

## Chapter - II

### A Brief History of Traditional Normative Ethics

#### 2.1 Introduction:

The word “ethics” etymologically came from the Greek word “*ethos*” which means character, habit, customs et cetera. “Moral philosophy” is also identified to ethics. The term “moral” comes from “*mores*”, a Latin word, which is similarly signifies customs, character, etc. Thus, ethics may be identified as the systematic study of human behaviour from the point of rightness or wrongness of their actions. It is the study of good or bad of human conduct for which they were responsible. More specifically, ethics identifies what is good and to achieve it, and what is bad to avoid it. It guides us to what ought to be done and what ought not to be. As a branch of philosophical study, ethics provides the values and guidelines to live our life qualitatively better, not only that, ethics also justifies these values and guidelines.

Ethics as moral philosophy, discusses about morality, moral problems, and moral judgements. Ethics can be considered as a science as it is a collection of reasoned truths organised in a logical order that deals with the question what human ought to be. Even more, it is a rational science because it deduces its principles by human reason concerning the free will. It is a normative science as it controls human’s life and provides the right direction to one’s way of life. Ethics can also be theoretical or practical. It is theoretical when it provides the basic principles for moral judgements and practical when it is concerned for a particular end and the ways of attaining it. Ethics is generally defined to study the human behaviour and the ways of being one should be. The approaches and concept of ethics has changed and varied over time among ethicists. Ideal human behaviour according to Aristotle were practices that leads one to the end goal of *eudaimonia*, means a higher level of happiness, while Kant believed that ideal behaviour is the capability to think rationally. As a branch of philosophy, ethics makes differentiation between right and wrong, good and bad and admirable and deplorable.

## 2.2 The Origin and Development of Morality:

It is difficult to answer the question, where does ethics or moral philosophy come from? Actually, the question is two-folded, one is about the historical source and the other is about the authoritative source. In fact, they both appeal some traditional myths about the origin of the universe. They both are intended that the primal clashes and disasters were originated because human beings have to live by rules which did not fulfill their desires. The quest for the origin of morality does not want to prove the moral rules unnecessary, but it can be a strong motive to establish a conclusion. Perhaps, it may be arising from conflicts within ethical rules. We can often see that, in any culture, tradition or society, accepted duties and moral rules sometimes clashes and some more basic rules are needed to negotiate between them. People are generally judgmental between these moral rules and it may provoke them to look for a supreme negotiation, which will be the starting point for the source of morality. Thus, there is no straight forward answer to the question which this paragraph starts with.

The question “where do ethics come from?” is not like the question “where does the meteoroid come from?” the question is about “why should we obey the rules?” A response may be given that it is necessary to imagine our life without these rules and which inevitably raise the question about the source of morality. This may raise another question where people tend to look backward and ask whether there is any conflict-free state before the rules were imposed. Perhaps they imagine a state where rules were not needed, perhaps because nobody ever wanted anything bad. They further ask that, how did we come to lose this pre-ethical condition and can we get back to it?

The answer may be given in two different ways:

- i. From the Greeks and Thomas Hobbes, who explain ethics as a device of egoistic prudence; it is an outcome of social contract. They foresee the pre-ethical state as solitude and the primal disaster being that people ever began to meet each other at all. And once they did, conflict was inevitable and the nature of state was then, as Hobbes describes, ‘a war

of everyone against everyone<sup>1</sup> as Rousseau insisted that, they had not been actually hostile to each other before colliding.

- ii. Christianity explains our morality as our necessary attempt to bring our imperfect nature in accordance with the will of God. According to this view, its origin of myth is the Fall of Man.<sup>2</sup>

We can see that Christianity in this context, shifts the problem rather than solving it, as we still want to know why we should obey God. Christianity might say that we can just derive our duty to obey God simply because an all-powerful being created us. Because someone may argue that, if something bad is created for bad motives then we are not bound or dutiful to obey that being. So far, as we have seen that neither of these approaches can solve our question, so the question remains. Keeping in mind the above, let us, discuss Hobbes view in this context, in the following paragraph.

### **Some Lure of Egoism and Social Contract:**

Some thinkers may say that ethics just a contract based on egoistic prudence, as propounded by Hobbes. Though it is a much simpler answer to our question but at the same time it is unrealistic and impossible too; to explain the actual complexities of ethics. There may be several reasons to show why this is impossible but here we will focus only two of them.

- i. First one is rests on human defect. Human beings are not so prudent and consistent according to this theory.
- ii. The second one is about human beings' good qualities. People who behave decently are often moved by a set of motives, considering others'. These motives are justice, friendship, love, loyalty, compassion, sympathy, family affection, which are honoured in most human societies. Egoist such as Hobbes claims that these motives are unreal, they are only empty names.<sup>3</sup> But it is hard to believe that how does a name could be

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<sup>1</sup> Hobbes, T., *Leviathan* (London, 1651, Everyman Edition), Dent and Dutton, London, 1914, Part One, Ch. 13, p. 64

<sup>2</sup> Midgley, M., *The Origin of Ethics in A companion to Ethics*, Ed. By Peter Singer, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., UK, 1991, p. 4

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5

invented for such motives which were not existent at all<sup>4</sup>. Thus, Hobbes's discussion is inadequate to locate the source of ethics. To find an answer to establish let us make a distinction between moral and factual argument for the origin of morality.

### **Moral and Factual Arguments:**

If we accept extreme individualism as a factual discovery then it will appear as how human beings are actually constituted. This argument rests on the idea of evolution, by the 'survival of the fittest'<sup>5</sup>. This process is surely shaped them into isolated beings. Unlike all earlier sources about origin of ethics, it can be said that this concept of Darwin is much more scientific. One may say that though it incorporates some genuine scientific evidences and principles but it ignores and distorts some great issues.

There are two issues by which it can be distinguished from our current science are:

**i** – Its fantasy and over-dramatised notion of competition and **ii** – The predominant position that secures our own species in the evolution.

- i.** What we need is to be careful in using the term 'competition'. Competition may be held between two organisms if they both cannot achieve it, and they both deliberately trying to defeat each other. But in the case of the organisms like, plants, bacteria, which are apparently not conscious then how can we say that they are in the process of competition. The competition really exists in a narrow sense. For example, the plants' existence in a particular ecosystem depends upon both with each other and with animals that consume plants, and those animals also depend on each other and on their predators. Thus, every entity is dependent makes the ecological cycle possible. So, we can clearly see the co-operative motivations supply the main structure of their behavior rather than the competitive motivations.

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<sup>4</sup> Midgley, M., *The Origin of Ethics in A companion to Ethics*, Ed. By Peter Singer, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., UK, 1991, p. 5

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 5

- ii. While the second reason presents the evolutionary process as a pyramid and place the MAN in its apex, this theory does not cohere with today's genuine biology<sup>6</sup>. Today's biological theory depicts the life-form quite differently. This theory does not belong to modern science rather it belongs to traditional metaphysics, and it does not play any role to develop the origin of ethics. Thus, the distinction between moral and factual argument from science does not give a solid ground for the source of morality. Let us discuss Midgley's another argument in the following paragraph.

### **Sociability, Conflict and the Origins of Morality:**

Some thinkers may opine that morality or ethics is originated from the natural social dispositions that human possess. So, the question remains how are these natural social dispositions linked with human morality. It is obvious that they do not directly originate from natural or social dispositions, rather, they definitely contribute some essential element to it. Perhaps they supply the new material for moral life but it still requires the work of intelligence to shape properly. This suggestion was sketched by Darwin in his *The Decent of Man*.<sup>7</sup> Let us discuss.

The relation between natural disposition to morality would be much like that of natural curiosity to science. Natural dispositions do not create rules themselves; these dispositions often conflict with each other. Following Darwin, Midgley mention that, in non-human animals these conflicts can be settled by further second order dispositions but in the case of human beings they arbitrate these conflicts somehow in a manner to feel themselves coherent and continuous.<sup>8</sup>

Darwin says that, in searching the special power possessed by 'the imperious word ought', there is a clash between these social dispositions with temporary motives which often conflict with them.<sup>9</sup> According to him, human beings naturally try to produce rules to protect their group. Also for him, 'any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, would inevitably acquire a moral sense

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<sup>6</sup> Midgley, M., *Evolution As A Religion*, Methuen, London and New York, 1985

<sup>7</sup> Darwin, C., *The Decent of Man* (1859), Princeton University Press, London, 1859, Vol. 1, Ch. 1, 1981

<sup>8</sup> Midgley, M., *The Origin of Ethics in A companion to Ethics*, Ed. By Peter Singer, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., UK, 1991, p. 9

<sup>9</sup> Darwin, C., *The Decent of Man* (1859), Princeton University Press, London, 1859, 1981, p. 92

or conscience, as soon as its' intellectual powers had become as well developed, or anything like as well developed, as in man.'<sup>10</sup> Thus, the social instincts, the prime principle of man's moral constitution – with the aid of active intellectual powers and the effect of habit, naturally lead to the Golden Rule, “As ye would that men should do unto you, do ye to then likewise” and this lies at the foundation of morality.<sup>11</sup> As we have seen that the Darwinian account of the relation between social disposition with morality is not enough to solve our problem of the origin of morality, so we will continue with our question in following paragraphs, as Midgley suggests.

### **The Problem of Partiality:**

We have tried to figure out the origin of morality by establishing the link between natural dispositions to morality but it cannot ignore the problem of partiality or biasness. But, how can we generalise the origin of human morality is equal to the origin of non-human morality. There are thinkers who have objected to this view rule them out entirely because these dispositions occur fitfully and their incidence is strongly biased. But this partiality or biasness often very powerfully exists in all human morality. It is important to notice that this biasness becomes stronger with the development of human civilization and it is still fully active in our own culture. For example, any modern society parents were giving more care and affection to their own children than they did to others and if they don't do it then they would be counted as monsters. Parents naturally spend their resources for their minors before considering the grave needs of outsiders. So, human society makes some fundamental rules or provisions like, code of conduct for the outsiders and it all starts with biasness towards their kin which shapes animal societies. It is true that biases need to be gradually corrected by the recognition of wider concepts of duties and responsibilities as human morality develops. This becomes true if all our parents care for other childrens as they give to their own. Though it cannot be a substitute for natural disposition but it will probably help to survive few warm-blooded infants. Therefore, there are some sociobiologists, who rightly point out that “heritable altruistic dispositions are not easily passed on unless they make possible an increase

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<sup>10</sup> Darwin, C., *The Decent of Man* (1859), Princeton University Press, London, 1859, 1981, p. 72

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 106

in the survival of the altruist's own kin, who share the gene that give rise to them."<sup>12</sup> But when that occurs, it becomes possible for such traits to develop and to spread through kin selection that did not only consider competition for survival between individuals.

One may be critically asked that if these dispositions are not disqualified by the biasness or partiality and still accepted as essential material for the development of morality then can we say that Darwin's proposal is the right one to convince this? In response to this question, we can say that there is obviously a force in, Darwin's suggestion that what makes morality necessary is conflict and an unfallen state would never require it. If this is right then the proposal to get rid of morality, would involve everybody conflict-free. Unless that were done, we need some priority rules to avoid individually into state of helpless. According to Mary Midgley, "in some sense, this 'the origin of ethics and our search need take us no further."<sup>13</sup>

Thus, for Midgley, the origin of morality is intended to avoid the unrealistic, egoistic theorizing on the one hand and equally unreal moral boasting to make the origin of human beings as a primary species looks incomprehensible on the other. It does not give equality to human morality with other social creatures. So, it is fallacious to equate any product with its source. Thus, morality emerges from prevailing atmosphere or conditions or state-of-affairs, so far as Midgley's view is concerned.

### **2.3 The Innateness of Morality:**

If we go through the book of Richard Joyce, we can find that everyone comes with an idea of good and evil, beauty and ugly, becoming and unbecoming, happiness and misery, proper and improper, what ought to be done and what ought not to be. Therefore, we all try to apply our preconceptions to particular cases and use these names as following: so-and-so acted well, not well; right, not right; is happy, not happy; is just, unjust and so on. But what compels us to think such behaviour is right or wrong? From where we derive it? One may respond with

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<sup>12</sup> Midgley, M., *The Origin of Ethics in A companion to Ethics*, Ed. By Peter Singer, Blackwell Publishers Ltd., UK, 1991, p. 11

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 11

different reasons, exposing significant differences in one's underlying conceptions of morality and let us focus on these conceptions.

One may define these underlying conceptions into two different steps.

- i. He may ask, "Is human morality innate?" In fact, one is basically tries to understand what the question is,<sup>14</sup> to arrive at a positive answer.
- ii. Second is to ask "so what?" If we suppose that morality is innate than can we say that does this provide a foundation to morality or does these remove away the threat of moral scepticism?

So, to respond the first question i.e. "Is human morality innate?" we need to understand "what is innate". People who debate for the innateness of morality are generally trying to explain that whether we can explain morality in genetic terms: whether our present moral traits can be explained by reference to a gene gifted from our ancestors. It does not follow that an innate trait will develop itself without depending on the environment and even it does not follow that there exists a gene for morality. The innateness and the reference to human nature which is closely associated with it never imply any dubious metaphysics regarding human essence. For example, to say that *bipedalism* is innate and a part of human nature does not imply that it is a necessary condition for being human.

There is another reason behind the vagueness of the hypothesis, human morality is innate and that reason might be the meaning of "morality". So, we need to clarify the meaning of the term "morality". Again, there may be two hypotheses to explain morality.

- i. The claim that humans are naturally moral animals perhaps mean that we act in a way that is morally praiseworthy. The process of evolution has designed us to be social, friendly, and benevolent and so on. But no one ever claims that humans always possess such virtuous behaviours rather they also be violent, selfish and lying. To say that human behaviour is morally praiseworthy, we might mean that the immoral qualities of humans are unnatural or might mean that both of those

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<sup>14</sup> Joyce, R., *The Evolution of Morality*, MIT Press, USA, p., 2006

behaviours are innate but the morally praiseworthy behaviours are predominant.

- ii. The hypothesis that humans are naturally moral animals may mean that the process of evolution has designed us to think and judge morally. Thus, the former hypothesis, the term “moral animal” is understood as an animal that is morally praiseworthy; while the second hypothesis is understood as an animal that is morally think or judges. Like the former the later claims that to say that we naturally make moral judgements may mean that we are designed to have particular moral attitudes towards particular kinds of things. For example, murder, rape and cheating is offensive and helping others and keeping promises to others is determined by contingent environmental and cultural factors.

These two hypotheses might be complementary to each other. No one may have objections to the fact that something which is morally praiseworthy must be motivated by moral thoughts. If humans are naturally or morally praiseworthy, then we are also naturally be able to employ our moral judgements. Thus, we can see the truth of the first hypothesis is depend upon the second. So, they are logically related. Here the second hypothesis is directly concerned with whether the human capacity to make moral judgements innate. We cannot discuss the evolution of moral judgement unless we know “what moral judgement is”. Let us focus in this section, by introducing socio-biological approach.

Sociology is a kind of research that explains social behaviour in terms of biology, with the assumption that biology is innate. Biology successfully explains the social behaviour of bees, ants and naked mole rats, but it is problematic when it is applied to human beings. To explain any human behaviour in terms of biological or natural selection is considered to be offering a socio-biological explanation. Socio-biology which is invented in 1970 again in 1980 invented as evolutionary psychology. Socio-biology discusses innate behaviour whereas evolutionary psychology discusses the psychological mechanism underlying that behaviour. Evolutionary psychology has three implications –

- i. Evolutionary psychology does not claim that human behaviour is adaptive rather it is a product of psychological mechanisms that are

adaptations. It is necessary that something which is a product of adaptation must always be adaptive.

- ii.** Evolutionary psychology never implies that an adaptation must result in cross-cultural Universals in human behaviour, cross culturality can be offered as evidence of innateness.
- iii.** The innateness for evolutionary psychologists does not mean any behaviour produced by an innate mechanism. It claims that the behaviour is generated by an innate mechanism in accordance with the mechanism's design. This mechanism is to be explained by reference to our ancestors having engaged in this type of behaviour in surrounding environmental conditions.

As we have seen, no one can object to evolutionary psychology and if anyone does then it will be difficult to answer, why do we have emotions at all? Why humans have better memory than that of a goldfish? Why are naturally attracted to sex and food? One may say that we need to look at the way of living of our ancestors. But if this is so, then one may wonder that why there are so many objections to evolutionary psychology. Because it is not only saying that the basic faculty of the human mind are due to evolutionary process but it also says that the mind consists of hundreds of innate psychological mechanisms and each of it geared to respond to some discrete ancestral threat. But this is terribly vague, so far as the prevailing discussion is concerned.

Though evolutionary psychology allows that the human behaviour may be evolutionary accidental but it also allows the human behaviour as malleable and the plasticity of psychological mechanism is an adaptation. That is our brain which produces different responses to environmental variations. The human brain or rationality is multiple faculties which were designed to deal with environmental variation per excellence and how we can best to respond to an infinite range of environmental stimuli. Rationality is the faculty what sets us apart from the rest of the other animal and enhance our capacity to do the things alone, on our own. It is not possible that our enormous range of behaviour in response to enormous range of stimuli is all well-programmed. No ancestral environment contained all such stimuli and our genome is not large enough to contain the information to cover all such behaviours.

Though it is true that human behaviour cannot be all programmed at all and it is our rationality or human mind which designed us, how to response in a particular environment but we cannot say that human mind is nothing but full of flexibility. The thesis of the human *tabula rasa* has never been held in pure form. The word “tabula” used as a metaphor for something that has innate abilities to acquisition, manipulation and storage of beliefs from the environment to build our mental mechanism. Even John Locke, accepts these innate mental faculties like memory, emotion, perception, deliberation, will, understanding and so on. Locke in *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, once says that “of all the men we meet with what they are, good or evil, useful or not, by their education”<sup>15</sup>. If, Locke indicates that 10% of character is innate then one might clearly consider Locke as an evolutionary psychologist.

Perhaps Locke was right in his discussion but it would be difficult for him to answer if someone asks Locke that why do we have emotions at all and why have we these particular emotions i.e., fear, happiness, jealousy etc. instead of other unimaginable emotions? One might say that it lies with our ancestors. Having emotions and having these particular emotions are provided to us by our ancestors. Our ancestors enjoyed them and thus, they selected these emotions to carry. There is flexibility and stability as well regarding these emotions. Though every human has the capacity for fear but what to fear is something what we learn from environment. In this way our emotions are both stable and flexible. And even humans are naturally attracted towards cohabitation and food but when food and cohabitation are search then food surely wins out. No one is starved to death on a lifeboat attracted with opposites with synonymous thoughts. Thus, the argument and counter arguments are not enough to solve our question of innateness.

In reference to socio-biology, the opponents go at a per with genetic determinism to establish their view. According to this view, human morality is genetically programmed and by the term “programmed” they do not deny the cultural or environmental influences, nor even say that any manifestation of morality is inevitable.

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<sup>15</sup> Locke, J. *Some thoughts concerning education*, Clarendon press, 1989, p. 83

Let us see how these genetically encoded or programmed? Morality may be affected by environmental factors. Phenylketonuria (PKU), for example is a genetic metabolic disorder that can cause terrible mental retardation which can be easily avoided with a restricted diet. So, we can see that there is no obvious relation between genotype and phenotype expression. So, it is wrong when Stephen Jay Gould wrote: “If we are programmed to be what we are, then these traits are ineluctable. We may, at best, channel them, but we cannot change them either by will, education, or culture.”<sup>16</sup>

The tendency to make moral judgement as an output of innate conditional strategy would not be considered in consistent with morality as a part of human nature. Even if our living conditions are very much dissimilar with our ancestors, we cannot say that there has been at least one modern human society without moral system and still claims that morality is innate. But we all know that apparently all of the modern human societies have their moral system.

As we have seen moral beliefs are unlikely to be inevitable and evolutionary account of morality would in some sense deprive us from our freedom. According to Patricia Williams, “if morality were innate then our moral judgements would be coerced from within, but that, since in order to be ethical brings we must be free, it is incoherent to appeal to evolution in order to explain our ethical nature; therefore, morality cannot be innate”<sup>17</sup>. Though many philosophers argue that freedom does not alter the course of neutral causation, it simply means acting on our desires. Thus, evolutionary explanation of an action actually clarifies that where the relevant desires came from. Richard Joyce thinks that human desires come from nature, all desires have a history and some of them have evolutionary history.<sup>18</sup>

Traditionally one may object against sociobiology and evolutionary psychology, which have been removed recently, that it leads to unpleasant political issues.<sup>19</sup> Most of the objection against these research programs was politically motivated and sometimes it was compared with Marxist philosophy. Levins and Lewontin once proudly made their declaration that, “...we have been attempting with

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<sup>16</sup> Gould, S.J., “The Non Science of Human Nature”, In Gould, *Ever Since Darwin*, Norton, p. 238

<sup>17</sup> Joyce, R., *The Evolution of Morality*, MIT Press, USA, 2006, P. 9

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, P. 10

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid*, P. 10

some success to guide our research by a conscious application of Marxist philosophy.”<sup>20</sup> Though it is intellectually repugnant to discuss these political issues here but what Joyce wants to highlight here is the weird presupposition that a Darwinian approach to human psychology and human behaviour should have any obvious political ramifications.”<sup>21</sup> He continues “...even if evolutionary psychology were to turn out to have specific political implications, so be it. The policy of letting political preference determines our acceptance of scientific theories, of denying a theory irrespective of its empirical support simply because of its uneasiness about its practical implications, has never, so far as I know, deserved a place among the virtues of intellectual enquiry”.<sup>22</sup>

So, our hypothesis, how much human psychology can be explained in terms of innate faculties, let us proceed to the available evidences. There is no such plausible argument to show that these findings may have any practical or moral implications. According to Richard Joyce, we are not committed to the view that human mind is open to direct evolutionary explanation and even Joyce is not sure that whether the ideas that will be discussed in his coming pages should favour evolutionary psychology or not. But if the question is about innateness of moral faculty, then neither hypothesis should be rejected in advance of examining the evidence. Even he says that it is obvious that biological natural selection should have developed that kind of mechanisms that designed to produce such judgements. It is also plausible that moral judgement is a culturally generated capacity flowing from more general psychological faculties. Thus, moral behaviour is generated from culture as well as psychological faculties, so far as Joyce is concerned.

#### **2.4 Normative Ethics:**

Discussions on the contemporary ethical theories are shaped by our predecessors. We are engaged in the discussions or debate because of their philosophical failures and success in the present context. The history of moral philosophy is thus, involved with the discussion between their theories and our contemporary debates. In most of the cases, these debates are similar because we all are looking for the better approaches by which we can understand ourselves, our

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<sup>20</sup> Levens , R. and Lewontin. R. C., *The dialectical Biologist*, Harvard University Press, 1985, p. 165

<sup>21</sup> Joyce, R., *The Evolution of Morality*, MIT Press, USA, 2006, P. 11

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, P. 11

place in the world and our relationships with the others. Keeping this in mind, we may distinguish moral philosophy into three main categories such as, normative ethics, meta-ethics and applied ethics.

Normative ethics is an enormous field. It is concerned with the justification of the fundamental ethical principles which considers that how we should live and what we morally ought to do. It is generally a decision procedure to guide our moral action. It deals with the question like how one ought to act? According to Hugh LaFollete, normative ethics generally considers the queries that “Are there general principles, rules, guidelines that we should follow, or virtues that we should inculcate, that help us to distinguish right from wrong and good from bad?”<sup>23</sup> Normative ethics is contrasted with meta-ethics because; it examines standards for the rightness or wrongness of an action, while meta-ethics deals with the meaning of moral language and metaphysics of moral facts. Meta-ethics concerns questions about normative enquiry, rather than discussing questions within normative enquiry. Normative ethics generally concerned with questions like what is good or bad, what we must ought to do. But on the other hand, meta-ethical questions are like what it means to say that something is good or bad?<sup>24</sup>

### **Theories of Normative Ethics:**

Normative ethical theories can further be divided into three main categories, such as, Consequentialism, Deontology and Virtue ethics.

#### **2.4.1 Consequentialism or Teleological theory:**

Moral philosophers have offered us different types of moral standards to understand what type of actions are right and what type of actions are wrong. They have generally proposed two sorts of ethical theories that are Consequentialism and Deontological theory. Consequentialism is the kind of moral theory which holds that the consequences of one’s actions are the only foundational criteria to determine the rightness and wrongness of that particular action. According to the Consequentialists, an action is morally right if and only if it produces a good consequence. If the act does not produce the comparative amount of good consequences or it does not

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<sup>23</sup> LaFollete, H. (Ed.), *The Blackwell Guide to Ethical Theory* Blackwell Publishers, USA, 2000, p. 1

<sup>24</sup> Mc Pherson, T. and Plunkett, T. (Ed.), *The Routledge Handbook of Metaethics*, Routledge, New York, 2018, p.

produces the comparative amount of good over evil then it is not the kind of right action. Frankena, opines: “Thus, an act is right if and only if it or the rule under which it falls produces, will probably produce, or is intended to produce at least as great a balance of good over evil as any available alternative; an act is wrong if and only if it does not do so.”<sup>25</sup>

In consequentialist theory, one judges things or actions solely in terms of the consequences it produces. Teleological or consequential theories are sometimes compared with hedonism because here the good is understood in terms of pleasure and evil in terms of pain, and the view is taken that the right action is that which produces the greater balance of pleasure over pain. Hedonism argues that pleasure and happiness is the highest good and the ultimate aim of our life. But consequential theory is not like that in every way. The consequentialists sometimes identify good with pleasure but they also identify the good with power, knowledge, perfection and obligation. So, it is not always necessary for the teleologists to identify good with pleasure; what is necessary is that they have some views about good or bad and seek to determine the right action by the greatest balance of good over evil.

### **Varieties of Consequentialism:**

The most discussed form of consequentialism is Utilitarianism, which is known as impartial theory in ethics. Though there are also some non-utilitarian views which are also accepted as impartial theory. For example, Egoism and Situational ethics. Like all the other forms of consequentialism, Utilitarianism holds that an action is right or wrong depending upon their effects only. The utilitarians believe that our main purpose of morality is to make life better and this could be done only by increasing good things in our life and decreasing the bad things. Utilitarianism maintains that an act is right if and only if it contains the greater welfare or consequences than any other alternative does.

According to the utilitarians,

“...impartial assessment of welfare, a benefit (i.e., addition to some one’s welfare) or harm (loss to welfare) to anyone individual gets the same weight as the same size benefit or harm to anyone else. Thus, benefits and harms to everyone count equally, no matter what his or her ethnic group, religion, wealth, education,

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<sup>25</sup> Frankena, William K., *Ethics*, Prentice-Hall India, New Delhi, 1997, p. 14

political views, talent or conscientiousness; all that matters is the size of the benefits and harms.”<sup>26</sup>

Utilitarianism is a kind of view proposed by philosophers to make decisions within a wide range of options that are available before the people. These options may be actions, laws, moral codes or what so ever. Utilitarianism is a kind of consequentialism because it depends on the consequences, if the consequence is good then the act is right and if the consequence is not good then the act is wrong. The best result of any action is always praised by the utilitarians. “Maximizes utility” – is the expression made by the utilitarians which means, actions or policies that produces the greatest amount of good.

### **Varieties of Utilitarianism:**

Utilitarianism has two forms one is act centered and the other is rule centered. The first one is called Act-utilitarianism which focuses mainly on actions and Rule-utilitarianism is the other variant which focuses on the moral rules.

Though both of the variants agree that our main purpose is to evaluate action on the basis of best possible result that it produces, but they differ on certain points. Let us discuss:

- i. Act-utilitarianism:** According to act-utilitarians we should perform the morally right action. But the question is what type of actions could be considered right actions. Act-utilitarianist says, the action that produces the largest utility is right, and we should perform that. The right action will produce the best result in all possible circumstances. Act-utilitarianism says, we should apply the principle of utility on every individual case. The right action produces more utility than any other action.
- ii. Rule-utilitarianism:** On the other hand, rule-utilitarian emphasises on the moral rules to determine whether an act is right or wrong. Rule utilitarian adopts a two-fold view that **i)** an action is right if and only if it is justified by a moral rule and **ii)** a moral rule is justified only if it produces more utility than any other possible rule. According to rule-utilitarianism, one action should be regarded as

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<sup>26</sup> Frankena, William K., *Ethics*, Prentice-Hall India, New Delhi, 1997, p. 14

morally right if it conforms to the moral rules and those moral rules are justified by the capacity of producing goodness than any other possible moral rules. Thus, we can see the difference between act-utilitarianism and rule-utilitarianism, the first one is applied directly on action for evaluation but the second one is applied to evaluate the rule in accordance with which the action that produces the largest welfare is done.

#### **2.4.2 Theory of Deontology:**

Deontology can best be understood in contrast with consequentialism. These two theories divide the entire moral philosophy from different perspectives. The etymological meaning of the word 'deontology' is derived from two Greek words i.e., 'deon' and 'logos'. In Greek language 'deon' means 'duty' and 'logos' means 'science', thus, the meaning of the term 'deontology' is 'the science of duty'.

Deontological theories do not agree with the consequentialist theories and deny that, an action is right by the consequences it produces. They argue that an action can be right or wrong depending upon the reasons besides the goodness or badness it produces. For example, to keep a promise is just, and thus, promise keeping is a right action without depending on its consequences. This type of action is right but its rightness is not due to its consequence. Consequentialists generally accepted the myth that, there is only one criterion to judge an act, whether it is right or wrong. They basically depend upon a non-moral comparative value. Deontologists do not believe that this characteristic is reliable, rather they believe that there are also other more pertinent characteristics to be considered to determine whether an act is right or wrong. Deontologists say that, "the principle of maximizing the balance of good over evil, no matter for whom, is either not a moral criterion or standard at all, or, at least, it is not the only basic or ultimate one."<sup>27</sup> Deontological ethics and consequential ethics are thus opposite to one another. If consequentialism tells us to emphasise on the consequences of individual work deontology tells us to consider only action without being considering its consequences.

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<sup>27</sup> Frankena, William K., *Ethics*, Prentice-Hall India, New Delhi, 1997, p. 15

### 2.4.2.1 Varieties of Deontology:

Deontological theories have different forms like; **i** – act-deontology and **ii** – rule-deontology is the most popular.

- i.** Act-deontological theories hold that our basic judgments of obligation are always particular like, “in this particular situation I should do so and so”. They do not believe in the general rule like “We ought to keep our promise always”. For them general rules are useless, they are just derived from particular sets of moral judgments. But H. A. Prichard and E.F. Carritt<sup>28</sup> do not satisfy themselves with the above mentioned formulation. They proposed an extreme kind of formulation of the act-deontological theory and thus they are considered as extreme act-deontologists. According to them, we ought to see each particular case or situation to decide what is the right or obligatory action. And they also hold that this should be done without any reference to general moral rules. And because it is a form of deontological theory which is opposed to consequentialism, so we do not have to see whether this act produces the greatest balance of good over evil. The similar kind of view is suggested by Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*; at the end of Book – II, when he says that the golden mean is “depend upon particular facts, and the decision rests with perception.”<sup>29</sup>

Butler also supports this view in his book *Five Sermons* when he says, “...any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, asks himself, is this I am going about right, or is it wrong?... I do not in the least doubt but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstances [without any general rule].”<sup>30</sup>

Existentialists also pose this kind of view. They say that there is no such general rule, and ‘humans create moral rules to fit the circumstances of their own existence’. As I have said earlier that act-deontologists believe that general rules can

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<sup>28</sup> The author of *The Theory of Morals: An Introduction to Ethical Philosophy* and *The Theory of Beauty*

<sup>29</sup> Ross, D. (Trans.), *The Nicomachean Ethics*, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009, p. ix

<sup>30</sup> Butler, J., *Five Sermons*, Liberal Arts Press, New York, 1949, p. 45

be constructed on the basis of particular instances which will be useful for us to judge an action in the future, if it occurred later. But this does not mean that we can derive the ethical values of one particular judgment from the values of general rules. Because situational ethics is opposed to the generalisation of rules it accepts both the variants of act-deontology.

- ii. The other variant of deontological theory is rule-deontological theory. Rule-deontological theory gives priority to the principle that can be generalised, rather than any particular judgment or principle. The rule-deontologist hold that the rightness or wrongness of an action is dependent upon a general rule, which can be applied to every action of everyone in the society, for example, “We always ought to tell the truth”. This is a general rule and ought to be obeyed by everyone. Unlike consequentialism, rule-deontology doesnot determine the rightness or wrongness of one particular action by taking the greatest balance of good over evil. And contrary to the act-deontologists they believe that the general rules are not derived by induction from particular instances. But they believe that the rightness or wrongness of particular instances is always determined by these general rules. We have many thinkers and writers who were considered as rule-deontologists but in the following paragraphs we will discuss the Divine Command theory and the Kantian account of deontology.

#### **2.4.2.1.1 Divine Command Theory:**

Divine Command theory is a kind of rule-deontological theory which is also known as theological voluntarism. Divine Command theory is a metaethical theory which holds that an action is morally right if it is commanded by God, and it is wrong if it is done otherwise. Thinkers who believe in this view also hold that “right” and “wrong” respectively mean the command of do’s and don’ts of God. This theory proposes that morality of an action is determined by God’s command. To be moral is to follow the commands of God. So, the rightness or wrongness of an action is solely dependent upon divine commandment.

Proponents of this theory do not follow the rule of greatest number of good for the people or the consequences of an action it produces. They believe that God’s

law is constituted by a set of rules, for example, the Ten Commandments of the Old Testament. If they think so, then they must be facing the problem of conflicts among these rules.

Question may be raised that, why should we act according to Gods will? A theist or a theologian may answer that we need to act because God's will provide reward to us and if we do not follow His will, then He will punish us. This kind of judgment is made by the theologians just to motivate us to obey God's will. But if they claim that we ought to obey God's will, then they presuppose that one ought to do only what is interested to him, interest means the good to one's own. So, the basic principle is not to obey God, but to choose the greatest good to one's own. But this formulation is not what deontological theories actually say. Here I just concentrate on the theologians who believe that rightness or wrongness of an action is determined by its being commanded or forbidden by God.

Divine Command theory is not equally understood by the believers and the non-believers of God. The person who believes in God definitely holds that the moral law is what God tells us to do, but, on the other hand, the person who does not believe in God, will express his/her/their disagreement to the previous one. So, it is not easy to formulate a version of Divine Command theory which is equally accepted by both the believers and the non-believers.

### **A Critical Analysis of Divine Command Theory:**

Divine Command theory is discussed from the Greek period to the present day and there are so many questions and objections against it. In Plato's *Euthyphro*, we can find that something is right because it is commanded by God, and then Socrates asks him, "is something right because it is commanded by God or does He command this because it is right?" Euthyphro replies that, God commands it because it is right. Socrates argues that Euthyphro must withdraw his theory. Socrates concludes from Euthyphro's argument that there is something which is right or wrong independent of God's command. In other words, there are such moral standards which are right and wrong by themselves. This is known as Euthyphro's Dilemma in philosophy. In this dilemma, if the first is chosen then it follows that whatever God commands is right, even if that is patently wrong from the human point of view. And if the later one is chosen then morality will be independent of

God, which is contradictory to the Divine Command theory. If God is subjected to other external laws, then He must lose His omnipotence, which is again contradictory to the orthodox conception of God. Proponents of this dilemma claim that the Divine Command theory cannot be accepted because, it challenges the ability of God. Though this turmoil Euthyphro's answer seems to be a natural one. He just says that God only reveals what is right and does not make anything right or creates its rightness merely by willing it.

Ralph Cudworth, an English theologian and a philosopher of the 17th century, said if Divine Command theory is true then if God were to command cruelty or injustices then those unethical things are considered as right and obligatory and thus ethical.<sup>31</sup> But this would be awkward. The supporters of Divine Command theory react that, God could not command cruelty. God is good in nature, by definition.

This theory generally teaches us that moral truth does not exist independently; the morality of judgment is always dependent upon the Divine Commands. Though there are so many objections against this theory most of the religious believers believe in some form or other of Divine Command theory because they feel that by remaining true to the moral principles, they remain obedient to God.

#### **2.4.2.1.2 Kantian Deontology:**

The best example of deontological ethics is the theory advocated by the German philosopher Immanuel Kant.<sup>32</sup> Kant was an 18th century Germany philosopher and thinker of the Enlightenment age. He had a strong faith in human reason. He believed that man can understand the various problems of worlds by and with the help of reason alone and he has the capacity to solve them as well – specially the ethical problems. Kant sought to prove that morality is based on reason. For him, if one is to be ethical then he should be rational, or to say the same thing in another way, an action is ethical if it is done through reason, and it is reason only that determines if an action is ethical or not. So, the most rational action is the most ethical one. Kant also believed that morality is all about obligations, obligations towards the actions performed by the agents irrespective of their consequences. Kant thought that moral actions do not have any exceptions; every action should follow

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<sup>31</sup> Raphael, D. D. (edit.), *British Moralists 1650 – 1800*, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1969, p. 105

<sup>32</sup> Kuehn, M., *Kant: A Autobiography*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2011, p. 159

the moral rules. For this reason, Kantian morality is considered as deontological ethical theory.

Kant's philosophy is basically concerned about duty. The principles of Kant's theoretical as well as practical philosophy are *a priori*. To be *a priori*, according to Kant, is to be strictly universal and necessary. For Kant, the general principle of the moral law, i.e., the categorical imperative, is derived from practical reason, and is therefore obligatory for every rational agent that poses the same practical reasons. So, every rational agent or human being is obliged by the moral law. But what does Kant mean by the moral law? In one word, the moral law is Categorical Imperative. Categorical Imperative is a set of principle, these are – respect the humanity in oneself as well as in other rational agents, not to make an exception for himself while deliberating others about how to perform an action, and action only in accordance with rules that could be universally obeyed.

Kant discusses his ethical ideas mainly in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* (1785), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1787), and *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797). These are primary sources of his ethical discussions, though *Groundwork* is the most popular and well known among them, for his ideas of ethical theories, and in this chapter, we shall primarily restrict our discussion from his *Groundwork*.

The moral theory which Kant sought for is possible only under the foundation of the unconditional good. Conditional good has no important value in Kantian morality. Conditional good presupposes some external cause for its goodness. If one thing is conditionally good then its goodness depends upon some other external cause which may be either conditional or unconditional. If the external cause is unconditional then nothing may be wrong with it but if the cause is conditional then the external cause needs another second external cause for its goodness. And this process will run if we do not accept any unconditional good as a foundation of morality. Kant believes that all our goodness ultimately depends upon something that is good unconditionally. We have so many examples of good things but these are not unconditionally good, these are merely conditionally good. For example, Money is such a thing that we generally consider as a good thing but this is not ultimately good, because money can be used for both good as well as bad purposes. Goodness depends upon the situation; thus, it is conditional. Power is also a criterion that is

considered as good, but power is not unconditionally good. Power is good if it is used for the development of human civilisation, otherwise not. Kant is very conservative in his conception of the good and, more definitely, with regard to what is unconditionally good. For him, even happiness is not unconditionally good. All people want to be happy, but if this happiness is due to the perception of something bad in others, then it is not good. Suppose if one person is feeling happy after coming to know a bank robbery then his happiness cannot be considered as good.

So, the question is, *is there anything that can be considered as unconditionally good?* Kant's answer is an affirmative one. There is only thing that can be considered as good unconditionally and that is *good will*. According to Kant, "The only thing that is good without qualification or restriction is a good will".<sup>33</sup> According to Kant, good will alone is good in all circumstances. And it is good in itself without depending on other things. But this does not mean that good will is the only good. There are innumerable goodness's in the world but they are not good in all circumstances, and sometimes they are bad when they are used by unworthy motives. It means that they are not unconditionally good, they are conditionally good. The value of goodness does not depend upon the result or consequences it produces, even a good will does not suggest any desirable consequence at all.

#### **2.4.2.1.2.1 The Good Will and Duties:**

Kant's goodness is strongly connected with the concept of duty. For him, to understand human goodness we need to examine the concept of duty. For Kant, "*A human action is morally good, not because it is done from self-interest – but because it is done for the sake of duty*".<sup>34</sup> He also says even an action in accordance with duty cannot be regarded as morally good action if it is done through self-interest. This is also applied to the case of inclinations. If an action is done out of any inclination, such as, sympathy or generosity, then it cannot be considered as a morally good action.

Kant's second proposition on duty is, "*An action done from duty has its moral worth, not from the results it attains or seeks to attain, but from a formal*

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<sup>33</sup> Paton, H. J., *The Moral Law*, B. I. Publication, New Delhi, 1979, p. 17

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19

*principle or maxim – the principle of doing one’s duty whatever that may be*”.<sup>35</sup> In this second proposition Kant adds the concept of ‘*maxims*’, and states the doctrine in terms of a maxim. A maxim is a principle which Kant calls ‘subjective’ principle, meaning a particular type of principle on which a rational agent performs his duty. For Kant, a maxim is a kind of general principle under which we all perform our particular action. For example, if I want to commit suicide to avoid my unhappiness then the principle or maxim under which I commit suicide may be stated as; “I will commit suicide if I have more pain than pleasure in life”.

The third proposition about duty is, “*Duty is the necessity to act out reverence for the law*”.<sup>36</sup> The third one is related to the previous two. Kant says duties should be done out of reverence for the law. All living animals can act out of inclinations or instincts and they might get the positive result as well. But not all living animals are rational agents. He says about rational agent or human being. Because only a rational agent can understand a general moral law and perform out of reverence (respect) for the law. The reverence for the law is not just an emotional feeling towards the greatness of the law but it is a moral motivation.

#### **2.4.2.1.2.2 Kant and the Categorical Imperative:**

According to Kant, every moral action is determined by ‘human will’. ‘Human will’ is the only thing that can be considered good without having any qualification. Good will is the kind of duty in accordance with law. As we have said earlier, morality should provide a mental framework of moral rules or maxims which are obviously categorical in nature. So, every human being should act in accordance with categorical imperative. In the *Groundwork* Kant opines, “the search for the establishment of the supreme principle of morality (AK 4:392). That supreme principle, which Kant calls the *Categorical Imperative*, commands simply that our actions should have the form of moral conduct.”<sup>37</sup>

The moral law, Kant says, is a categorical imperative. There are two kinds of Imperatives, hypothetical and categorical. A hypothetical imperative says that, if you want something then you ought to do something to fulfill your desire: for example, if

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<sup>35</sup> Paton, H. J., *The Moral Law*, B. I. Publication, New Delhi, 1979, p. 20

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21

<sup>37</sup> Gregor, M. J. (Trans. & Ed.), *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2001, p. x

you want to be a healthy man, then you ought to exercise to fulfill that desire. Here the imperative talks about how to achieve a particular end. Hypothetical imperatives apply only to those who want to achieve a goal of their preference. But if anybody don't care about to be a healthy person then he/she don't need to follow those above-mentioned criterions.

On the other hand, a categorical imperative simply tells us about what we ought to do, not on condition, but unconditionally. Categorical imperative is not related to our particular desires. It does not tell, 'If you want to be a healthy man, then you ought to exercise', it says, 'Do the exercises'. Hypothetical imperative is merely a suggestion, but the categorical imperative is a command.

According to Kant morality does not ask us to achieve a particular goal. It does not consist of hypothetical imperatives, but rather it is a categorical imperative.<sup>38</sup>

There are three formulations of the 'Categorical Imperative' as stated by Kant in his *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. These are discussed as follows –

### **The Formula of the Universalisation:**

Generally, Categorical Imperative asks us to follow those principles which are laws by themselves. The first formulation of the Categorical Imperative is, "act only that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law (4:421).<sup>39</sup>

Thus, there is only one categorical imperative, or we may describe the categorical imperative in various words as the various particular moral laws in which one general categorical imperative is essential. Categorical laws, such as, for example, 'Thou shalt not kill'<sup>40</sup>, are generally derived from one categorical imperative and this categorical imperative is regarded as the fundamental principle of those particular laws.

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<sup>38</sup> Gregor, M. J. (Trans. & Ed.), *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2001, p. xvi

<sup>39</sup> Paton, H. J., *The Moral Law*, B. I. Publication, New Delhi, 1979, p. 29

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid*, p. 29

### **Universal Law of Nature:**

Kant's first formulation about the universality of nature is closely associated with the formulation of the law of nature, because the laws of nature are always universal, and they are inexorably necessary; they are inviolable. The moral laws, on the other hand, are violable, though they ought not to be violated. What Kant says is that this 'ought not to be violated' of the moral law is as good as the inviolability of the laws of nature. Accordingly, Kant's view of the categorical imperative is, "Act as if the maxim of your action were to become through your will a universal law of nature."<sup>41</sup>

In accordance with this formulation of the moral law Kant divides our duties into four varieties. Kant says, "Duties may be divided into duties towards self and duties towards others, and again into perfect and imperfect duties."<sup>42</sup> Kant speaks of these four varieties of duty and also gives us an illustration of each type to show how his formula covers all of them.

### **Duties towards Self and Duties towards Others:**

According to Paton, the duties regarding to oneself and the duties towards others than oneself in his translation of *Groundwork*, that is –

"In the case of duties towards self, Kant assumes that our various capacities have a natural function or purpose in life. It is a perfect duty *not* to thwart such purposes; and it is also a positive, but imperfect, duty to further such purposes."<sup>43</sup> And "In the case of duties towards others we have a perfect duty *not* to thwart the realisation of a possible systematic harmony of purposes among men; and we have a positive, but imperfect, duty to further the realisation of such a systematic harmony."<sup>44</sup>

### **Perfect and Imperfect Duty:**

A perfect duty is one which admits of no exception in the interests of inclination. Under this heading the examples given are the ban on suicide and on making a false promise in order to receive a loan. We are not entitled to commit suicide even if we may have a strong inclination to do so, nor are we entitled to pay

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<sup>41</sup> Paton, H. J., *The Moral Law*, B. I. Publication, New Delhi, 1979, p. 30

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p. 30

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31

our debt to one man and refuse another because we happen to like the one and dislike the other. In the case of imperfect duties, the position is different: we are bound only to adopt the *maxim* of developing our talents and of helping others, and we are to some extent entitled to decide arbitrarily *which* talents we will develop and *which* persons we will help. There is here a certain ‘latitude’ or ‘playroom’ for mere inclinations.

Kant’s first formulation of the categorical imperative is similar to the Golden rule of ethics: “Do not impose on others what you do not wish for yourself”. So, Kant’s formulation of categorical imperative sounds almost like Golden rule. It is empirical in sense that, it requires the context to apply, for example, if you don’t get hurt by others then you should not hit the others or do not follow the rules which you are unable to universalise.

### **The Formula of the End in Itself or Humanity:**

The formula is, “Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end.”<sup>45</sup> According to this formulation of imperative, every rational action must be considered a principle as well as also an end. Like the principle ends may also be subjective in nature: they may be randomly chosen by the individual. A subjective or relative end possessed by an individual agent is a hypothetical imperative, though its value is relative and is conditioned. A hypothetical imperative is a kind of reason that must be conditional. It guides to achieve our goal, for example, *one must drink if he wants to quench his thirst*. And if there were objective ends provided by reason to us, which is pursued by a rational agent without depending on any circumstances, then these would have an absolute and unconditioned value.<sup>46</sup> But these ends are not the result of our action, because we know that no mere product of our action can have an unconditioned and absolute value. They must have ends and the existence of these ends imposed on us to pursue the duty. That is to say, unlike subjective ends, the ground of hypothetical imperative, objective ends are the grounds of categorical imperative. These ends are described as ends in themselves, not as ends relative to particular rational agents.

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<sup>45</sup> Paton, H. J., *The Moral Law*, B. I. Publication, New Delhi, 1979, p. 32

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 32

Only rational agents can be ends in themselves, because only they have an unconditioned and absolute value, and it is wrong to use them as a subjective end which have only relative value. According to Kantian ethics one cannot treat another mere as a means to an end. Kant in his second formulation of the categorical imperative says, a person must be obedient to duty to achieve the end and that must be equally applied to all people.

### **The Formula of the Kingdom of Ends:**

Kant's formulation on the Kingdom of Ends is, "So act as if you were through your maxims a law making member of a kingdom of ends."<sup>47</sup> In the *Groundwork*, Kant suggest that for the discussion of judgment we must rely on formula of Universal law or formula of Autonomy, but in the *Metaphysics of Morals* he often uses the idea of humanity as an end in itself.<sup>48</sup>

Interpretation may vary from one to another but the basic analogy is concerned with an ideal commonwealth, in which laws are legislated by all the people and the people are also subject to them. These laws treat each other as ends in themselves, who autonomously legislate universal laws. If the laws are not universal, then they could not be the laws of conduct at all. As we have stated about the analogy with the laws of a commonwealth, we mean that the legislations do not follow the ultimate moral laws, but they adopt more specific principles what are guided by ideas implicit in the ultimate principles.

We have so far mentioned in the essay about the three formulations of Kant's categorical imperative and we can see that the first formulation is all about moral maxim and its universalisation; the second is also about moral maxim but is concerned with its ends, what is also considered as the matter of maxim. So, the first is about the form of maxim and the second is about the matter of maxim, while the third is a combination of both the matter and form.

Using this formulation of categorical imperative to any maxim we can decide whether this maxim is permissible under deontological ethics. Let's take an example to understand this situation. The example is about the act of picking flowers for

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<sup>47</sup> Paton, H. J., *The Moral Law*, B. I. Publication, New Delhi, 1979, p. 34

<sup>48</sup> Skorupski, J. (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Ethics*, Routledge, New York, 2010, p. 163

beautification and someone may want to take few of them to home for decoration. This act requires to adopt a maxim that will support doing whatever one may want to do. But if we apply the formulation of the universal law of categorical imperative, then there obviously will arise some contradiction to adopt such a maxim as law. If this maxim is to become law and everyone does the same, picking flowers for home decoration, then there would be no flowers left in the park. Here the act contradicts the original motive of cultivating flowers. So, instead of doing this, one should go to the flower shop and order for his likings.

But there is also such kind of acts that are always forbidden, lying is one of them. This negatively values the meaning of truth and helps to keep trust between us. Lying is forbidden in all cases even if it has some advantageous or some good consequences. For example, a mad man may want to kill your neighbor because; your neighbor does not lend him money. If you lie and do not tell the mad man about where he hides then an innocent life could be saved. Here one moral duty contradicts another. In situation like this follow the higher moral duty, that is, the obligation of not killing or helping others in killing.

## **2.5 Is Virtue Ethics Different from Deontological and Teleological Systems?**

Reasons in favour of Virtue ethics being different from teleological and deontological approaches. Normative ethical systems are generally divided into deontological, teleological and virtue ethics. The first two are action-based ethical theories and focus on the actions of a person. When actions are said to be right in themselves or right in how well they conform to a set of duties, the ethical theory is deontological. Virtue ethics focuses on the character of the person doing the actions and looks at what actions would make a good person.

There is much less emphasis on rules people should follow and more on helping people develop character traits which will help them make the right decisions later on in life. Virtue ethics is flexible as it is not based upon absolute rules/formulas that cannot be broken. Virtue Ethics understands the need to distinguish good people from legalists - obeying the law and following the rules does not make one a good person. In particular this is unlike deontological approaches. Virtue ethics does not pretend to be able to tell us what a good person would do in every possible situation but encourages us to be more like such a person so that we will not need an ethical

theory to make our decisions for us. It stresses the importance of character - after all, someone who helps the poor out of compassion does seem to be morally superior to someone who does it out of duty. Again, this is unlike the formulaic approaches like Situation Ethics.

Virtue ethics sees it as good to be biased in favour of friends and family, unlike utilitarianism or situation ethics which see impartiality as important. · Unlike act-based theories, virtue ethics cannot be applied to moral dilemmas. This is the problem raised by Robert Louden ('On Some Vices of Virtue Ethics'): Virtue ethics does not help people facing a crisis because it does not give any clear rules for action. It is difficult to work out what is the virtuous response to stem-cell research or abortion. Virtue ethics does not give us any concrete answers and says only that it is a matter for the practical wisdom of the person facing the situation. It is possible to apply both deontological theories and teleological approaches to moral dilemmas.

#### **Reasons Against Being Different –Teleological:**

Virtue ethics could be said to be teleological as it focuses on the person's telos or end - *eudaimonia* or human flourishing. Virtue ethics can consider possible consequences from being virtuous and therefore can be applied to moral dilemmas. For example, it could be considered courageous to be honest regarding your sexuality. This is in common with act-based ethics. In common with Situation Ethics a teleological approach. Virtue ethics also takes on the character of a particular culture, so that it can espouse particular virtues such as mercy and 'agapaeic love'.

#### **Reasons Against Being Different-Deontological:**

Virtue ethics has close links to the deontological natural law approach of the Catholic Tradition. It's main thinker Aquinas drew heavily from Aristotle and he saw natural law as compatible with a virtue-based approach.