **8.4.3 The Two Essential Gifts of Love**

Whatever else love may ask of us in a given case, there are two indispensable gifts that is always a part of loving. We can always be sure that these two gifts are needed. The first is the gift of self through self-disclosure. All the other gifts of love - like flowers, jewellery, performs, mobiles etc. are mere tokens and symbolic expressions. The essential gift of love is always the gift of myself. If I do not give you my true and authentic self, I have given you nothing. I have given you only pretence and sham. I have let you watch my charade.

The second essential gift of love is the affirmation of the other person's worth. If I am to love you, somehow I must appreciate and reflect back to you my appreciation of your unique goodness and giftedness. I cannot interact with you without making some contribution, either positive or negative, to your all important self-image. Nor can I so interact with you without taking away some increase or decrease in my own sense of personal worth. We are all like mirrors to one another. We perceive ourselves largely in the "feedback" of one another's reactions. We are always contributing, positively or negatively, to one another's self-image. I can know that I am worthwhile only in the mirror of your smiling face, only in the warm sound of your voice, and in the gentle touch of your hand. And you can understand your worth only in my face, my voice, and my touch. "All they need is a little understanding and a little love!"

### **Check Your Progress**

Give short answer in around 50 to 60 words.

1. State the central position of Christianity on Love.

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2. What is Sin?

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3. What is Christian understanding of freedom?

## **8.5 Summary**

By way of summary, then, the eyes of love see in every other person not one but two persons: the wounded and angry, the good and the gifted. It is understanding and love that call forth the good and gifted person. This is the way that Jesus loved people like Zacchaeus and Mary Magdalene and the Twelve Apostles into the fullness of life. The essential prelude to a Christian way of life is always empathy, which breaks our own self-centered fixation and provides for the other the inestimable good feeling of being understood. Having given a listening and available heart in empathy, we must go on to respond to the specific needs of those we love. The two specific needs we can be sum

of are the gift of ourselves in self-disclosure and the gift of our affirmation of the other's worth.

Christian understanding of love can at best be exemplified by quoting from the epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, chapter thirteen. St. Paul writes on love as the following: "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not charity, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; Does not behave redely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; Does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; Bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails ... And abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is-love."

## 8.6 Glossary

**Love** – Love in Christianity is a strong positive emotion of regard, affection, self sacrifice, generosity and unconditionality towards others.

**Sin** – According to Christian theology sin is an act of offence against God and his humans and disobeying Christian law and injuring fellow beings

## References

1. St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans. 8.18
2. 1 Corinthians. 1: 18-25
3. Thomas, Merton: The New Man (New York, 1963), pp 63-78
4. Job. 42. 2-6
5. Ibid. 38. 4-18
6. Mathew 22: 34-39

## 8.7 Further Readings

- Macindyre, Alastair (1966) A Short History of Ethics. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul

## 8.8 Model Questions

1. Discuss the concepts of Freedom and Sin in Christianity
2. State and examine the concept of Love in Christianity

## TELEOLOGICAL ETHICS

(i) Hedonism

(ii) Utilitarianism

### Structure

- 9.0 Objectives
- 9.1 Introduction
- 9.2 Teleological Ethics
- 9.3 Hedonism
- 9.4 Psychological Hedonism
  - 9.4.1 Objections to Psychological Hedonism
- 9.5 Ethical Hedonism
  - 9.5.1 Egoistic Hedonism
  - 9.5.2 Criticism
- 9.6 Universalistic Hedonism or Utilitarianism
  - 9.6.1 Quantitative Utilitarianism of Bentham
  - 9.6.2 Hedonistic Calculus
  - 9.6.3 Moral Sanctions
- 9.7 Critical Assessment of Bentham's Hedonism
- 9.8 J.S. Mill's Qualitative Utilitarianism
  - 9.8.1 Pleasure is the only thing that is desirable
  - 9.8.2 People actually desire pleasure
  - 9.8.3 Each person desires one's own happiness
  - 9.8.4 Pleasures are qualitatively different
  - 9.8.5 Internal Sanction
  - 9.8.6 Critical Assessment
- 9.9 Summary
- 9.10 Glossary
- 9.11 Further Readings



## 9.12 Model Questions

### 9.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- state and explain the doctrine of Hedonism.
- comprehend the contributions of different forms of Hedonism.
- critically assess the value of pleasure as a goal of life.

### 9.1 Introduction

Ethics generally has two types of approaches – Deontological as well as Teleological. You have already studied one such instance when you studied I Kant's Duty Ethics. Teleological theories refer to consequences and judge conduct as right or wrong in relation to some end or goal and in this lesson we will discuss pleasures as one such end. This lesson will also introduce you to two forms of Hedonism – Psychology. Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism further you will study in detail two major theories – viz. Bentham's Quantitative Utilitarianism as well as Mill's Qualitative Utilitarianism.

### 9.2 Teleological Ethics

Ethics is the study of value judgements, of what is good and what is bad. It is a search for an ideal, a standard or criterion according to which human actions are to be judged. That is why it is called a normative study. Generally, two types of theories or approaches have been prevalent in Ethics: the deontological approach and the teleological approach. Deontological theories assert that certain types of actions ought to be done (or avoided) in all in certain types of situations regardless of the goodness or badness of the probable consequences. This approach we find in Kant, you have studied Kant's theory is lesson No. 7. On the other hand, teleological theories do not admit of 'unconditional obligation'. Teleological theories judge conduct as right or wrong in relation to some end or goal that is considered good. Hedonism and perfectionism are the possible forms of teleological approach. Hedonism emphasizes that the ultimate goal in life is pleasure which is usually associated with sensory or perceptual level of experience, while perfectionism aims at the perfection of development of all the possible faculties which man possesses. Sidgwick, in his 'Methods of Ethics' says "I shall therefore confidently lay down that if there be any good other than happiness to be sought by man as an ultimate practical end, it can only be the goodness, perfection or excellence of human nature". In the following pages we shall discuss Hedonism and its various forms.

### 9.3 Hedonism

Hedonism is the general term for those theories that regard pleasure or happiness as the summum bonum (the supreme end) of life. These theories have taken different forms. It has been held by some men that always seek pleasure i.e. pleasure in some form is always the ultimate object of their desire. This theory is known as

Psychological Hedonism because it simply affirms the seeking of pleasure as a psychological fact. Others hold that man ought to seek pleasure. This form is called Ethical Hedonism.

Historically Hedonism dates back at least to Democritus (C 460 BC-C 362 B.C.) a Greek philosopher who said that happiness is the object of our conduct and to Aristippus (C. 435 B.C. - 356 B.C.) who was a pupil of Socrates. The views of Aristippus called Cyrenaicism, advocates that pleasure is the one end, the only good for him. The most intense pleasure is the highest good. Epicurus (C. 342 B.C.-270 B.C.) another Greek exponent of Hedonism modified the views of Aristippus. His system of Ethics, called as epicureanism, stressed that it is not the most intense pleasure but the most lasting and the highest pleasure which men should seek. The spiritual pleasures are elevated above the fleeting physical and self-control, friendship and wisdom are encouraged and developed.

The pleasure theory was revived during the Renaissance and was propounded in England during the 17th Century by Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) and John Locke (1632-1704). Later exponents of the pleasure theory were Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873). A detailed discussion of various forms of hedonism is given below.

#### 9.4 Psychological Hedonism

Psychological hedonism advocates that the ultimate object of desire is pleasure. There is a natural tendency in man to seek pleasure and avoid pain. Pleasure is a psychological fact. Man may appear to desire other things like wealth, fame, respect, health, power, virtue but all these are subordinate of means to get pleasure. Pleasure is the chief motivating factor of human conduct Bentham and Mill are the main exponents of this point of view. To quote Bentham- **“Nature has placed man under the dominance of two sovereign masters pleasure and pain. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do as well as to determine what we shall do.”**

Mill also supports this point of view. In his book, 'Utilitarianism' Mill states that self-consciousness and self-observation assisted by observation of others will declare that desiring a thing and finding it pleasant, aversion to it and thinking of it as painful, are phenomena entirely inseparable or rather two different modes of the same phenomena. In strictness of language two different modes of naming the same psychological fact; that to think of an object as desirable (except for the sake of its consequences) and to think of it as pleasant, are one and the same thing and that to desire anything except in proportion as the idea of it is pleasant, is a physical and metaphysical impossibility, he held.

The theory of Psychological Hedonism is a description of human nature learned by empirical observation. At first glance the theory seems to be quite appealing. It is certainly true that many people do pursue pleasure and that all men consciously seek pleasure at times. But this is not a sufficient proof of Psychological Hedonism. What

Psychological. Hedonists need to show is that all men in all their activities are seeking 'pleasure and nothing but pleasure. Holt, an American realist, comments that it need not be doubted that there is much a tendency in human nature but what the Psychological Hedonist would need to prove is that this only tendency determining human action. Sidgwick criticises Mill for stating that desiring a thing and finding it pleasant are two modes of naming the case, it is hard to see how the proposition we are discussing requires to be determined by practised self-consciousness and self-observation as the denial of it would involve a contradiction in terms. The following are the main objections raised against psychological hedonism.

#### **9.4.1 Objections to Psychological Hedonism**

I. The strongest argument against Psychological Hedonism comes from Introspection. When we desire we are not consciously desiring pleasure. We may be desiring food or a piece of music or some form of exercise without any thought of the pleasant feeling that their attainment will bring us. It is true that the satisfaction of our desire for things is normally accompanied by a pleasant feeling. Yet it is evident that what we desire is not merely and pleasant feeling but the object arousing it. The confusion arises because of ambiguity in the word pleasure as pointed out by Sidgwick. Pleasure is sometimes understood to mean an object that gives satisfaction. The hearing of music is sometimes said to be a pleasure but of course the hearing of music is not a feeling of satisfaction but it is an object that gives satisfaction. Machenzie says that when we speak of 'pleasures' in the plural, or rather in the concrete we mean objects that give satisfaction whereas when we speak 'pleasure' in the abstract form we more often mean the feeling of satisfaction which such objects bring with them. Now when it is said that what we desire is always pleasure, it means that we always desire some object, the attainment of which is accompanied by an agreeable feeling.

II. Wants are prior to satisfaction. This point was chiefly brought out by Butler and Hutchison. Many kinds of pleasure would not exist at all, if they were not preceded by certain 'desires for objects' Take for instance the pleasure of benevolent affections. No one could possibly feel these pleasures unless one were first benevolent i.e. had a desire for the welfare of others. This is true of almost every pleasures. Even the most delicious food will not be enjoyed by you unless you are hungry.

III. Modern psychologists have demonstrated that there are certain natural tendencies of self-sacrifice and sympathy in human nature which induce not only to seek one is own pleasure but to look to the interest of others. A mother sacrificing herself for the sake of child, a man deliberately risking his life to save another human being from drowning, or a martyre choosing rather to be tortured than to renounce the truth. Our brave soldiers sacrifice their entire lives even give their supreme sacrifices too just for their nation. These are some of the example of 'dis-interested action'. Central message of this only.

IV. Another inconsistency which is pointed out by Sidgwick is the paradox of hedonism. First Sidgwick establishes that what we desire is some objective end and not

the accompanying pleasures. Then he proceeds to demonstrate that even when we desire pleasure, the best way to get it is to forget it. If we think of pleasure itself we are most likely to miss it. If we direct our desires towards objective ends, the pleasure comes of itself. Sidgwick takes the example of a player. If the player is always thinking of his victory only he will not enjoy the game, may be he could even lose it. What he desires, before the game begins, is not victory but the pleasant excitement of the struggle for it.

A certain degree of disinterestedness, seems to be necessary in order to obtain full enjoyment. A man who maintains throughout an Epicurean mood fixing his aim on his own pleasure, does not catch the full spirit of the pleasure, his eagerness never gets just the sharpness of edge which imparts to the pleasure its highest zeal. This is the paradox of hedonism that the impulse towards pleasure, if it is too predominant defeats its own aim.

The conclusion is that we do not desire things because they give us pleasure, on the contrary, they give us pleasure because we desire them. The natural tendencies of self-sacrifice, sympathy and benevolence are equally predominant in mankind which motivate humans to seek good for their fellow beings too.

## **9.5 Ethical Hedonism**

Ethical hedonism holds that the supreme end of man's life ought to be pleasure or happiness. Pleasure is the only desirable end to be aimed at. Desire for all other things such as wealth, virtue etc., are subservient to the end of pleasure. Pleasantness is the only quality because of which an experience is good or valuable. Ethical Hedonism does not merely say that one of the factors which makes an action good is pleasantness of the experience rather it asserts that no consequences of an action except pleasantness and unpleasantness, which we may call its hedonic consequence, have the slightest relevance whatever to the goodness of the action.

Ethical Hedonism is that ethical theory which asserts as to how men ought to act what men ought to desire. Is there any relation between Psychological Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism? Sidgwick stated that if Psychological hedonism implies that it is psychologically impossible for a man to aim at anything but his own greatest pleasure, it would entail the rejection of all rival ethical theories. If we always did seek our own greatest happiness there would be no point in saying that we ought to seek it. But generally Psychological Hedonists do not take this step. They hold that man always desires pleasure but not necessarily the greatest pleasure. Thus it leaves scope for Egoistic Ethical Hedonism i.e. Men do always seek pleasure, but they ought to seek the most intense and most lasting pleasure.

Mill tried to base Ethical Hedonism on Psychological Hedonism. To quote a passage from Mill. "The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it. In the like manner, I apprehend the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable is that people do actually desire it."

It is assumed that the meaning of the word 'desirable' is analogous to that of 'visible' and audible, that these three words are similar in appearance but different in meaning. The word 'visible' means 'able to be heard', whereas 'desirable' does not mean able to be desired rather it means it is reasonable to be desired or that it ought to be desired. Thus the confusion between the above mentioned words involves a logical fallacy called 'figure of speech'. Hence, we arrive at a conclusion that there is no logical interlink between Psychological Hedonism and Ethical Hedonism.

Ethical Hedonism not only states that we ought to seek pleasure but definitely states that we ought to seek the greatest pleasure. In estimating the amount of pleasure two factors are to be taken into account intensity or degree of pleasantness caused and duration or the length of time for which the pleasant experience lasts. It is, of course, not simple to estimate the relative importance of the two factors. Sometimes it becomes difficult to make a choice between very intense, but momentary and less intense but lasting pleasures, Pains are also to be taken into account because hedonists emphasise surplus of pleasure over pain. Bentham suggests certain other criteria, for example certainty, proximity, fecundity, purity and extent to estimate the pleasantness of experience.

Ethical Hedonism assumes two forms (i) Egoistic Hedonism and (ii) Universalistic Hedonism.

### **9.5.1 Egoistic Hedonism**

It is a doctrine that man ought to seek his own greatest pleasure. The sole moral duty of man is to try to get the greatest amount of pleasantness for himself throughout his life. The chief advocates of this doctrine are Cyrenaics and Epicureans in Early Greek Period. Cyrenaics held that a man ought to seek the pleasure of each moment without any consideration of future consequences while, Epicureans held that there should be prudent consideration of consequences which would enable the agent to secure the greatest possible amount of pleasure in the whole course of life. Thus, they preferred durable and lasting, though less intense pleasure to momentary but intense pleasure. The pleasure of friendship, philosophic study i.e. of intellect are to be preferred to the pleasures of momentary appetites.

The influence of Christianity with its emphasis on self sacrifice reduced the impact of egoistic hedonism. Egoistic hedonism is also implied by the theories of Hobbes and Gossendi. Hobbes maintained that man was entirely selfish, egoist always seeking his own benefit or good. Hobbes did not directly talk of pleasure yet it is implied by his theory.

In the modern period Sidgwick has given due consideration to egoistic hedonism. He recognises it as an inevitable element in a complete system of Ethics. Why should we pursue a particular end? asked Sidgwick. It is not due to the fear of some outside authority rather due to the demand of our nature that we pursue an end. Prof. Sidgwick however thought that "when we sit down in a cool hour (as he says, quoting Butler) we perceived that there is nothing which is reasonable to seek i.e. nothing which is

desirable in itself except pleasure" He then argues that since pleasure is the one desirable thing the greatest pleasure must be the most desirable goal.

### **9.5.2 Criticism :**

The above account reveals that Egoistic Hedonism is based on Psychological Hedonism. Since Psychological Hedonism, is an unsound theory, therefore, egoistic hedonism, if based on psychological hedonism, cannot give us sound results. besides, our direct intuitions. Even the researches in the field to Psychology reveal that man has not only selfish tendencies but also the natural tendencies of sympathy, self-sacrifice, benevolence which lead him to seek good of others. This leads us to consider another form of hedonism viz., Universalistic Hedonism, more commonly known as Utilitarianism.

## **9.6 Universalistic Hedonism or Utilitarianism**

It is a theory which emphasizes that we ought to aim at the greatest possible amount of pleasure for the greatest possible number of persons. Some of the 18th century English moralists, including Butler and Shaftesbury, emphasized the naturalness of benevolence, or seeking good of others. Huchison said that the end of good conduct is greatest happiness for the greatest number. This phrase characterised English Utilitarianism. The Chief advocates of the theory are Bentham, Mill and Sidgwick. Bentham gives a quantitative analysis of pleasures. Mill introduces qualitative differences in pleasure, Sidgwick gives a rational analysis of hedonistic theories. Their views are known as Quantitative Utilitarianism, Qualitative Utilitarianism and Rational Utilitarianism respectively. Here we will examine the first two theories only.

### **9.6.1 Quantitative Utilitarianism of Bentham**

The Utilitarian movement, the revival of hedonism in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century, grew out of the wretched conditions that existed in England as a result of revolutions and wars. Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) lived through the period of the American Revolution, the French Revolution, the Napoleonic wars and earlier stages of the Industrial Revolution. He was conscious of the serious political, economic and social abuses of the world at the time. So, he was interested in finding a base for morality that was practical, useful and social. He used the phrase '*greatest good of the greatest number*' and tried to apply this yardstick to both individual conduct and to social behaviour.

In his book 'An introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation' (1789), Bentham states. "Nature has placed man under the empire of pleasure and pain. His only object is to seek pleasure or shun pain, the principle of utility subjects everything to these motives." This quotation is also mentioned in connection with Psychological Hedonism. Obviously Bentham tries to base his Utilitarianism on Psychological Hedonism. Since we do seek pleasure, therefore, we ought to seek pleasure. He further mentions that man should not only seek his own pleasure but the greatest good of the greatest number. This is called the principle of utility.

### 9.6.2 Hedonistic Calculus

In order to determine the utility or to estimate the pleasantness of an action Bentham introduces hedonistic calculus. He says, 'weigh pleasures and weigh pains and as the balance stands, will stand the question of right and wrong'. An action is right to the extent it gives a surplus pleasure over pains and is wrong to the extent it gives the surplus of pain over pleasure. In order to measure the quantity of pleasure, Bentham suggests seven dimensions of value.

- (i) **Intensity** or the degree of pleasantness caused.
- (ii) **Duration** or the length of time the pleasant experience lasts.
- (iii) **Certainty** or the degree of probability of the pleasantness resulting from the action.
- (iv) **Proximity**, or nearness in time of the pleasant result.
- (v) **Fecundity** or the power of the pleasant experience to produce further pleasant experiences.
- (vi) **Purity** or freedom from intermixture with unpleasant experience and
- (vii) **Extent** or the number of persons affected by it.

Bentham hoped that ethics could be put on a strictly scientific basis and that these seven elements could be measured. Ethics would then be able to give exact guidance in specific problems of conduct. A person could add the pleasures, subtract the pains, strike a balance and decide the action.

Bentham's Utilitarianism may be called gross or sensualistic because he does not admit qualitative difference among pleasure. For him, any pleasure is as good as another provided they are equal in quantity. He says, 'quantity of pleasures being equal pushpin a game which was played between 16<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> century in England. The game was considered as an inferior form of pleasure as compared to superior artistic pleasure is as good as poetry'. When Bentham talks of a game known as Pushpin which was played between 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> century in England. The game was considered as an inferior form of pleasure as compared to superior artistic pleasure of purity of pleasures he does not mean any superior quality but simply freedom from pain.

Bentham's Utilitarianism contains both egoistic as well as altruistic tendencies. Bentham talks of the Natural Egoism of man as is obvious by these statements : to obtain the greatest portion of happiness for himself is the object of every rational being Dream not that man will move their little finger to serve you, unless their own advantage in so doing be obvious to them. Yet he talks of the extent of pleasures i.e., the number of persons affected by them. Bentham introduces moral sanctions in order to account for the transition from egoism to altruism.

### 9.6.3 Moral Sanctions

**Bentham admits of four sanctions, viz.**

**(i) Physical Sanction** which refers to the physical pains that result from the disregard of natural laws such as the law of health. It is the law of nature that we should satisfy the appetites moderately; if we violate it by their over indulgence, the violation are followed by diseases and pains.

**(ii) Political Sanction.** If a man violates laws of state which are, of course, directed towards social benefit, he is inflicted penalties by the state.

**(iii) Social Sanction** If a man becomes too egoistic and selfish the society will penalise the individual by isolating him from all social relationships.

**(iv) Religious Sanction.** Man does virtuous action with the expectation of being rewarded in heaven.

These are the four external sanctions, call them as pressures, which compel a man to sacrifice his own selfish interest to those of society. The moral obligation is due to these sanctions.

### 9.7 Critical Assessment of Bentham's Hedonism

The first objection that can be raised against Bentham is that he bases his Utilitarianism on Psychological Hedonism. It has been observed earlier that psychological hedonism is unsound, therefore, no sound theory can be based on unsound base. Besides, Psychological hedonism is not compatible with Ethical Hedonism. Since man always seeks his own pleasure therefore, the question of oughtness has meaning in the sense that 'man ought to seek his own greatest possible pleasure. Therefore, the only possible ethical theory, which can be based on psychological hedonism is egoistic hedonism as pointed out by Sidgwick, Utilitarianism cannot be based on Psychological hedonism.

Second, coming to Bentham's hedonistic calculus it may be mentioned that it is not workable. He recognises seven dimensions of value among pleasure and holds that surplus of pleasure over pain determines the rightness of an action. He looks upon pleasure and pain as concrete things which can be added and subtracted and thus quantitatively measured. But feeling of pleasure and pain are purely subjective states of mind and cannot be measured like this.

Third, Bentham admits only quantitative difference in pleasures and ignores the qualitative differences in pleasures: The elements of pleasantness in listening to music is certainly different in kind from the element of the pleasantness in eating. Normally, we use different phrases for different types of pleasure. The word 'pleasure' stands for the gratification of bodily appetites, 'happiness' for more permanent and durable kind of pleasure like, intellectual pleasures and joy' of 'blessedness' for the enjoyment of creative or the joy one gets from communion with God. Bentham's utilitarianism fails to account for such distinctions.



Bentham's attempt to reconcile egoism with altruism on the basis of external sanctions is not convincing. Moral actions done out of fear, may be that of punishment from society or state of fear of God, are not spontaneous actions. These sanctions no longer leave man morally free which is a prerequisite condition of ethics. The question of moral obligation or responsibility is relevant only if the actions are freely and spontaneously done by the agent and are not done under any compulsion. With these comments we proceed to discuss Mill's Utilitarianism.

## **9.8 J.S. Mill's Qualitative Utilitarianism**

J.S. Mill (1806-1873) attempted to improve upon Bentham's Utilitarianism, He was aware of the two major drawbacks in Bentham's view-point. First major charge against Bentham was that for him all types of pleasures were homogenous and differed only in quantity that his utilitarianism promoted sensuousness or that it was a doctrine worthy only of swine. To meet this charge Mill introduced qualitative difference in his utilitarianism.

Second main charge against Bentham was that he treated morality as something to be imposed from outside due to the fear of external sanctions. To meet his objection Mill introduced internal sanction besides the four suggested by Bentham.

Mill's utilitarianism may be summed up in the following statements.

### **9.8.1 Pleasure is the only thing that is desirable.**

In defining Utilitarianism Mill states 'Utility or the greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness. Wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain, by unhappiness pain and the deprivation of pleasure. Thus pleasure and the absence of pain are the only desirable ends. Mill further adds that men do desire other objects, but they desire them as a means such as wealth, health, virtue are valuable only to the extent they promote happiness or pleasure. We shall take only one example given by Mill himself. He asks 'What is the value of money?' It is valuable only to the extent that it enables a man to buy things which will give satisfaction (Pleasures) to him. Mill adds that 'sometimes money is desired in and for itself, the desire to possess it is often stronger than the desire to use it. But in that case money does not become an end itself rather it becomes an important ingredient of individual's conception of happiness. Same is true of power, fame, music and health. These are all means or a part of happiness.

### **9.8.2 People actually desire pleasure**

The only proof that a thing is desirable is the fact that people do actually desire it. Obviously Mill based his ethical hedonism on psychological hedonism. To quote again Mill's passage, 'the only proof capable of being given that an object is desirable, is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it. In the like manner, I apprehend the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it'. We leave this point here to be commented when we come to the critical evaluation of Mill's theory.

### 9.8.3 Each person Desires one's own happiness.

Each person's own pleasure or happiness is good to that person, so the general happiness is good to everybody. Mill says no reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable except that each person desires his own happiness. This is a fact. Therefore, the only proof we can give for seeking general happiness is that each person's happiness is good to that person and the general happiness, therefore, is good to the aggregate of all persons.

### 9.8.4 Pleasures are qualitatively different.

If one of two pleasures is preferred by those who are competently acquainted with both we are justified in saying that this preferred pleasure is superior in quality to the other. Mill introduces qualitative differences into pleasures. Human beings' with refined facilities are not satisfied with the pleasures of lower appetite but seek the higher pleasures of the intellect, of feeling and imagination and of the moral sentiments. The criterion of superiority in pleasure is determined by the choice of rational Human being by his native sense of dignity. 'Better a Socrates dissatisfied than a Pig satisfied', says Mill.

### 9.8.5 Internal Sanctions.

Why do people seek greatest good of greatest number? In answer to this question Mill accepted Bentham's four sanctions, physical, political, social and religious, but he adds an internal sanction to it. He emphasized that morality is a matter of heart and not of compulsion. He states that a feeling for the happiness of mankind is natural and habitual to human being. There is no clear line of separation between the interests of individual and those of society. The social feeling of mankind is powerful force, which tends to grow stronger as man advances in civilization. Thus, to promote not an individual's happiness but greatest happiness of the greatest number is the essence of Mill's utilitarianism.

#### Hedonism Quiz

Out of the four choices given below two are correct. Tick the right Choices.

1. Hedonism is broadly divided in the following two types:
 

a) Sociological Hedonism	b) Ethical Hedonism
c) Logical Hedonism	d) Psychological Hedonism
  
2. Psychological Hedonism advocates that (Tick the right Options)
  - a) Man ought to desire pleasure
  - b) Man has a natural tendency to seek pleasure
  - c) Man must always be desiring pleasure
  - d) Man seeks pleasure for greatest number of Persons
  
3. Out of the following four lists (each carrying 7 dimensions of Value to measure the quantity of pleasure as given in the Hedonistic Calculus), pick the right list.
  - a) Intensity, Creativity, Probability, Flamboyant, Prescriptive, Experiential

- b) Instantaneity, Couturier, Dispassionate priority, Formality, Positive, Exact
- c) Intensity, Duration, Certainty, Proximity, fecundity, Purity, Extent
- d) Instinctive, Duration, Clean, Primeval, Precaution, Extreme

### 9.8.6 Critical Assessment

In the first statement Mill has tried to define good in terms of pleasure which men desire and hence he commits a '*naturalistic fallacy*' as pointed out by Moore, which means good cannot be defined in terms of any natural quality. In the second statement Mill has based his utilitarianism on psychological hedonism. It has been observed earlier that only plausible theory that can be based on psychological hedonism is egoistic hedonism and not utilitarianism. Mill's attempt to base utilitarianism on psychological hedonism rests on the ambiguity of the word 'desirable'. The analogy between, the words 'visible', 'audible', and desirable is logically wrong. 'Visible' means 'able to be seen', 'audible' means 'able to be heard' but 'desirable' means not 'able to be desired' but 'ought to be desired'. Mill admits that men do seek things other than pleasure but these are either 'parts of pleasure' or 'means to pleasure'.

The expression part of pleasure is not clear. It has already been observed in connection with psychological hedonism that we aim at objects and feeling of pleasure is just an accompaniment.

Mill's recognition of qualitative difference in pleasures leads him away from his hedonistic position which admits that the only element that constitute good or value are pleasantness and unpleasantness. Faculties means that there are many ingredients in good or value and pleasure is only one of these. Pleasure in common sense stands only for the satisfaction of appetites, or 'blessedness' for the enjoyment of creative art or the joy one gets from communion with God. Bentham's utilitarianism fails to account for such distinctions.

Bentham's attempt to reconcile egoism with altruism on the basis of external sanctions is not convincing. Moral actions done out of fear, may be that of punishment from society or state of fear of God, are not spontaneous actions. These sanctions no longer leave man morally free which is a prerequisite condition of ethics. The question of moral obligation or responsibility is relevant only if the actions are freely and spontaneously done by the agent and are not done under any compulsion. With these comments we proceed to discuss Mill's Utilitarianism.

## 9.9 Summary

Hedonism you learnt is a general term which applies to those theories which consider pleasure as the supreme end of life. Historically these theories date back to Democritus and Aristippus, both were Pre – Socratic Greek philosophers.

Later two major forms of Hedonism were advanced. **(1) Psychological Hedonism** advocated that Human beings seek pleasure and avoid pain. **(2) Ethical hedonism** propounded that pleasure should be the supreme end of man's life. Later you

were introduced to the Quantitative Utilitarianism of Bentham who emphasized that an action is right to the extent it gives more pleasure than pains. He gave a seven dimensional moral calculus.

The second theory we discussed was of Mill who propounded a Qualitative theory of Utilitarianism. Mill's theory could be summed up in the statement – *Pleasure is the only thing that is desirable*. His theory states that it is the greatest happiness principle which holds an action right. His Unique contribution was that he introduced the qualitative difference in pleasure. Also, besides the four sanctions admitted by Bentham he added an extra internal sanction thereby underscoring that morality is not just a matter of compulsion or external pressure. It is a matter of heart, he added.

### 9.10 Glossary

**Hedonism** – a doctrine which advocates that pleasure is the supreme good of life thus according to Hedonism good is that which yields pleasure and results in removing suffering.

**Utilitarianism** – an ethical theory which advocates that morality of action is evaluated on the principle-greatest happiness of the greatest number.

**Ethical Hedonism** – an ethical theory which claims that every person ought to seek pleasure.

### 9.11 Further Readings

1. Sahakian.S. William (1974) Ethics: An Introduction to Theories and Problems, New York: Barnes & Noble Books.
2. Titus.H. Harold & Keeton Moris (1973) Ethics for Today (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) New York: D Van Nast and Company.
3. Lillie William (1957) An Introduction to Ethics, London: Matheun.
4. Frankena K. William (1999) Ethics (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.), New Delhi: Prentice Hall of India Private Limited.
5. Sinha Jadunath (2004) A Manual of Ethics, Kolkata, New Central Book Agency
6. Mackenzie J.S (1956) A Manual of Ethics

### 9.12 Model Questions

1. Define Hedonism?
2. Explain Mills Qualitative utilitarianism?
3. Give a critical assessment of Bentham's Quantitative Hedonism?

Hedonism Quiz Answers		
1.) b and d	2.) b	3.) c

# MORAL RIGHTS OF FOETUS, FEMALE FOETICIDE

## Structure

- 10.0 Objectives
- 10.1 Introduction
- 10.2 Foetus and its rights
- 10.3 The Moral Rights of foetus
  - 10.3.1 The Conservative Argument
  - 10.3.2 Medical Perspective
- 10.4 Female Foeticide
  - 10.4.1 Descriptive and Factual Account
  - 10.4.2 Social Reasons of Female Foeticide
  - 10.4.3 Is Female foeticide Justified?
- 10.5 Moral grounds to condemn Female Foeticide
- 10.6 Summary
- 10.7 Glossary
- 10.8 Further Readings
- 10.9 Model Questions

## 10.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- comprehend the idea of Moral rights of foetus
- analyse female foeticide from ethical perspective
- critically asses the concepts of moral rights of foetus and female foeticide.

## 10.1 Introduction

Human societies are formed by a group of people who share some common lifestyles, interests, culture, values, concerns, aspirations and even challenges. Individual within a society feel good living together, following societal norms, being

interdependent, providing mutual care, ensuring some rights and even fixing some duties. Individual within a society care for each other and treat otherwise dignity. Each society has its set of rights and duties for its individuals. Should it or can it even apply to unborn human beings. Rights of the foetus, the unborn human, have a lot of concerns and quite a few moral deliberations have been going on around it of late with the large scale spread of female foeticide around the globe has raised serious concerns. In this lesson, we will take up the issue of Rights of foetus and a little further we will take get another similar issue of female foeticide which, though after having come under societal as well as governmental scanner has shown signs of reversal but it continues to worry ethical thinkers. This chapter will take up the ethical concern of these two issues.

## **10.2 Foetus and its Rights**

There are some basic problems which must be attended to in order to understand whether a foetus has rights and can a foetus claim some rights.

1. What is the status of the foetus? Can it be treated as an individual?
2. Is abortion justified? or should foetus be killed?
3. Is Embryo experimentation justified?
4. Is there anything wrong in the use of fetal tissue for medical purposes?

Before tackling with these problems let us be clear about the meaning of foetus and its rights. Foetus is the individual unborn organism carried within the womb in the later stages of its development. Uterus is the place in womb where a new organism is engendered or brought into life. The earliest stages in the development of an organism, before it has assumed its distinctive form, first eight weeks in the human species is known as embryo.

## **10.3 The Moral Rights of Foetus**

The question - Should abortion be permitted? has been answered both in negative by some, and in positive by others. There are some who take a conservative view which holds that life should be conserved and argue against abortion, and others with liberal view argue in favour of abortion. Is not abortion an act of violation of human rights? What do we understand by rights? Human rights are the inherent claims sought by human beings to enjoy life and freedom by practising and enhancing their talents and live a life of their own choice.

### **10.3.1 The Conservative Argument**

The basic argument by conservatives is given against abortion on the basis of fundamental human right to life. The dispute about abortion arises because it is absolutely focused on human life. There is a continuum between fertilized egg and child. Therefore, conservatives argue that foetus should be granted all those rights which are given to human beings. The argument seems to be quite strong to be turned down. But,

can we draw a significant line between a fertilized egg and a child? Does foetus count morally? Are basic questions of our interest as they have a concern to the value of life. It is taken for granted that animals and plants do not count morally. However, their lives are preserved and ought to be preserved on practical and pragmatic basis i.e., for justified reasons the animals can be killed. Can we compare human foetus to plants, animals or a fully grown up human being? No doubt a foetus has the potential to grow into a human being but at an early stage it cannot be considered to be so. However, conservatives argue such in favour of moral rights of foetus as it will depend upon the most fundamental justified beliefs and values. They believe that a foetus, whether inside the womb or outside the womb, is a human child, who has the same features and belong to same human species. Therefore, to kill or abort it will be wrong. On the other hand liberals argue against conservative view. They question, can a foetus claim such rights and act freely and live life of its own choice? The foetus lacks consciousness and cannot deliberate about actions and make decisions. Consciousness, feeling of pleasure and pain, deliberations and evaluation are of the real moral significance. They strongly counter conservatives' view and ask that how can we give rights to foetus as it is not conscious of even itself and its concerns? The conservatives, opponents of abortion, claim that the right to life can be given from conception without any concern whether the foetus is conscious or not.

But the question can further be asked, when does human life begin? One could perhaps, say that a new human life begins with conception. But the problem with this position is that we are not sure that the fertilization of egg will necessarily result in an embryo and not as a tumour and a new individual will begin there. Or one may still find that the fertilized egg instead of resulting in an embryo has split into two or more than two embryos. Life is a continuum and the emergence of individual occurs gradually. Conservative argument in favour of foetus is that the embryo must be protected because it is a Homo-Sapien, a human being or because it is going to be a human being. Against this view Peter Singer asserts that "...claims for the right to life should not be based on species membership, so the fact that the embryo is of the species *homo sapiens* does not show that the embryo is a human being in any morally relevant sense". On the other hand, conservatives claim that embryo inside the female body unfolds its potential that is inherent in it and has a chance of developing into a child unless its development is deliberately interrupted. So it has a right to be protected and grow as an individual.

If the life does not begin at conception, at least, the fertilized egg has the potential, complete with its fullest genetic make up to be a full blown new human being. It has all its uniqueness and individuality. On the basis of potentiality argument it may be said that because fertilized egg is potentially a human being it should also be given all the human rights and protection that are possessed by actual human beings.

The potentiality argument is not free from objections (i) How can we be sure that something like fertilised egg will become a moral individual X? Treating fertilized egg as a particular individual and conservatives values do not have good reasons to argue in its favour (ii) We may say that it is not only the fertilized egg that has potential to grow as an

individual but also even unfertilised eggs and sperms have equal potential to grow as full human beings. It is objectionable to say that only the fertilised egg has all the necessary potential to become an individual being. The unfertilized egg has the potential to be fertilized. The potentiality argument fails as we know that the life continues and what we are required is not to know when life begins but when does life begin to matter morally.

From moral point of view, what matters is not life or human life but a person who is conscious of his own self and other selves also. If we say that living beings should be protected and they all have right to live then we will not be making much difference between human beings and animals, for they are living being too. Then the question is at what stage does foetus attain rights? At what stage should it be considered as human, or as a person? Foetus may be assumed to be a human being, a person, a member of the species - Homosapiens. Scientifically, it may be proved by an examination of the nature of chromosomes in the cells of living organism. In this sense there is no doubt that from the first moment of its existence an embryo conceived from human sperm and egg is a human being".<sup>8</sup> But in moral sense a human being, a person is one who has self-awareness, self-control, capacity to relate to others, concern for others and a social being. What is a person? Descartes says, a man is a conscious and thinking being, who reflects, remembers, doubts, feels, wills-, evaluates, judges, knows, imagines, believes etc. He is a conscious being and can make differences and distinctly know plants, animals and persons. A person alone can value things around himself, and this conscious activity is the essential feature of a person which a foetus lacks, however, it might be having a potential to grow like a person. Potentiality may be necessary but not sufficient condition for giving any kind of rights to it. "What matters is not the content of each account but rather that the individual in question has the capacity to give such one account."

The recognition of a person might find its place in the social organization and interaction. Is it the personhood when the life begins to matter morally? It is because of personhood that human beings should be given rights over all other creatures. Persons alone have a capacity to value life and judge others' actions besides self-evaluation. And the conservatives argue that the foetus should not be denied the right to grow into a full fledged person. A foetus is potentially a person capable of valuing life and therefore, it is wrong to abort it. It has right to protection and should be given opportunities to grow as a person. Although foetus is not a person who can value life but has the potential to be so and to do so.

Morality is not .concerned with calculations and hedonistic approach only but with certain strong sentiment which coax one to protect the foetus. If the life of the foetus is valuable, then it should not be ended unless the reason for so doing are more important than its life. Even a mother has no right to abort it unless there are more convincing reasons to eliminate it. Peter Singer takes side with liberal view and says :



"..... that we accord the life of a fetus no greater value than the life of a non-human animal at a similar level of rationality, self-consciousness, awareness, capacity to feel etc. Since, no fetus is a person, no fetus has the same claim to be as a person".

A conservative points out that foetus is not a property of its mother; It may be stated that "The fact that someone has a claim to ownership is not a feature of comparable importance to the value of life. If a woman is right to choose, she is right not because she has a claim to ownership of the foetus, or because it is in her body, she is right because the moral reasons for respecting its life are less important than the moral reasons for respecting her decision to end its life."

A liberal justifies abortion without denying that the foetus is an innocent human or has a potential to be so and argues that the woman has a right to what happens to her own body. Foetus is not a person and therefore cannot have rights in strict sense. There is nothing wrong if its life is ended prematurely. Pain inflicted due to abortion may be considered wrong, so it is most important to ensure that no pain is caused in the process of abortion. The foetus cannot choose to live, nor can deliberate or think. Its parents may have the interest in its survival, that is a different matter. Freedom lies with an individual not with a foetus.

It may be argued that loss of one life due to abortion is a loss of the world. On the other hand, it may be said on social, political and economic ground that the rapid growth of population may weaken the society and under such circumstances the abortion may be justified. It is the right of the woman to bring the foetus in the world or not. It is not humans per se that are valuable, but full human beings without assuming that the foetus can claim rights.

### **10.3.2 Medical Perspective**

Another important question arises concerning of rights foetus in connection with being used for the medical purposes. We may quote from Peter Singer in this connection that their "Research carried out specifically on foetuses has led to hope of finding cures for many illnesses by the transplantation, and to be likely to be rejected by the patient. The example that has received the most publicity to date is Parkinson's disease, but the use of fetal tissue has been suggested in the treatment of Alzheimer's disease, Huntington's Disease, and diabetes; and fetal transplants have been used to save the life of another fetus, in a case in which a 30 week old foetus, in uterus, suffering from a fatal immune system disorder was given fetal cells from aborted foetuses.

Do foetus have rights and interests that they may not be used for these purposes? Can there rights be violated? We have all ready said that foetus cannot claim rights. Before 8 weeks a foetus cannot feel pain because it does not reach a stage when there is any nerve transmission in those parts which are associated with consciousness.

A week old baby is neither rational nor a self-conscious being. There are many animals who have self-consciousness capacity to feel more than the new born baby. He

is not an autonomous being who cannot make claims for dignity, rights to freedom, equality and justice. Life should be saved and infanticide should be prohibited but this does not confirm the stand point that foetus has rights.

#### **10.4 Female Foeticide**

As *unknown a foetus* is an unborn human more than eight weeks after conception. Foeticide means aborting or killing a potential human being through expulsion or termination of a foetus especially by medical induction from the womb before it is capable to survive independently.

Foetus, whether a male or a female, is a potential person and aborting a foetus because it is a female is a heinous act which should be morally and socially condemned. Selective abortion and female foeticide is a crying shame which highlights the degraded status of woman in society. Even the woman imbibes this notion of being inferior to man that the concept of bearing a son becomes so hard wired to her that she needs no external pressure to prefer a son and abort the daughter. She believes as if she is making a choice in giving birth to a son, while the matter of the fact is that she becomes insensitive to the issue by being brought up in a male-governed society. In fact she does not realize that as a person she has a right to choice made after deliberations and reflections. Female foeticide reflects the mentality of the individuals and status of women in the society. It is a blot on humanity which prescribes equal rights to all human beings, men or women. Female foeticide is in back rejection of right to life to a woman.

##### **10.4.1 Descriptive and Factual Account**

The female to male ratio in India has considerably decreased. The incidents of female foeticide is at the highest number in North India, particularly in Punjab and Haryana where the ratio of male and female has been touched around 1000 : 864. Of course some sustained Governmental and social efforts have yielded good results and the skewed sex ration is limping back to normal. With strict enforcement of female foeticide legislations the skewed sex-ratio has started showing positive results. One could definitely give the credit to the intensive campaigns and positive deliberations and public engagements started by government and non-government organisations, social media and mass-media.

##### **10.4.2 Social Reasons of Female Foeticide**

Girls are treated as burden to be married off. The custom of giving dowry and gifts at the time of marriage to boy and his family charges heavily the parents of their daughter. It is rather an unavoidable social evil which leads to many other related evils like dowry torture, physical and mental abuse, murder of the girl, divorce, separation and so on and gives rise to an imbalanced and disordered society.

Girls are treated as commodity and inferior to boys. Girls are tortured not in their in-laws' houses rather in many cases they are ill treated at their parents' house, i.e. below they are not even granted a life of dignity. Sometimes girls are married off in such

families that they prefer their being dead while they were still a pound of flesh. Kidnapping of girls and selling them in the market for flesh trade to make money is also a reason for female foeticide. Prostitution, maltreatment at parent's or in law's house or dowry deaths, physical or mental abuse make one feel not to have a girl child. Dowry deaths and harassment of the daughter-in-law are more prevalent in rich sections of our society and so called middle class. Female foeticide has been practiced even in educated families too. Even when a female is born, parents yearn for a male child and continue breeding till they get a male child. This is very much a common practice in our society. The poor people always look for helping hands to feed the large family and hence boys are preferred. But that is no excuse to choose boys over girls.

#### **10.4.3 Is Female foeticide Justified?**

Abortion may be justified on certain grounds irrespective of male-female discrimination. If a woman has no way to support a child and is not emotionally, physically or financially ready to bear and rear a child then no dogma should stop her from making a choice to abort the foetus. But the same argument cannot be extended to self-selective abortion. How can a woman kill her child in womb itself just because the foetus is of female sex.

### **10.5 Moral Grounds to Condemn Female Foeticide**

The full implementation of the human rights of woman and of the girl child ensure their fundamental freedom and inalienable, integral and inseparable part of all human rights. Right to life and freedom of choice does not make a person self-selective abortion. It is a blight on our country. Human life is the basis of all good and is the necessary source and condition of every human activity. Religions too advocate that life is sacred and no one has a right to eliminate it. Life is a gift of God and ought to be preserved. It is wrong to kill anyone.

All innocent life should be valued equally unless there are some relevant reasons to eliminate it. Every individual has value avoid any attempt to destroy an innocent being is in the violation to the right to life.

In nature male and female have equally important roles to play. We can think of a balanced and disciplined society if and only if male and female are given equal rights and they could work with their unique strengths in a harmonious order. Rather it may be observed that a woman with her patience, tolerance and moral sensitivity inculcates moral ideals in children; and if she is not given opportunity to survive we can well imagine what sort of society will evolve in future. Why should the right of girl child to survive be denied even before she comes into the world.

Human rights must ensure the dignity of every person (even potential human beings) irrespective of race, religion, nationality, sex or any other factor. These rights are duly given to any individual-male or female by virtue of his/her being a human being.

Women are integral part of society and if they are not given their due dignity and esteem human society will be failing in delivering its prime duty.

Foetal sex determination is illegal and a punishable offence. Real education is required. Occurrence of sex determination is illegal. It is mainly required only to detect any genetic disorders or complications in the formation and growth of the foetus. Only when it relates to sex-related disorders especially genetic. Bringing a new life in this world is such a divine act that to grudge over a minor detail like the sex of the child is unfortunate, no matter what socio-economic class one belong to. One cannot blame the woman alone who aborts her child. Is not the doctor equally guilty? or other members of the family may be the society at large is guilty of propagating a preference for having male babies.

Let us understand all of us Girls are in no sense inferior to boys. They have the same level of intellect, capacities and skills to work. They are rather more sensitive to situations and can understand life more clearly than boys. To avoid the problem of female foeticide we have to change the mindsets through education, and not just by making it illegal to abort female foetus.

### **Pause and Reflect**

The Male/Female ratio is still not an ideal one. UN Human Rights council reports a dismal scenario of skewed sex-ratio at birth world wide. India is placed fourth in the top worst affected countries. Obviously the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex- Selection) Act (2003) is not bringing its desired impact. Now more advanced procedures of Sex- selection through IVF are taking this immoral and cruel practice to yet another level.

Reflect from ethical perspective. Why all these things are happening? How can they be stopped? Write your remarks on a separate page.

### **Check Your Progress**

1. On what grounds human rights be granted to a foetus?
2. What is Female Foeticide?
3. Mention some moral grounds of condemning Female Foeticide?

## **10.6 Summary**

This lesson began by raising some very fundamental questions concerning the very rights of an unborn human being. We learnt that a foetus is an unborn human in the

womb of a mother in its later stages. The discussion introduced us to different arguments founded by Conservatives and Liberals. Later we learnt about some medical issues concerning the problem. In the second part, we took up the issue of Female foeticide. Selective abortion of unwanted female unborn human is not only immoral, shameful and illegal it is cruel also. After considering the social reasons of female foeticide we discussed whether we can justify female foeticide on any ground. In the end we viewed all the moral grounds on which we could condemn Female Foeticide.

### **10.7 Glossary**

**Foetus-** an unborn human of more than eight weeks of age after conception which develops from an embryo.

**Female Foeticide-** an unethical and illegal form of termination or abortion of a female unborn human inside mother's womb.

### **10.8 Further Readings**

Goodkind, Daniel (1999) Should Prenatal Sex Selection be Restricted? Ethical Questions and their Implications for Research and Policy." Population Studies, 53 (1): pp-49-61.

George, Sabu M. (1997) Female Infanticide in Tamil Nadu, India: From Recognition Back to Denial? Reproductive Health Matters. 5 (10) pp. 124-132

### **10.9 Model Questions:-**

1. What do we understand by foetus? Discuss in detail the moral rights of Foetus?
2. Discuss the moral concerns of Female Foeticide.

## SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER JUSTICE

### Structure

- 11.0 Objectives
- 11.1 Introduction
- 11.2 The Idea of Gender
- 11.3 Gender Justice
- 11.4 Malaise of Sexual Harassment
- 11.5 Summary
- 11.6 Glossary
- 11.7 Further Readings
- 11.8 Model Questions

### 11.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- state and explain the idea of Gender and its moral significance .
- understand the idea of Sexual harassment.
- critically estimate the ideas of Sexual Harassment and Gender Justice.

### 11.1 Introduction

Man writ large is society and if man can display certain qualities like honesty, truthfulness, peaceful, co-existence, non-violence, loyalty and altruism society can also have certain virtues like - Justice. Ideas of equality and reward/punishment had always been central to the concept of Justice. In its broader perspective justice aims to provide a fair framework within which each individual gets one's due and pursues one's own good. For that the society must develop a shared understanding of the community and create a binding ordering principle which is impartial, unprejudiced and unbiased. We talk of justice in various contexts e.g., legal justice, social justice, gender justice. In the following few pages we shall be discussing Justice in the context of gender studies.

### 11.2 The Idea of Gender

First, let us understand what do we understand by two key words - *gender* and *sex*. *Sex* refers to the biological distinctions between males and females due to their reproductive organs. *Gender* refers to certain feminine and masculine attributes which men and women acquire or develop while living in a society. The central issue then is

gender which in any way determined due to biological attributes. Now when we try to talk of justice in the context of gender we come across very many interesting issues.

At the outset let us understand that gender justice will mean a rejection of all hierarchical and gender-structured inequalities and an assurance of freedom, equality, equal treatment, dignity, and self-esteem for all. The central objective of gender justice is that a woman is an autonomous person, fully human, thinking individual free to pursue her own welfare and fulfill her own aspirations without any bias to her sex. One may say that in the eyes of law and the state, men and women are equal. Definitely both have the equal right to vote and enjoy many other state provided privileges rights and opportunities on equal terms. But does societies at large which is, till date, male-dominated, accord equality and justice? Gender justice is essential because women deserve a dignified life free of exploitation, discrimination, humiliation and torture. On the contrary men always treat them as their subordinate in every field, women are denied a fair, equitable, and righteous opportunity to propagate their own self interest. They are treated in terms of her motherhood. Do we talk about a man in terms of his fatherhood? We always talk of a woman as a mother or a sister or a wife or as certain social relation. A man is a man always but a woman is always one or the other social labels. There is yet another aspect which is still more derogatory than these social – labels where we talk of a woman in terms of her BODY. 'Sex-symbols', 'glamour dolls', 'beauty queens', 'super-models'- what will be your reactions when you hear women being given their new epithets. Commodification of woman is a very disturbing social trend and still worse are practices of female foeticide, infanticide, girl-child discrimination, bride burning, sexual exploitation, domestic violence, discriminatory inheritance laws, inconsequential property rights and genital mutilations, We do not talk of similar or parallel practices or malpractices in the case of males. Gender justice would discuss all such issues under its ambit and provide a sense of justice to woman society. This calls for resetting our mind sets, rethinking our thought-constructs, reviewing our assumptions and accepting a standpoint that women are unique, no less free, no less equal, no less important, no less powerful and no less vital for the function of our society. It must be re-emphasized that a woman is equally unique as a man. So here equality does not stand for giving them equal rights but treating them equally unique and allocate to them their own due. Her justice will ensure that a woman gets the status she deserves as also she is given complete freedom which allows her to pursue her own self-interest and aspirations. All this ensures that she be her own self irrespective of her biological differences and social discriminations.

A woman must be treated as a complete and free individual, free from any patronising forces or any patriarchal dominance, she should be treated as-a person who can grow and evolve as an enlightened, empowered and honourable equal member of a society. Gender justice is all about rejection of traditional patriarchal stereotypication of women, accordance of full human rights to women, development of supportive regimes

to bring the women out of the effects of the ages-old discriminatory and subordinating practices. All such social practices and policies should be reconsidered which lead to inequality and discrimination on the grounds of one's gender only. All people (Males as well as females) are born different and justice should lie in treating each as unique, free, equal and capable of pursuing one's own goals and in all these assurances gender should not create any bias.

### 11.3 Gender Justice

As a matter of fact, besides being *Homosapiens*, men and women are biologically and psychologically different from each other. It is argued that each class has its specific activities to perform, well suited to its nature, that women can nurture children better than men, whereas men can handle heavy duty risky jobs better, take up field jobs and be better fire-fighters and security-personnel. This belief rests on the view that nature has determined peculiar jobs for different creatures. The role of women, in life, is taken to be limited to look after children and take care of their husbands and other family members. In many communities women are considered inferior to men and it is believed that they don't need to be educated. Men on the other hand are considered rational and are capable of handling policy matters, who can calculate and make better deliberations; whereas women are considered emotionally sensitive and understand relations better than men. Both of them are tasked to play different roles and each one's role is essential for the well being of whole life and entire humanity.

Kant's view suggests that only rational beings are capable of being morally worthy. Women are emotional and their actions have no rationality therefore they cannot be truly moral. The point is, 'Are women different from men or inferior? And, are women not rational? Cannot they think decide and judge? There is no doubt that, "Men are different from women and women are on the whole psychologically and biologically better equipped to be the principal child nurtures. **(Ruth Lea 2000:2).**

Does this motherhood make women inferior to and subordinate to man? In this context Jennifer refers to Hegel that, "the difference between men and women is like that between animals and plants. Men correspond to animals, while women correspond to plants ... When women hold the helm of government the state is at once in jeopardy, because women regulate their actions not by the demands of universality but by arbitrary inclinations and opinions. Women are educated who knows how? - as it were by breathing in ideas, by living rather than by acquiring knowledge" **(Hegel 1952 [1821] addition to para 166)**

Kant, Hegel and Ruth Lea seem to be advocating the view that woman cannot go beyond their arbitrary inclinations. And their job determined by nature is the only work they are capable of doing. Even if women prove their worth in different fields still they will be subordinate to men. Today, we find that educated women are not less than men in any respect. If male and female are complementary to each other then how can women be inferior to men?



In the social framework the differences may be seen in the nurturing, caring and education of the male and female members in the same family. Women may be brought up in the same manner as men but still they are conditioned to remain subordinate to man. It can markedly be seen from infancy and childhood till later life as soon as they enter social relationships. However, there can be exceptional women (who can be numbered) to hold positions normally reserved for men and still men continue to grab the position against the interests of women. It is because of the sort of education that is imparted to children at home and society makes males contemptuous, egoists and masculine individuals. Besides this they develop some psychological fears, resentment and dread that if women will rise to their level one day then their position will be in danger, or they might have to live in subordination to women. By acquiring the distinctive rational human status while denying to women, men place themselves in an uncomfortable position for any genuine human interaction. It is because of masculinity they treat women as things and not individuals. The status of individuals acquires meaning and value in their development and gender discrimination is caused by the societal malaise.

One of the factors of male supremacy lies in the mothering by women which is a necessary pre-requisite for social nexus. Being a mother, women bring up their children with selfless love, utmost care and devotion. Thus, biological, psychological and sociological needs make mothers invest most of their time and everything in bringing up their children. This became a prime factor in discriminating women from men. The discrimination ensures in the families first, and thereafter extend to the entire society.

The difference between men and women has been restricted not merely to their natural behaviour and biological nature but also in the way they dress up, they talk and the sort of language they use. Feminists are known for their interest in feminine looks. They enjoy shopping, acting strong, being single, being independently minded, career oriented and even being conscious of their looks and body. Their appearance is a matter of personal choice, which has nothing to do with politics or ethics or social order. Women are obsessed with dieting to attain the culturally desirable body. Women's efforts to look better through high heels, fashionable clothes and make up become the cause of their being ridiculed. On the one hand they talk about their liberation and on the other hand they are obsessed by trivial interest. The problem is, whether looking after one's good looks is irrational or good looks will become an hindrance in the way to rational thinking. Are the two contradictory to each other? Besides caring for one's good looks one can behave in the way to progress, rather both may be complementary to each other.

However, these days we find that even men are increasingly bothered about their own looks. Their way of life cannot be a discriminating factor between men and women, for something more substantial is required, if at all either of the two is discriminated against the other. If such a difference cannot be found then none of them can be discriminating against each other. Male appearance related insecurity is increasing sharply. We all live under such pressure irrespective of different genders. However, it is a different matter that women have to suffer such pressures more strongly. Therefore,

an important goal of gender justice is to change the way people think about women. Main concern of gender justice is to change the thinking of people that men alone are the privileged class and occupy a privileged place in the society.

Moreover women are different from men, and women are inferior to men are two independent issues. For, one man may be different from another man, still none of them may be inferior of each other. Gender discrimination is a case in which women (particularly) are considered not only different but inferior and subordinate to men. And this is a serious matter and should be looked into and analyzed fully. Women are struggling hard to bridge the gap between psyche of men and that of women. Natural roles cannot determine that women are inferior in any sense. The difference lies in nature/nurture. In order to bring parity between the two it becomes necessary that both man & women should be educated alike. Men should learn to see women as human beings. They need moral education. Both should be treated equally by providing them equal opportunities. Difference in their bringing up brings the vice of power in men and artifice in women.

Equal treatment does not imply that women must imitate men and act like them, or vice versa; but rather both of them must be given free atmosphere and opportunities to develop their personalities according to their dispositions and capabilities in the service of mankind. Women should be allowed to go and explore the way men get the freedom, equal to men, i.e. if they want to be a politician or so, then they should not be denied the requisite opportunity. Women are not only emotional but rational too, and with the combination of the two they can act virtuously and the same can be said about men. Moreover, both men and women are *Homosapiens* and belong to the same species. A balanced and harmonious development is possible only if the two are given equal opportunities to sharpen and chisel their talents. Of course, gender differences will always be there but treating them equally is the demand of a healthy society. Women too think, evaluate and decide. Nature has chosen women to bear and rear children but that does not imply that she should always live for this natural function and be dominated by men folk. Once she is free from her motherhood she should be treated equally competent to execute any suitable responsibility which men can do.

It is the thinking of the community that widens the gaps between men and women on the basis of biological and psychological differences. Women is capable of giving new ways to life from a different perspective. Half population of the world is female and the problems of life cannot be solved justly if their views are not taken into account. The world can be viewed from a new angle if women are also taken into account. If women cannot decide for the male members, then by applying the same logic, we can ask how can men decide for female members. Differences do not justify the subordination of women to men. Mothering, which is a matter of pride for a woman becomes a cause of male dominance. If the two think differently then why should the woman be graded low? Why not men? Equal Women rights are the pillars of a healthy society; a society in which all are happy. All the respected and their dignity is preserved.

A society in which one should do to others as one wants others to do to him. It is a rational and universal statement having equal application to all human beings, whether a man or a woman. Nurturing children can never be, an obstacle in assigning other duties and giving rights to women. Women does the most worthy job of educating her children and making them responsible agents and citizens.

The prerequisite to be a person is to be able to reflect, to think freely, act morally and responsibly. Do we not find these qualities in women? If they too have these qualities and then how are women inferior to men. All the human beings in the world have to carry out different roles, and one of the role of woman is nurturing children. This is one of the many roles that a woman can perform. Why do all of us forget, whether we are males or females, after all it was our mother who brought us into this world and made us capable enough to face it. Is it a mean job? Also why women should be labeled as a relation only? Whether it is a man or woman, both can be judged morally. Both are supposed to do actions in right manner. Moral principles have a universal appeal. Being man or woman cannot be the criterion for their discrimination. There are no grounds on which the two cannot be discriminated against each other. Reason has been given the supreme authority over emotions and feelings. And, so long it is believed that men are rational and women emotional, the difference between the two cannot be overlooked. It is believed that reason guides and emotions mislead us. But we may raise this question. Are women merely emotional? Do not they think and reflect before acting and deciding? Women have proven, without any doubt of their thinking capacities. If they are given appropriate resources and opportunities they may prove to be even better than men. However, in a male dominated society they may be deprived of all that which they deserve. Women do not react only, they act too. Whether it is an act of sympathy or compassion, it is grounded in the sound understanding. One can act virtuously only by training our self to act so. Moral action is the most responsible action. And if a woman acts sympathetically or compassionately, it does not imply that she just did it as a response to a stimulus, but because her compassionate and sympathetic self has good reasons to do so. A man may lack this emotional touch. The emotions need to have rational basis in their use in actions. Are men absolutely rational? Or should they be so? Are women emotional only? In either of the case the answer is negative. Both men and women are rational and emotional simultaneously. The combination of the two is required for moral judgements and actions. No one should look down upon each other, rather they should listen to each other patiently and find out the best ways to live by. Of course, some natural differences between the two are there but that will not justify the higher or lower status of any one. Moral outlook is the same for all.

It is very difficult to trace out a significant difference between men and women as moral persons. In some specified roles and on physical grounds they might appear to be different. But that is not a sufficient reason to discriminate them from each other. The status and position can be determined on the basis of the talents and merits irrespective

of their gender. The status that a man can achieve can also be achieved by a woman, if she has access to equal resources and equal opportunities. The sociological differences can be eliminated and with that even some of the psychological differences would vanish. Both are free and autonomous in nature and should be treated equally. Men need to learn something from women and women from men. No one can be considered superior or inferior morally. They must command equal respect, both are unique and both complement each other.

#### **Pause and Reflect**

You must have heard of an inclusive and equitable cultural ethos from your elders which gave women equal respect and considered man and woman complimentary to each other. Now, Pause and reflect for a few moments and try to look for the answers to the following Two Questions :

1. Do you see anything closer to that in reality?
2. Do you think a clear understanding of the concept of Gender justice will help change the social attitude and eventually make this world genuinely inclusive and equitable for half the population of the world.

#### **11.4 Malaise of Sexual Harassment**

All human beings are equal before a moral principle which any rational being would subscribe. It does not matter, on ethical and humanitarian grounds, that to which ever race or sex one belongs. The only difference that one can find in human beings lies in their talents and abilities. Morally speaking there is no discrimination between two human beings. Sexual harassment is akin to racial harassment.

Either of the two sexes, male or female can commit or be a victim to a sexual harassment. We come across such incidents in our daily experience that even boys falls prey to some perverted persons and suffer sodomy or homo-sexual assault. They are tortured to such an extent that sometimes they even collapse. They are made to suffer so much in a manner which forces them to leave the studies in between and sometimes even take the extreme step of committing suicide. And if they do not take this step, such activities leave a deep scar on their personality throughout their lives. Sexual harassment can take place on either of the sexes but usually women, being considered weak, become victims of sexual harassment easily. And it is said that women need to be given protection. Their rights should be restored to them. It is a world wide known fact that, generally, women become victim of harassment, so sexual harassment seems to be a feminine issue. Sexual harassment has played a significant role in causing women leave their work, places altogether or change their jobs. But we will still like to repeat that sexual harassment can happen to any one irrespective of his/her gender.

It is a historical fact that women have been treated as assets, as objects, or even as slaves by their male relatives, employers or authorities. Even at home, women are sexually harassed by their husbands and even by her family members. It is believed that the wives are supposed to do what their husbands want from them. It is not true of today but all the times they have been treated so. For some, they have not been treated more than an object of gratification. Is there a reason to treat women like this? Women are raped at home and outside their homes. They have to be the victim of abusive language too. They are even sold as if they have no identity, used as sex-slaves or bonded labour having no dignity and no self-esteem of their own.

Women are a harassed lot in other forms too. Besides sexual harassment women are harassed by undermining and underweighting their ability to work. They are made to manage domestic chores only as if they can they do not have any intellectual capacity. They are made to nurture children and look after their husbands' needs. It is believed that they cannot hold higher posts and should not pursue political or scientific jobs. Women are rather subjected to eve teasing and unwanted sexual comments. Women have to suffer sexual harassment and live in hostile environments. For years women suffered without having any voice or platform. In several countries including India strict Sexual Harassment laws have not been in place. However now with women becoming more aware of their rights Sexual Harassment has become a legal issue of prime concern, and some legal provision have been introduced.

A person may be sexually harassed if she/he fails to carry out stereotype work labelled for her/him. Men are harassed for not being masculine enough and women are harassed for not being feminine enough. Persons may be harassed for not being heterosexual, because it is going against stereotypes of their sex. We cannot say that only men can be perpetrators of sexual harassment and only women can be victims. This may happen to any person belonging to any sex. But one fact remains that whosoever is weak tends to become the victim.

For a teacher using sexual analogies is also a case of sexual harassment. Sometimes the teacher stands too close to the student to make him/her embarrassed and feel compromised All of you might be aware of the idea of *Bad touch*. Such persons indulge in bad touch and poor students become silent victims. Such silent victims forget that their silence will further embolden their stalker who will date to assault many more Vulnerable persons. Such bad touches are instances of sexual harassment .

In all such instances the harassed victims are in a subservient position where they either do not have a choice or are not allowed to resist the undesired indecent treatment. Even if some victims dare to raise a voice or register complaint they are either not needed to or their complaint is sternly silenced. Mostly the oppressors become so callous that they are only concerned about their perverted gratification and do not even bother about ill effects of their behaviours on the victim. It is also noticed that most of the cases of sexual harassment take place at home only. Many cases of Sexual

harassments are committed by close friends, neighbours, by uncles or even by fathers or brothers of the victim. Such sexual advances could be manifested through their actions, language and gestures. What counts as sexual harassment is a complex and debatable issue. For sexual harassment, the information on the **British Equal Opportunity Commission's (EOC)** website explains that 'behaviour must be unwanted, unreasonable and offensive to the recipient... Unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature ... that the essential characteristic of sexual harassment is that it is unwanted by the recipient.'

Sometimes non-sexual behaviour may also count as a case of sexual harassment, e.g. letting down women by telling them that they should go home and look after household activities, making them feel that they are not capable of doing business or intellectual activities; and making them feel irrelevant and inappropriate for the jobs. A hostile atmosphere is created to shoo away the women. It is not the competence of the women but the inferiority complex of the men which reminds them of their stereotyped jobs to dominate them and reminding them of their subordination to men. Sometimes male workers refuse to cooperate with their female colleagues which is certainly neither a verbal nor physical conduct but still it an act of harassment. But it is debatable whether such actions can be included in the cases of sexual harassment. One may refuse to take such cases as cases of sexual harassment. Such acts may take place even between two persons belonging to same sex.

Such unwanted sexual behaviour of such type of person plays a special role in making women subordinate to men. This is certainly not welcome because it not just only to humiliate a woman but also to undermine her the right to equality, freedom and justice - the basic values of life. Those who emphasise the stereotyped works either for men or women, humiliate and harass them. We do not find any reason to discriminate one sex from another. The racial or sexual discrimination without any relevant reason is an evil which should be eliminated from its very roots. It is not an easy task because its roots are deep rooted in our culture and present social order society. But this should not hamper the efforts made by people to acknowledge the values of life. Men and women are homosapiens and rational beings. Their being male or female can not be taken as a justifying reason for discrimination. No one is superior and no one is inferior. No one has any right to harass any one in any sense. All humans have equal rights and each one is capable of proving worth. In order to control such incidents to happen education can play a significant role. Moral education can help to check this menace and can help people in forming good habits among people. And women should be trained to free the critical situations and self-help. Men and women should learn to treat each others equally. Women should become mentally and physically strong and assertive. Sexual harassment is a serious matter and should be dealt with strictly. Society at large, individuals who have wield power, governments which serve and law keepers and

justice provider must make a collective effort to ensure complete gender justice in the society.

### **Essential Life Lessons**

Sexual harassment is any form of unwelcome, unsolicited sexual advances which is offensive, intimidating, unlawful and demeaning. What according to you one should do if one unfortunately becomes a target of some sexual harassment?

Most of you must have heard or read about sexual harassment. Every 12 minutes, some women is sexually harassed in our country. But unfortunately almost 99% such cases go unreported. 'Me too' campaigns, at best, create some awareness and trigger some activism momentarily but the habitual offenders continue with their dirty acts unabated. Most of the harassed victims either ignore or avoid taking any action in the absence of right knowledge and lack of moral support. Many of such victims even do not know what actually amounts to sexual harassment. We give below a set of acts, gestures or typical behaviors which sexual harassers/ offenders might indulge in, by doing so they are actually sexually harassing someone.

- *Inappropriate touches, physical grabbing, fondling, pinching and indecent patting.*
- *Leering, staring, whistling and telling lewd jokes.*
- *Making sexual gestures, displaying obscene signs.*
- *Sharing/ showing inappropriate images, videos and pictures.*
- *Asking for unsolicited sexual favors.*
- *Making obscene phone calls, posting obscene posts, texts or sexual messages or pornographic material.*
- *Making offensive comments regarding gender, sex etc.*

## **11.5 Summary**

This lesson began by giving you a background to two almost related moral issues which have drawn the attention of our social as well as ethical thinkers. The issue of Gender Justice apprised us and sensitised us to the need that there should not be any basis, prejudice or difference on gender basis. Male and Female are not equal in terms of their endowments, needs and expectation but each gender should get one's just dignity. Men and Women as moral persons should not be subjected to any gender bias. Both should be treated as free, autonomous, incomparable and unique.

The second topic on Sexual Harassment introduced you to yet another disturbing practice. Historically women have been treated as properties, commodities or even

inferior human beings. At work place their sexual harassment is a big issue these days especially because a kind of dark culture of silence prevails in the workplaces where sexual harassment is simply accepted as a forced condition. The lesson also introduced you to some acts which should be treated as sexual harassment and also apprised you to what one should do in case a sexual harassment of someone is noticed.

### 11.6 Glossary

**Sexual Harassment** - is some uninvited, unwelcome but intentional verbal, physical or digital behavior of sexual nature by a person with power or authority.

**Gender Justice** - is a system which will address the inequalities between men and women, boys and girls and endeavours to ensure that they share equitably in the distribution of resources, knowledge and power.

### 11.7 Further Readings

D Nadkarni (2014) Ethics for our Times- Essays in Gandhian Perspective. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Jennifer Mother Squ.(2003) Feminism-Issues and Arguments Delhi: Oxford University Press.

### 11.8 Model Questions

1. What do you understand by Sexual Harassment? Bring out its ethical concerns.
2. What is Gender Justice and why it is important for our society?



## **ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS**

### **POLLUTION, LAND DEGRADATION, ORGANIC FARMING AND GLOBAL WARMING**

#### **Structure**

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.2 Pollution
  - 12.2.1 Air Pollution
  - 12.2.2 Water Pollution
  - 12.2.3 Sound Pollution
  - 12.2.4 Pollution: the growing menace needs urgent remedial steps.
- 12.3 Organic Farming
  - 12.3.1 Paradigm Shift
  - 12.3.2 The concept of Organic Farming
  - 12.3.3 Essential Principles of Organic Farming
  - 12.3.4 Organic Farming and Moral Concerns
- 12.4 Global Warming
  - 12.4.1 Global Warming today
  - 12.4.2 Climatologist's Fears
  - 12.4.3 Impact of Climate Change
  - 12.4.4 Humanity must act
- 12.5 Land Degradation
  - 12.5.1 Impact of Land Degradation
  - 12.5.2 Factors leading to land Degradation
  - 12.5.3 Call to Action
- 12.6 Summary
- 12.7 Glossary

12.8 Further Readings

12.9 Model Questions

## 12.0 Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to :

- understand the concepts of Pollution, Land Degradation, Organic farming and Global farming.
- outline the ill-effects and consequence of pollution, Global warming, Land Degradation.
- critically evaluate the growing significance of Environmental ethics and Climate change action.

### 12.1 Introduction

Ethics is an important branch of Philosophy engaged in the analysis of certain concepts and issues which pertain to human conduct like actions, choices, preferences, dilemmas, customs and judgments passed in the domain of morality. Simply put ethics would undertake a study of the moral notions like good, right, virtue, duty, obligation etc. Ethics is not directly concerned with how moral agents actually act or should act or what constitutes their morality, it is only concerned with clarifying concepts and offering some moral principles. In other words ethics acts as a 'second-order inquiry' against the first order activity of doing an action in a situation where moral choices of goodness or rightness are involved. But that does not mean whatever ethics or ethical thinkers deliberate upon will lead to no consequence or be of no use to moral agents. Ethical thinkers do keep in mind that whatever is deliberated has got the capacity of being realizable in practical life. Aristotle believed that there is no point in studying ethics if it does not deliver some beneficial effects in the lives of moral agents. One could say that ethics, besides being an essential philosophical activity, has some practical or applied aspects also, especially will a view to clarify certain moral issues cropping up in some practical domains. Take for example corporate social responsibilities and environmental obligations in the context of Business. Issues like euthanasia, cloning, female foeticide are some issues of medical concerns bearing moral implications which should draw our close attention. Similarly climate change has become a serious concern for everyone. To address such issues which crop up in the context of environment, a new branch known as environmental ethics has emerged as a fast developing domain of applied ethics.

In this chapter we will discuss some very significant issues which form the core of environmental Ethics. By studying these issues and critically examining them you will be able to understand how environmental ethics functions.

### 12.2 Pollution

For billion of years the earth celebrated her untainted pristine virginity. And then entered the modern Man, who thought that he was the most intelligent of all living beings and deemed that this world is created for me the entire world changed after this attitude.

Now it is a known fact that ever since man has entered the industrialization phase he has disturbed the natural harmony and ecological balance. And today he has altered the natural ecology, polluted the eco-systems and degraded almost all its vital ingredients to an undesirable level and the resultant changes are definitely not good for mother earth and very harmful for the humanity at large.

'Pollution' in our day to day deliberations is understood 'as turning something dirty', hence undesirable. Latin word '*Polluere*' from where the term pollution has evolved means 'turning something dirty'. In oxford dictionary pollution means. 1) to contaminate, to make impure 2) to corrupt and it further suggests that some words which are synonymous with it are - to adulterate, to blight, to defile, to make dirty, to infect, to poison, to soil, to taint, to corrupt and to sully. If we closely notice today pollution in fact stands for all these words. However in a little technical sense pollution (environmental pollution) is to be understood as the unfavourable and undesirable alteration of our surrounding conditions and resources as a result of direct or indirect human acts and interventions which have lead to harmful physical, chemical, biological characteristics of all natural resources such as water, land and air. Pollution manifests itself in many from and in each forms it harms. We discuss some major forms of pollution as under.

### **12.2.1 Air pollution**

Presence of one or more contaminating substances in air at such a level and for such a duration that it proves to be injurious to life and affects the ecological balance. Modernization, industrialization, urbanisation, coal and Hydrocarbon based power generation, vehicular traffic, cement, steel and chemical industries, refineries, mining, urban waste disposal and chemical farming are some major sources of air-pollution. Dust storms, smoke of forest fires, volcanic eruptions are some natural polluters. Carbon monoxide, Carbon dioxide and Sulphur dioxide get produced where petrol, wood, diesel etc. are burnt.

The ever increasing airconditioning systems are further damaging the ozone layer. To this the forms of fossils fuel is further aggravating the air pollution. Construction activity, stubble burning, industrial further adding to Suspended Particulate Matter (SPM) of our environment is which is known to have caused serious respiratory disorders, like asthma, lung cancer, bronchitis.

The air pollution is primarily more responsible in further deteriorating the wisening scenario of green house gases. Today our capital Delhi has became one of the most polluted capitals in the world mostly on account of her Air-pollution from Diwali to Lohri. Delhi air is in its worst form. Is not it a wake up call? should we not awaken to our own environmental obligations? Should we not worry about the climate justice of our future generations.

### **12.2.2 Water Pollution**

When the undesirable inorganic, organic or biological substances are present in pure water it becomes polluted. With these pollutants water gets adversely affected and

turns into a health hazard for living organisms and disturb the balance of eco-system. When toxic substances in the form of industrial discharges, indiscriminate use of chemical fertilizers, insecticides and herbicides, oil spills, urban sewages are indiscriminately discharged and disposed in lakes, rivers, streams, oceans, and other water bodies then one can easily understand the source of water-pollution. Almost 70% of surface area of earth is covered with water but only 1% to 2% water is available for human consumption.

### **12.2.3 Sound Pollution**

Sound pollution is another damaging form of pollution. Some people call it as noise pollution, but noise in itself is an unwanted and undesirable condition. One may call it as another form of air-pollution since sound needs air to travel. But it is desirable if we treat sound pollution independently and make our own dedicated efforts to contain it. Industrialization, urbanisation and modernization of our life introduced new undesirable sounds in our ambient conditions – Noises of machines, grinding, drilling, blasting, traffic, industrial noises etc. all such sounds which are heavy and disturbing enough contributor to sound pollution.

Continuous exposure to such a level of sound (or noise) make men prone to severe health disorders especially cardiovascular diseases - Strokes, nervous-breakdowns, constant headaches are some most immediate and acute effects of sound pollution seen leading to impairment of hearing capacity, anxiety, fright and stress. Observe your own condition when you are attending a high decible music concert. Where high wattage speakers (woofers etc.) are placed just in front of you. To understand the range of safe sound level just consider these facts. Sounds which enters our audibility level starts from 10dbs. (decibels)- a whisper touches 20 dbs, normal conversation ranges between 35-60 dbs, all sounds going beyond 80 dbs cause sound pollution and can be termed as harmful and undesirable. Mean sound levels of Indian cities is much higher than 45 dbs which WHO considers to be a safe sound level. The music concerts mentioned above can even go upto 120 plus decibles.

### **12.2.4 Pollution: the growing menace needs urgent remedial steps.**

There are some other forms of pollution like chemical pollution, radioactive pollution and soil pollution. But one thing is common in all forms of pollution that each form is harmful and each needs to be checked from immediate effect. Pollution of any kind damages health, threatens life, spoils natural beauty, disturbs ecological balance, and it is a kind of an immoral action, a dereliction of duty and non-fulfillment of our commitment. The worst part is that we do not have any realization of these omissions. Today's List of century consider and behave in a manner that the entire world is homocentric (that is man-centric world) whereas it ought to be biocentric. Those who refute this should consider this - how bad we feel when a painting of landscape gets damaged or when a bed of flower is damaged by some naughty children? And now consider this - the polluting ways of humanity are spoiling the flora and fauna and the

real beauty of humans mother earth every moment and no one is bothered about it. When the natural landscape is being spoilt.

When it comes to taking a stand then we always extend it to a later day, when it comes to stopping here and now we extend the date to still a later date. When it really comes to shifting to cleaner and green technologies we refer to higher costs involved. We have a feeling that we are paying a penalty for no fault of ours. Industrialists all over the world are known to have this mindset. They act only when the state creates strict laws and ensures better enforcement. Switching to CNG and introduction of Metro (mass rapid transis) in the capital of our country and which now in about 15 cities of India proves this point that such switch overs may appear costly initially but in the longer run the entire humanity benefits from such morally sound decisions. In fact our policy makers should reset their priorities and factors like political willingness, economic feasibility or populist decisions should not get precedence over environmental obligations and adoption of pollution prevention technologies. But above all, we must realize our moral responsibilities and take up genuine initiatives to restore the natural ecological balance and decide to switch to a sustainable growth order.

### **12.3 Organic Farming**

Man became civilized long back and with the growth of the civilization his bond with the nature started weakening. Not far behind man lived in complete harmony with nature. He was a part of a self-sustainable cycle of nature, he honoured the natural cycles and observed some sanctity for the natural eco-system he lived in. Agriculture was no exception. Just a almost two and half a Industrial Revolution brought in practices and systems which favoured few at the cost of many. Like industrial mass production, society also eventually switched to chemical agriculture, invasive technologies, intensive farming techniques to obtain short term gains and maximization of agri-produce. In short the modern agricultural system promoted synthetic agrochemical fertilizers, pesticides and insecticides, nutrient responsive high yielding varieties of crop, hybridization of seeds, discontinuation of conversational agricultural practices, large scale indiscriminate usage of agri-chemicals, switching over to cash-crops and profitable cropping pattern without giving due consideration to resources, and complete dependence on outsourced agri-inputs. All these contributed to a large scale degradation of land, toxicity of water, over exploitation of natural resources, depletion of ground water level, emergence of more virulent pests that have developed resistance to any chemical control. Millions of agriculture workers getting influenced by the ill-effects of agro-chemicals and ultimately diminished profit-margins. What it led to was never imagined. Now virulent weeds, stagnant production and pesticide laced agriproduce are doing more harm than the promised benefits.

#### **12.3.1 Paradigm Shift**

Scientists in particulars and farmers at large have realized that a paradigm shift is much needed. But lack of a viable alternative, large scale business interests of the agri-input industry and absence of political will is coming in the way of checking the

menance of over dependence of agriculture on off-farm agri-inputs. The only ray of hope is that a new class is emerging who is promoting and supporting organic farming in a high way.

### **12.3.2 The Concept of Organic Farming**

Organic farming has drawn noticeable alternation of farming communities in over 130 countries (covering 24 million hectares of land under organic farming) of the world, farm scientists, environmentalists and policy makers of almost all the countries. International forum of organic agriculture movement and WHO prefer to understand and promote organic farming as - Holistic food production management system which promotes and enhances of ecosystem health, biodiversity, biological, cycles and soil biological activity, use of off-farm inputs, taking in which are detrimental to ecology to account regional conditions, require locally adoptive systems using agronomic, biological mechanical system methods as opposed to synthetic and invasive systems.

In relatively simple words we can understand organic farming as a specialized form of diversified agriculture where farmers manage their agriculture by using locally managed resources, produce or raise their own agri-inputs by utilization of agri-waste, application of farm and natural manure, practice of integrated organic pest control methods like neem, garlic, cow-urine prepared natural pesticides, utilizing, cow pat pit (CPP), liquid manure, fermented plant nutrients, appropriate crop rotation, intercropping, live-stock keeping, utilization of crop residues, and several other traditional farm practices and latest environment – friendly innovations. Unlike the model of chemical based hi-tech agriculture which promotes an individual crop-productivity without taking into account the environmental costs, this practice shifts the focus on the total-system, productivity, safety, health of land in particular and environment in general.

### **12.3.3 Essential Principles of Organic Farming**

1. Practicing ecologically responsible and sustainable farming mostly based on traditional time-tested agricultural practices.
2. Respecting agri-ecosystems, biodiversity of plants and animals, soil-conservation and observing sanctity of ground water.
3. Making optimum utilization of sustainable local resources instead of utilizing synthetic external resources.
4. Avoiding synthetic fertilizers, chemical pesticides and over exploitation of ground water.
5. Making optimum utilization of self grown seeds, animal manures, crop-residues, non polluting agro inputs and renewable resources.
6. Exercising natural control of pests and weeds through bio-pesticides, friendly insects, and herbal herbicides.

7. Maintaining natural balance in soil-health, natural-nutrients-cycles and bio-diversity.
8. Nurturing soil health to increase higher yield of quality farm produce that is chemical free and treat soil, plants, animals, human beings and environment as one indivisible unit.
9. Switching to time tested legume farming, maintenance of fair relationships between present and future generations.
10. Sustaining and supplementing soil-health, plant health, animal health and human health all in one go.

#### 12.3.4 Organic farming and Moral Concerns

Green revolution technology developing farm-scientists promoting synthetic agro-chemicals, chemical fertilizers, pesticides, nutrient- responsive high yielding varieties of crops yielding enhanced, production have their own valid reasons and commercial interests in promoting their inventions. The Agro-chemicals, hybrid seeds, improved GM seeds and farm equipment industry has phenomenally grown in stature and influence. No doubt all these inventions and innovations have yielded dramatic results and have certainly helped feed teeming hungry millions accross the world. But now the overdependence on these practices have resulted in conspicuous dramatic reversals like - stagnation in production, degradation of land, toxicity of ground water, loss of human health due to chemical effects, failure of certain crops, emergence of virulent *pesticide - resistant pests* and *herbicide resistant weeds*, irreversible loss to environment and ground water resources, loss of holding capacity of land, fall in organic matter in soil, snapping of biological cycles and frustration among farming community. The powerful chemical farming industry is least these big corporate houses bothered about any damage to environment, land or even farmer's or consumer's health are only worried about loss of their business. are the people who strongly oppose organic farming.

Arguing against organic farming these groups claim that a large scale shift to organic farming will bring down the production and lead to large scale food scarcity. They also raise the issue of economic feasibility of adopting these practices besides highlighting the fact that the quality of produce will also get affected because large-scale supply of organic agri-inputs is not possible at all. They have their doubts with regard to pest control and weed management also. Obviously if we see the short term effects and results things look very much on the side of the advocates of chemical farming but if we see the long term effects the focus shifts in the favour of organic-farming. Researches have shown that the produce through organic-farming grows steadily as against the dramatic, results imminent synthetic farming. But over a period of 7 to 10 years the farmers practicing start noticing the ill-effects whereas the organic farmers start noticing the perceptible positive effects of their sustainable agriculture endeavours. Farm scientists accross the world do accept that the future of sustainable development in

agriculture, next to water, depends on arresting the fall in organic matter in soil and only organic farming holds the key.

History holds witness that farmers do well when they adopt holistic farming paradigm which is in sync with nature. Our elders used to say - A farmer is not alone when he does the farming, the sun light helps him, the humus in the soil promotes biological activity, the earth worms loosen and aerate soil, the friendly bacterial activity is also working with him. He does not have to borrow money to outsource his seeds, fertilizers, micro nutrients and pesticides. Live-stock and agri-waste provide the requisite fertilizer. His farm profits would increase because he would save a lot of money on procuring biologically derived nutrients from within the system. Locally managed resources would help him to improve the soil biological activity, enhance land-fertility, suppress weeds and pests. Chemical Farming. Unlike the synthetic farming organic farming develops the cooperative system. This leads to create a synergy of other sub-systems and build complimentarity.

A country like India produces over 600-700 million tonns of agri-waste which is equivalent to its weight to any nutrient rich complete fertilizer. Converting this waste in to agri wealth will bring a reversal in the fortunes of the lives of farmers. A large scale burning of crop residue leads to environmental pollution and loss of biological activity in the soil. Shift to organic farming will certainly check this. As far as the cost-efficiency argument is concerned there is no denial that organic farming is a relatively costly practice. But a closer review of the facts yields that agriculture in the past has always been a kind of self-sustainable organic farming only. Rather the recent development of new technologies and researches can help organic-farmers obtain better yield and overcome some productivity and quality related issues. Above all the better nutritive value of organically produced food will compensate any additional input cost incurred on switching over to organic-farming pattern. Mass production of certain crops creates a number of storage and transport related problems also.

Strengthening of co-operatives in organic farming is nor just a bright idea it is already yielding impressive results in different parts of the world. To conclude we can say that organic farming is not a forced choice but under fastly deteriorating conditions and worsening environmental health it is the only choice left before us. After all farmers had been following the organic-farming practices right from the times when they switched to organised farming largely dominated by market driven forces. As far as the cost-argument is concerned and the food security of million poor is concerned only one argument is sufficient short term gains in terms of large scale production may bring quick prosperity to the progressive farmers (who uses all modern agricultural practices) but what he does not notice is that his land, his environment, the health of his consumers and his workers and long term damage to his land are certain hidden costs which he in any case pays if not now a little later. A similar argument is forwarded is the case of adopting costly clean technologies. Let me end on some positive notes :



- i) The demand of organic food in the world is increasing by almost 20% every year.
- ii) The cost of input (costs) output (yield) ratio in the case of synthetic farming has come down from 1 : 16 to 1 : 7. Whereas the organic yields are steadily growing.
- iii) Organizations like Kheti Virasat Mission have taken up a mass awareness campaign to promote natural farming amongst farming community.
- iv) World of organic agriculture report 2018 claims that India has the largest number of organic farmers in the world more than 30% of the total number of organic producers belong to India.
- v) Till 2019 more than 187 countries across the globe have joined the organic Farming Paradigm.
- vi) Globally 1.5% of the farmland is under organic farming and India has registered almost 20% increase in bringing farmlands under organic practices.
- vii) World over the number of organic producers are on the rise. Till 2019 there were 3.1 million organic farmers in the world.
- viii) After the outbreak of Corona pandemic world over the consumption of organic food has gone significantly up.

### Activity

Visit an organic farm or meet an organic farmer to learn the basics of organic farming. You will learn that organic farming is just rediscovering our traditional time tasted farming practices. Keeping the essential principles of Organic farming (Refer 12) in your mind and seek more clarity about different aspects of organic farming. After the visit/interaction, write down your observations and share some of your key learnings with your friends. If your resources allow try to grow some plants following Organic farming practices.

### Check your progress-I

1. What is Environmental ethics?
2. Mention the essential principles of Organic farming.

## 12.4 Global Warming

At first let us understand what is global warming. Globe stands for our earth and warming means rising mean temperature of our earth. Now let us understand the phenomena of global warming. Earth is a unique system of certain physical and

biological factors which is characterised by a network of interdependent relationships operating between, the environment, humans, animals, plant kingdom, bacteria, microbes etc. and certain forces even lying outside our planet. Earth's temperature remains within fixed ranges due to an interplay of sun and earth's environment. Out of the 100% solar radiation coming to earth only 50% reaches the ground or oceans where it is absorbed as heat. The absorbed heat that is finally given off by the earth does not escape to the space because it is trapped by Greenhouse gases including carbon dioxide and other substances in the atmosphere, hence a "greenhouse" effect gets generated. Under normal circumstances it maintains earth at about 33°C, warmer than it should be. But such a temperature is within desirable limits of the living organisms at large. Green House effect is an age old Phenomenon. But recently indiscriminate activities of the mankind has been constantly adding more carbon dioxide and other undesirable heat-trapping gases to the atmosphere and depleting the protective ozone layer in the upper atmosphere. Vehicular emissions, forest fires are further adding to the carbon deposits to the air. Large scale deforestation and resultant lesser carbon dioxide intake by the plants has further contributed to keeping more heat-trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere. The cumulative effect of these factors have led to more carbon dioxide in the environment and more carbon dioxide means more heat, around earth's surface and hence warming of the globe.

#### **12.4.1 Global Warming Today**

Today global warming is the single worldwide factor of gigantic scale which has the potential of bringing in a devastating irreversible climate change, a damaging economical doom and inescapable mass-destruction threat to the living organisms on earth. And the worse part is in many do not know this and still less few believe and much lesser are concerned. And those who are concerned are not as effective or as influential as the situation demands. For those who say that global warming is just not happening and even if it is happening it will be of no significance some signs are too conspicuous to be missed. Sea level have actually risen by 10-25 cms, climate change is real, average temperature of earth has increased between 0.30C to 0.60C in the past 100 years, carbon-dioxide levels have increased by 15-20% since last 200 years, 50% of forest land is lost and 40 species have gone extinct in the last two centuries. Our own ISRO observations reveal that 466 glaciers in India have shrunk by 20% in their sizes between 1962-2001. Receding permafrost has caused the ground to subside more than 15% in parts of Alaska, Greenland's Ice sheet is shrinking very fast. Since 1978 the area of perennial Arctic sea ice is decreasing by 9% per decade, In year 1998 16% of the world entire coral existence got bleached (dead).

#### **12.4.2 Climatologist's Fears**

If nothing concrete and significant is done to reverse climate change Climatologists have forecasts which can frighten anybody. Just look at what they fear.

- 1) Sea ice disappears from the bays by year 2070.

- 2) By the end of this century West Antarctic ice sheet would break up raising the sea levels by over 20 feet.
- 3) More than a hundred million people (approx) world wide. Who live within 3 feet of sea level, will have to be evacuated within next few years because of rising sea level.
- 4) Countries like Maldives, Tuvalu would simply get submerged by year 2060 or so.
- 5) Himalayan Glaciers could virtually disappear by year 2035 or so.
- 6) Megacities like Shanghai, Bangkok, Jakarta, Tokyo, New York, NCR Delhi, Mumbai and Kanpur are all at risk.
- 7) Almost 50% of landmass of Netherland is at or just below sea level. The existing protective walls will not be able to save the country for long.

### **12.4.3 Impact of Climate Change**

The climate changes in general and perceptible changes in the living organisms are not insignificant enough to be just ignored. It is the right time to realize that we have pumped in enough green house gases in the system and depleted the protective ozone layer that global temperature will go out of our control. They will even disturb earth's own 'Global Thermostat'. In fact  $\text{CO}_2$ , Methane and Nitrous Oxide, the three greenhouse gases have helped keep this earth warm and hospitable by trapping tolerable levels of heat. But we have even made these noble green house gases to earn the status of a rogue. Look back at historical records of the level of all these gases, they were pretty normal and stagnant but since 1950 the level has shown a consistent upward movement.

### **12.4.4 Humanity must act**

Consequences of climate change due to global warming have special significance for humans. After all it is only the human species which is growing at a rate which it never attained in any point of history. Humanity has never been so hungry as it is today. Human sickness has never been so miserable as it is today. Water-scarcity, food insecurity, drawing up of lakes and water reservoirs, invading coastlines, rising temperatures, longer draughts, heavier presipitations, the list could go on and on; these are some of the consequences which will make things still worse for future generation. Look of Collective endeavours of global scale to check emissions leading to global warming, lack of resources to adopt costly but cleaner technologies, lack of awareness and absence of any consciousness regarding the restoration of ecological balance and no sincere efforts to switch over to sustainable development, policies and practices will bring the inevitable end a bit faster and sooner than anticipated. The more threatening news is a finding which scientists have recently observed-The subsequent warming of globe may not be as gradual as it is today, the temperatures by nature may rise suddenly and humanity will not be in a position to react so fastly. But humans are quite

forgetful, they suffer huge devastations like sunamis or caterinas and then get in busy their lives. Another finding reveals that forests, soil and oceans are absorbing much lesser CO<sub>2</sub> then before. This will leave more CO<sub>2</sub> in the system and hasten global warming still further. The scenerio is grim, the anticipated consequences are devastating but the awareness is unfortunately absymal and preparedness still tardy. The problem is gigantic and the effort must be herculean. But unfortunately the international community and Big nations who matter are not taking any significant initiatives in this direction.

Our ancestors will always at peace with nature earlier because they never treated nature as their asset but more as an obligation. They worshipped their rivers, their mother earth, their animals; his trees, he conserved his water resources, he was considerate in animal-grazing, pollution never existed in human consciousness. We have to listen to Peter Singer who suggests that the circle of moral work should be expanded to include the rights of non-human animals too. Alan Marshall advocates the recognition of the fundamental interdependence of all biological and abiological entities and their essential diversity. James Lovelock's **Gaia hypothesis** offers best conclusion. The planet is a unified and holistic entity with ethical worth of which human race is of no particular significance in long run. But still the irony is Man continues to act irresponsibly. Need of the moment is ethically oriented environmental activists and scholars must take up a date bound, result oriented and self mandated projects to restore environmental harmony.

## **12.5 Land Degradation**

Natural ecosystems sustain themselves, there are cycles and balances and counter balancing factors which keep our land in good shape. But the moment humans make an entry the problems begin, deforestation begins, grazing progresses to over grazing, natural forests are replaced by organised farming. A consequence to all and some more human-caused-activities-phenomenon begins that we call as land-degradation. Almost 40% of the world's agricultural land, which is almost 2 billion hectares (each hectare is equal to 2.5 Acre), is degraded today.

### **12.5.1 Impact of Land Degradation**

Let us first understand what really happens when we say the land has degraded. The most privasive and damaging force is erosion- erosion of top-sail. Top soil, you know is the top-most layer of the land which is so full of organic matter and fully supports all biological activity thereby aiding to the growth of plants. But when due to natural factors like rains, floods or winds the top soil, especially uncovered, unprotected bare soil is eroded or blown or washed away it leads to degraded land. Normal protected soil, having some vegetation, has the advantage of a kind of vegetative mats absorbing the impact of rain or wind. The most damaging aspect of rain, wind or flood erosion is that the lighter particles of humus and useful clay is carried away first. This is what happened to today's deserts, their lighter top soil got carried away leaving only sand behind. Clay and humus are the most vital components for vegetation survival, especially they are nutrient rich and have the capacity to hold water. In fact any degraded land left barren is

as good or as bad as a desert. You must be hearing new terms like desertification. More than 100 nations across the globe are officially working together under United Nations supported convention to combat this desertification phenomenon.

### **12.5.2 Factors leading to Land Degradation**

In the following few paragraphs we shall examine some major causes of land degradation. We list few of them below :

- 1) Over cultivation
- 2) Over grazing
- 3) Land Clearance (deforestation)
- 4) Agrinutrient depletion due to poor farming practices
- 5) Urbanisation
- 6) Weeds
- 7) Salination

Out of these three major malpractices or poor management of resources are leading to the majority of land degradation on our earth. They are i) Deforestation ii) Overgrazing and iii) Over cultivation.

- i) Deforestation means clearing of land under forests. Forests are very efficient in holding and recycling nutrients, holding and absorbing water and protecting the porous humus-rich top soil. They also reduce the impact of floods. But today more than 15 million hectare of forests are being cleared per year in the developing countries. Out of which over 80% is used for Agriculture, Industries, Infrastructures, Mining, Habitation which in any way cause much more land-degradation.
- ii) Overgrazing grasslands is another major cause of land-degradation. Traditionally lands with little rainfall or not fit for agriculture or social forests are kept for grazing and unfortunately due to higher demands these allotted lands are subject to overgrazing. These barren lands easily become the victims of soil-erosion and the degradation of land. Mostly these lands are public lands and anything public, especially when it is degraded and hence unproductive leads to the 'tragedy of the common'. Because it is the common man and his cattle which suffers the most, hence we could call it a 'Tragedy of the common'. The solution lies in better management of such greenfields. In India some village panchayats and co-operatives have come up with effective community participation programmes and such projects should be promoted further.

Overcultivation is yet another man-caused factor of land degradation. In any case land under cultivation is subject to excessive use, and over-exploitation of resources.

Ploughing, which is very essential for sowing, is considered necessary for loosening the soil, aeration and infiltration and uprooting the weeds. But the fact is it does more harm to land, through it may be leading to some higher productivity. Such factors further leads to more impact on land and its organic matter. Earlier farmers have been using sustainable crop-rotation patterns which were good for recycling of certain elements and replanishing nutrients extracted by previous crops. But these days farmers grow cash crops defying traditionally beneficial agricultural practices which were really good for land. These days agri-scientists have introduced a no-till agriculture practice which is routinely practised in developed countries and catching up the attention of farming community in North India also. Overcultivation has promoted use of synthetic fertilizers and agrochemicals which are very harmful for the soil. Intensive cultivation is further harming for the soil and depleting it of its nutrient resources. Organic farming and adopting crop-rotation practices can definitely help save a lot of land from getting degraded.

Irrigation and Salinizations are also causing a lot of degradation of land. Worldwide overirrigation has brought the salt dissolved in subsurface water reservoirs to the surface layers of land thereby leading to salinization of land. In fact salinization is a kind of desertification, world wide we loose over 4 million hectares of land to salinization.

### **12.5.3 Call to Action**

The issue of land degradation definitely calls for serious consideration because their constraints on the land to produce more. Obviously that leads to adoption of practices which disturb the eco-balance, break the natural cycles and cause serious damage to the natural resources. Most of the causes have human agency behind them and endeavours of intervention are not yielding concredited and desirable results. The choices are tough and the restraint has to be much more effective: Land degradation needs to be tackled at two levels at the level of the individual - land holder. Here of course moral sensitization has a role to play. Traditional wisdom needs to be reinvoked and choices have to be made between long term and short term goals. Secondly the action has to be initiated at the level of public policy. States, civil societies, scientific community and international organizations have to join hands to restore the lost glory of our mother-earth. Governments have started massive salinity treatment and land reclamation projects. Farm scientists are introducing salt-tolerant species to counter the problem. But ultimately everything comes back to taking a serious note of everything and start with absolute earnestness.

It is opportune time when man realizes that he has certain moral responsibilities towards the earth which is probably the only known planet supporting life. Man must remember he is only one form of life and not the entire life. So this earth does not exclusively belong to him. Instead misutilizing his intelligence he should use his moral intelligence to right the moral wrongs he has committed in the past. Hope you will come forward to take a moral stand and own some responsibility to restore the eco-balance.

Earth took millions of years to be ready to host life. It took another million of years for man to appear. The same very man is now hellbent to destroy his own creator. We just said-Earth came first and then life followed it, but in its return journey it will be the life which may vanish first. Should we let it happen?

### **Pause and Reflect**

We are amidst pollution. It is not just only visible it has actually started harming us. You must not forget that while you are its victim you are also a contributor to the pollution. If you choose to cut your share of pollution, it definitely would help. Pause and reflect on your daily life routine, habits and activities and try to identify areas where you can reduce your carbon footprint. Write down your key observations and mention at least 5 concrete and positive steps to reduce your carbon footprint.

Write down you remarks.

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### **Check your progress-II**

1. What is Land degradation?
2. Enlist some major causes of Land degradation.
3. Mention some measures which have been taken up to heal Land degradation.

## **12.6 Summary**

After reading this lesson you would have formed an idea that man has significantly harmed the environment. Pollution, has not only impacted our surroundings, wounded our eco-systems, wiped species and green covers dented holes in Ozone layers, results of climate change haunt us like Australian fires, Snowfall and Hail storms in gulf, successice draughts, sea level rises, melting of glaciers, etc. are too real to be denied. This lesson gave you a comprehensive idea about Pollution and the Global Warming it is leading too. The Land Degradation is one area which needs to be immediately attended to and Organic Farming is one doable and a time tested practice which should be made into a large scale global mission. This lesson also makes you

aware of the moral concerns of the issues besides inspiring you to be a responsible citizen conscious of your environmental duties and remain attentive to the moral concerns of practices which lead to climate change.

## 12.7 Glossary

**Pollution** - is the introduction of contaminants in to the natural occurring environment leading to adverse changes resulting in damage to environment , harm to kingdoms of life and natural cycles.

**Organic Farming** - is a method of crop and live stock production that involves eco-friendly, chemical free and sustainable ways similar to traditional farming practices.

**Global farming** - is a long term rise in the average temperature of the globe's atmosphere mainly attributed to greenhouse effect caused mainly by manmade pollution.

## 12.8 Further Readings

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## 12.9 Model Questions

- 1) What do you understand by Pollution? What is the role of Pollution in Global Warming?
- 2) What is Organic Farming. How will it help humanity?
- 3) What is Global Warming? How it is affecting as directly?



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**Student Response Sheet No. I**

**Enrolment No. ....**

**Sub. Philosophy**

**Class : Semester- IV**

**Paper : II**

**Block : I & II**

**Lesson No. : 1 - 12**

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Detach this response-sheet, write on it your name and address in capital letters in English script, then either dispatch it by post or deposit personally at the counter of CDOE. It should be addressed to the Chairperson, CDOE, Panjab University, Chandigarh - 160014 and should reach this office within one month of the dispatch of the lesson to you. Each of the response-sheets be tagged separately, though mailed in the same envelope. Use foolscap paper for your answers.

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**(DO NOT TEAR AWAY QUESTIONS PLEASE)**

**Time : 3 Hrs.**

**Max. Marks : 90**

**Note :-** Attempt five questions in all including Q. No. 1 which is compulsory and selecting one from each Section. All Questions carry equal marks.

1. Write short notes on any nine in about 25-30 words each (9×2)
- (i) Define Ethics.
  - (ii) State any two similarities between Ethics and Aesthetics.
  - (iii) Define the notion of 'beauty'.
  - (iv) What do you understand by moral situation?
  - (v) Define the concept of 'agape'.
  - (vi) Distinguish between ethical mitzwah and ritual mitzwah.
  - (vii) Explain in short Kant's concept of 'good will'.
  - (viii) Define Aristotelian concept of 'virtue'.
  - (ix) Define Psychological Hedonism.
  - (x) State any once characteristics of Utilitarianism.
  - (xi) State any two differences between Mill's Utilitarianism and Bentham's Hedonism.

- (xii) State any one misuse of sex determination test.
- (xiii) State any two measures which can help in providing gender justice.
- (xiv) What do you understand by Organic farming?
- (xv) State any two factors which lead to the problem of pollution.

**Section - A**

- 2. Define Ethics. How are Ethics and Religion related to each other?
- 3. Discuss the object of moral judgement.

**Section - B**

- 4. Explain the concept of Mitzwah with special reference to positive mitzwah and negative mitzwah.
- 5. Critically explain Kant's doctrine of Categorical Imperative.

**Section - C**

- 6. Critically examine Bentham's Quantitative Hedonism.
- 7. "A dissatisfied Socrates is better than satisfied pig". Critically explain this statement in the light of Mill's Utilitarianism.

**Section - D**

- 8. Do you think the foetus has any moral right? Discuss this issue particularly in context with the problem of female foeticide.
- 9. Explain the various consequences of Pollution and Global Warming. How far we ethically responsible for these consequences?

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**(TO BE FILLED IN BY THE RESPONSE SHEET EVALUATOR)**

Name of the Evaluator with address: \_\_\_\_\_

Percent of Marks \_\_\_\_\_ Remarks: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature





