



Comparative Approach to Ethical Theories Indian and Western

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ABSTRACT

An ethical theory indicates a looking at ethical issues a distinct way of making sense of them and of attempting to resolve them. Such theories are prescriptive theories. This means that they set pit to tell us how we ought to address and resolve ethical difficulties. Ethical theories deal with ethical problems. They made analysis of what is good or bad these ethical theories help us to approach ethics is, ethical theories are general perspectives from which particular issues can be considered. It is a distinct way of looking at ethical issues and attempting to resolve them. As people have reflected upon and suggested with ethical issues, they have found it useful to develop general perspectives called ethical theories. That is a common sense morality is needed it consists standards of conducts, duties, obligations, values and principles that come from disparate sources such as parents, teachers, peers, religious leaders, professionals, literature, music, media etc. In western ethical theories the act utilitarian tries to decide which action to perform on the basis of calculation. Rule utilitarianism is benevolent or well meaning because the main goal of rule utilitarianism is to bring about good consequences measured in terms of human happiness.

KEYWORDS : Asteya, Aparigriha, Bramacharya, Ethics, Utilitarianism, Act utilitarianism, Deontology

INTRODUCTION

As a branch of philosophy, ethics investigates the questions "what is the best way for people to live? And what actions are right or wrong in particular circumstances? In practice, ethics seeks to resolve questions of human morality by defining concepts such as good and evil, right and wrong, virtue and vice, justice and crime. As ethics has grown in to an established field of study and practice, questions have arisen about the nature of the field and the problems within it. One of the most fundamental of these concerns is the usefulness of ethical theory. Traditional moral philosophy has virtually identified the possibility of genuine moral knowledge with the possibility of universally valid ethical theory ethicists call these standards a commonsense morality because they are the norms that most people learn and practice without any explicit theorizing or deeper analysis for example: keep your promises, be fair, always does your best etc. Commonsense value includes happiness, honesty and justice, charity, courage, integrity, community, love, knowledge and freedom. Ethical theory attempts to provide a justification or foundation for commonsense morality. Many philosophers who study applied ethics prefer to work with general, ethical principles rather than moral theory because one can use principles to support an ethical decision or a social policy without defending an entire moral theory. Ethical concerns are also found in systems like Buddhism and Jainism. Thus the ancient culture and religious practices of ancient India are a witness for many ethical principles. These ancient percepts and practices can serve as a means to bring about an improvement in the quality of life in global society. Most of these issues are controversial ones demanding either a factual analysis or an ethical one. Moral philosophy of the most important ethical theories that have been developed as approaches to ethical problems are Jaina ethics, Gandhian ethics, deontology, utilitarianism, rights theory, virtue theory, Ethics of Care, Casuistry, etc. Theories of normative ethics are generally grouped under two main headings: Deontological theories and Teleological theories. Moral law according to Kant is a pure form without any matter. It simply tells us that our action should have self consistency. Deontology holds that people act in an ethically acceptable way whenever they act in accordance with their duties and obligation. Action based theories may also be deontological theories which examine the concept of right and duties, whereas consequence based theories are teleological ones which are based on effects and consequences.

JAINA ETHICS

According to Jainism the goal of life is Moksha which means negatively removal of bondage of the soul and positively the attainment of perfection. Cardinal teachings are Right faith, Right

knowledge, Right Conduct. These three are known as three gems or Triratna that shines in a good life. Liberation is the joint effect of three. Five Great Vows can be applied in the field of bioethics: Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya, and Aparigraha. Ahimsa is abstinence from all injuries to all life. Life exists simply in moving beings but also in some nonmoving ones such as plants etc. The idea of Jaina is to avoid molesting life not only of the moving creatures but also of the non moving ones. Satya is abstinence from falsehood. Truthfulness is not speaking what is only true, but speaking what is true as well as good and pleasant. Without these qualifications the practice of truthfulness would be of little use as an aid to moral progress. Because merely speaking what is true may sometimes descend in garrulity, vulgarity, frivolity, vilification etc. The perfect maintenance of this vow one must conquer greed, fear and anger. Asteya is abstinence from stealing. This vow consists is not taking what is not given. Brahmacharya is abstinence from self indulgence. Aparigraha is the abstinence from all attachments. This is explained as the vow to give up all attachments for the objects of senses-sound, touch, color, taste and smell. The attachment to the world's objects means bondage to the world and the force of this causes rebirth, liberation is impossible without with drawl of attachments. So abstinence from all attachment leads to liberation.

GANDHIAN ETHICS

Gandhian ethics is simply his life. Mahatma Gandhi was an apostle of ahimsa and Gandhi describes his religion as truth. He considers God as truth that is God is truth. The only way to find God is to see him in his creation and we one with it. Gandhi ultimate truth was not intellectual but practical. When truth is observed in practice it assumes the form of dharma or moral law. Truth is the backbone of all morality. Gandhi was not merely able to regard satya as the necessary basis of all life and therefore of human society, but also to look upon every man as a truth seeker. According to Gandhi ahimsa is not merely a negative virtue of non killing and non-injury, but a positive virtue of doing well to others. Ahimsa is nonviolence in thought, word and deed and ahimsa requires truthfulness and fearlessness. Ahimsa is the means and truth is the end. Ahimsa and truth are inseparable and presuppose each other. Gandhi involvement in nonviolence is also praiseworthy. Gandhi has given a new orientation to the problems of humanity through his life.

DEONTOLOGY [KANTIANISM]

Deontology is an ethical theory whose name is derived from the Greek word 'Deon' meaning duty or obligation. It is an obligation based theory whose author was Immanuel Kant. This theory emphasizes the type of action rather than the consequences of action. A deontologist believes that a moral decision is based on

ones duties and the right of others. According to Kant morality is based on pure reason, that is reasoning a priori or abstract reasoning is central to Kant's whole idea of morality. According to Kant those who act from the motive of duty are said to have good will. Goodwill is the only thing unconditionally good in itself i.e. the moral law. In one of his major works 'Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals' Kant says that moral, when discussed in the context of human nature are 'liable to all kinds of corruption if we do not grasp the moral law in its purity. For Kant, this moral law further implied acting in accordance with the categorical imperative. A deontologist can be relied upon to take his or her promises seriously. Another quality of deontology is that it can take it account of what is often felt to be an extremely important kind of obligation a special obligation. A special obligation is an obligation someone has a result of standing in a certain relationship to someone else.

UTILITARIANISM

The opposite of deontology is the ethical theory known as utilitarianism. This theory is rooted on the thesis that an action is right if it leads to the greater possible balance of good consequences in the world as a whole. Utilitarianism holds that there is one and only one basic principle of ethics namely, the principle of utility. The classical origins of the theory are found in the writings of Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill. Utilitarianism is a teleological theory. Teleological theories judge actions to be right or wrong in relation to some end or goal that is considered as good. When pleasure or happiness is considered as the chief good in life, the theory is known as hedonism. Earlier the emphasis was on the pleasure of the individual but with Utilitarianism the emphasis shifted from individual to the social group. The Utilitarianism believes that the best evidence of the good character is good actions and hence they stress the consequences of action. An action is not to be called right or wrong because it is performed by a good or bad man or because the man is courageous or amiable. The morality of an act does not depend on the motive that prompts the action but upon the effects of the act upon the society as a whole. Utilitarian moral philosophers are divided into several types on the issue of utility. The problem is whether the principle of utility is to be applied to particular acts in particular circumstances or to rules of conduct that determine which acts are right and which is wrong.

ACT UTILITARIANISM

Act utilitarianism is an extreme theory, which takes into account nothing except the consequence of actions. Hence it is also called Consequentiality theory of ethics. The central idea of act utilitarianism is that act for the greatest good for the greatest number. For the act utilitarian good is measured in terms of happiness or of satisfaction and bad is measured in terms of suffering or dissatisfaction. Thus act utilitarian seeks in every action to maximize the overall amount of the suffering. The following example will illustrate the act utilitarian position. Suppose that a team of ten botanists led by an act utilitarian is captured by bandits in a remote forest. The bandit chief tells they all will be shot unless the leader of the botanists agrees to shot four of them. In his case the act utilitarian has two courses of action: accept the bandit chief's deal and shoot four colleagues rejects the deal and allow all ten members to be shot. The second stage is predicting the good and bad consequences of each course of action. The act utilitarian decides upon the best action to perform in three stages, survey all possible courses of action, predict what consequences in terms of happiness and suffering each of these courses of action will have, calculate which course of actions consequences represent the best balance of good results over bad results. Act utilitarian values to happiness and seek wherever possible to produce it. The motive of human action is always accepted as the desire to increase the amount of happiness in the world and to reduce the amount of suffering.

RULE UTILITARIANISM

The idea behind rule utilitarianism is that you should act in accordance with rules that would produce the greatest amount of happiness for the greatest number of the people. In this theory, a

good action is an action, which is in accordance with such a rule, and a bad action is an action that breaks such a rule. It may also be described as a consequentiality theory of ethics since it seeks good results in terms of human happiness. Rule utilitarianism some insist that we need some set of procedures or rules for dealing with cases of each particular kind. If that is, every case falling under that rule. This helps to overcome the criticism against act utilitarian that it is inconsistent and situational. Rule utilitarianism insists that similar cases are always treated in similar ways. Rules of behavior are formed on the basis of benevolence and rationality. Rule utilitarianism is rational in the sense that its rules are adopted on the basis of calculating which rules lead to the best results. Consistency and consideration for the demands of justice are common to rule utilitarianism. Rule utilitarianism can make sense of special obligations like parental that is obligations of parents to their children or children to their parents. The rule utilitarian can argue that the world will be a happier place if these obligations are generally honored.

CONCLUSION

Ethics is as fundamental in moral life as principles of moral obligation. In short, according to the approach the central question in morality is not what ought I to do. Our main task in life is to develop certain traits of character known as moral virtues. Ethics has intellectual interest as well as practical value a morally good person with right desires or motive is more likely to understand what to be done, to perform required acts and to form moral ideals that are a morally bad or indifferent person. India has a spirit of environmental conservation ethics inherent in our history, religion and culture. According to Bhagavat Gita, each member of the society has the duty to perform towards nature's well being and to protect to his fullest ability. Hindu scriptures recognize four goals in the life of a person and they are Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. Dharma is both superior to both Kama and Artha, since without dharma, Kama and Artha cannot be accomplished in sustainable manner and they are not be regulated and controlled by the norms of dharma. In rule utilitarianism there is the possibility of conflicting rules. One criticism of ethics is that he ultimately assumed the freedom of will without proof. In Kant's case he seems to make a pragmatic decision that moral responsibility is so important that this justifies the assumption of human freedom. Another criticism is many reject Kant's contention that genuine moral worth is grounded in a purely rational activity of the will married to an impersonally calculable logical inconsistency. Deontological ethics concerned with set of duties to produce and obligations, usually of a fairly rigid kind and they reveal world tend to produce some rather complicated situations. The philosophical teachings of great teachers and thinkers have been pushed to the background. Since man has become machine minded, there is little scope of morality. Ethical choices and consequences ought to be assessed on the scale of large groups at the system level, over the long term, to nonhuman as well as to human life and well being. It is his attitude of exploitation and dominance which is causing problems.

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