

Chapter - III

The Development of Virtue Ethics

3.1 Introduction:

In the previous chapter, we have discussed the origin and development of moral philosophy. The question has not any straight forward answer. So, we had tried to deal this question in both historical and mythological way. We had found that Mary Midgley has done extensive research on this issue in her article *The Origin of Ethics*. After that we had also discussed the innateness of morality in the second chapter. Here we had tried to answer the question that whether the human morality is innate or not? This question is linked with the first question. After discussing the origin and development of moral philosophy we have briefly discussed the normative ethical theories, such as, Consequentialism, Deontology and Virtue ethics. Here in this chapter, we have continued the virtue ethical discussions from chapter two for a detailed enquiry in the history and development of virtue ethics.

We find that the concept of virtue is one of the central concepts of moral philosophy. Moral philosophy deals with the questions of morality that discusses how one should live. In this chapter we will make an attempted to elaborate a brief survey of concept of 'virtue' from its etymological meaning and development to its journey across the century. Virtue ethics gained its popularity in Ancient Greece from the writings of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, though it can be found even before these writings. But it has again become popular in the last part of the twentieth century with the writings of the thinkers like Elizabeth Anscombe, Phillipa Foot and Alasdair MacIntyre, Jane Aultine and Benjamin Franklin.

3.2 The Very Definition of Virtue:

The word 'virtue' is used as an equivalent of the Greek word '*arête*' means 'moral excellence'. Though '*arête*' in its basic sense designates the "the excellence of any kind, virtue is generally regarded as a quality which is morally good, and thus it is used as a foundation of the principle of good moral being.

The term '*arête*' or virtue has a long history and it is used with many meanings. In the ancient Greece, the notion of excellence was bound with the act of

living up to one's full potential. Homer used the term for both the Greeks as well as Trojan heroes and also for the female figures, such as Penelope, the wife of Greek hero Odysseus. For the Greek and Trojan heroes, it is used for their bravery but in the case of Penelope it is known for her faithfulness towards Odysseus. Though *arête* is frequently used to designate bravery and faithfulness, it is more often associated with the effectiveness. When *arête* is used as a quality of man and woman it signifies that the man or woman is having the quality of highest effectiveness. It means that the man or the woman having *arête* use all their faculties - strength, bravery, and wit - to achieve their goal. In regards to the *Iliad* the way Homer describes Achilles is an example of *arête*. Here *arête* is used as the goodness and strength of a warrior. Though Homer used the word to describe the fighting spirit of warriors; many authors applied the term to animals and even to lifeless objects, such as tools and instruments.

3.2.1 Sophists' View of Virtue:

By the end of the fifth century B.C., one important meaning of *arête* was popularized by the Greek thinkers. This meaning of virtue or *arête* represents as becoming a good citizen and achieving success in daily life, especially in politics and society. Taking advantage of this, the Sophists claimed that, they possessed the secret knowledge of achieving success in public life. Thus, they were able to attract the young people who were struggling to achieve success in Athenian life. However, the leading Sophists did not practice what they taught to others, because they did not belong to the society of Athens; they were foreigners.

There were few Sophists who were very popular in their time. Protagoras, Prodicus and Gorgias were among them. Protagoras of Abdera came from Thrace; he travelled around Greece as a teacher and lived in Athens for several years, where he got associated with Pericles and other rich and powerful Athenians. Pericles invited him to write the constitution of the newly founded Athenian colony, Thruui, in 444 B.C. Prodicus came from an island of Ceos. His countrymen sent him as an ambassador to Athens but later he is known as a great speaker and a teacher. Gorgias came to Greece from Leontini in Sicily. They all were first generation Sophists. These foreigners became very popular and successful not by becoming good citizens and succeeding in public life, since foreigners could not do such things. They were

popular for their teaching. They could convince the Athenian young people that their teachings would help them to develop excellence for success in Athenian life.

3.2.2 Socratic Conceptions of Virtue:

As the teachings of the Sophists gained in popularity in Athens, the sophists also became controversial figures. Their way of making money from teaching virtue also bothered their rival men. The controversies regarding their teaching raised sufficient discussion about excellence or virtue among the Athenian people. At the end of the fifth century Socrates became a major person in these ongoing debates.

Socrates and his contemporary philosophers began to discuss about virtue with the prevailing notions of virtues. They pointed out their difficulties and ultimately modified them. The quote from Plato's *Protagoras*, "the Sophist Protagoras describes virtue as deliberating well (*euboulia*) about one's own affairs and... as one plays a role in public life (*Protagoras* 318E – 319A)."¹ As the discussion started, Socrates asked whether virtue can be taught by teachers and about whether virtue is one or many. He further asked whether there are many too many virtues then are they separated from one another. From Plato's dialogue we come to know that there are many types of virtues. Plato discusses the virtue of Temperance or *Sophrosyne* in his *Charmenides*, his *Laches* deals with Courage, *Euthyphro* with Piety and Justice and the *Crito* is about Justice. The concept of justice has an important role in Plato's writings, the main question of Plato's *Republic* is 'what is Justice?'

Let us consider the six major characteristics that perhaps proposed by Sophist philosophers. Though, later on these characteristics were modified by Socrates.

1. Virtues are admirable and praiseworthy:

It is very difficult for us to determine whether virtues are truly admirable. For example, Odysseus is a more admirable character in Homer, than he as appears in Sophocles. In Sophocles' play *Philoctetes*, Odysseus is described as clever and deceitful. But in Homeric epics he is an admirable character. Sophocles describes

¹ Devettere, Raymond J., *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks*, p. 61, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 2002

how Odysseus planned to kidnap Philoctetes and steal his weapon by cheating. By any standard, this act of Odysseus is injustice and shameful.

2. Virtues are related to actions:

This behavioral view of virtue was presented by Homer. He talked of great warriors whose actions were admirable because their actions were heroic and excellent. From the Socratic days it was very clear to the Athenian people that virtue was about deeds, deeds that are admirable and not shameful.

3. Virtues are based on one's role in life:

In Plato's dialogue *Meno*, Meno (a person) begins his discussion of virtue with Socrates by saying that virtue varies with one's role in social life (*Meno* 71E – 72A).² Virtuous behaviors are not same for the whole people of a society; they vary from person to person. The virtue of a warrior differs significantly from that of a poet, a musician, a politician, an ordinary citizen, a head of household, and so on. Virtuous behavior is one thing for a woman living as a wife, another for a man acting as a citizen, another for warriors, and another for children and still very different for slaves. In other words, virtuous behavior is relative to persons' role in life in the society.

4. Different virtues are not interconnected:

Each virtue has its own uniqueness with no connection to any other virtue. Being a virtuous person in a particular field does not entail to be virtuous in other areas of life. For example, a warrior might have great courage in battle but have no temperance to take wine or having sex.

5. Virtues can do harm to themselves:

Virtues can also do harm to the person who is performing virtuous behavior. One courageous soldier could lose his health, even lose his life when he is performing courageously in battle. Neoptolemus, son of Achilles, put his life in danger when he challenged Odysseus by returning to Philoctetes the awesome bow that the Greek desperately needed at Troy.

² Devettere, Raymond J., *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks*, p. 62, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 2002

6. Wisdom or knowledge is just a kind of virtue:

Wisdom or knowledge has no special role. It is just an important form of excellence, such as justice, temperance and courage.

Though the Greeks would talk a great deal about different virtues, they were hardly subjected to criticism. However, these popular conceptions of virtue began to be changed when Socrates and other Philosophers started examining them and the conception of the Sophists. What we know today as virtue ethics is the result of radical modification of the concept of made by the philosophers.

Philosophical conceptions of virtue:

Though the philosophical conception of virtue considerably differs from the popular conception of virtue these is yet an argument in regard to the first characteristic of virtue it is admirable and praiseworthy. Philosophers modified the second characteristic and thoroughly revised the rest four. For them virtues are not only actions but psychological states; they are connected with each other; and the last one, practical wisdom is not just a virtue, it is a foundational virtue of every other virtue. Now we shall discuss about the six cardinal characteristics of the philosophical conception of virtue.

1. Virtues are admirable and praiseworthy:

As I have already noted this is the only popular characteristic of virtue about which the philosophers are in argument with the popular conception of virtue.

2. Most virtues are psychological states:

According to the philosophers' virtues are mainly related with the character, habits and dispositions of persons. They explain in determine the kind of person one is, and not his actions. Actions follow from but do not determine a virtuous character.

3. Virtues are not based on our social roles:

The Greek philosophers believe that virtues are rooted in our soul, they are not based on the roles played by a man in the society. Socrates in his *Meno* explained that, virtues such as justice and temperance are not dependent upon the role that a

person played in life. Being a good human being, one is just needed to have a set of virtues independent of what role he plays in the society (*Meno* 72C – 73C).

4. Virtues are connected:

All virtues are internally connected with each other. If a man has one virtue, it means that he can have them all. Ancient philosophers believed that all virtues are united or integrated in the character of person, and so are in responsible from each other. For them virtues cannot be separated. If a person does not have the virtue of temperance it follows that he does not have the virtues of justice, love, and so on. Though this theory looks like counterintuitive yet it is clear that, with wisdom as a virtue unity of the moral virtues seems to be inevitable.

5. Virtues are not contrary to the person's self-interest:

Virtues are never in conflict with person's self-interest. Many people think that this theory is counterintuitive. Most of the modern moral philosophers react against it by saying that ethics is about social life, but the interest of the society need not necessarily contradict personal or self-interest. Live and let live is the principle of social living.

6. Wisdom or knowledge is the foundation of all virtues:

All of our virtues require wisdom to move us towards the goal. For Socrates wisdom or knowledge is the only virtue, and for Aristotle and Plato, it is the foundational virtue that creates the others.

7. Virtue requires freedom:

A person is called virtuous only by freely choosing his or her actions. So, virtue requires personal freedom, the freedom of choosing actions. A person becomes just only by choosing just actions repeatedly, he became honest by choosing honest actions repeatedly, temperance by choosing temperate actions repeatedly, and so on. Without the freedom of personal of choice authentic virtuous character cannot be constituted. However, it is also true that freedom does not alone guarantee virtue. Choosing to do something does not necessarily mean that what is chosen is good.

These seven characteristics of virtue as we have explained are enough for us to understand the difference between philosopher's conception virtue and the popular conception made by the Sophists in the fourth century in Athens. And when we are discussing the conceptions of virtue in detail, it will be also clear that the Greek philosophical conceptions of virtue are quite different from the most doctrines of virtue to be found in modern moral philosophy.

3.2.3 Plato's Notion of Virtue:

Plato's account of virtue can be found in two different works, one is *Protagoras* and the other one is *Republic*. In Plato's dialogue *Protagoras*, Protagoras (a person) claimed that virtue is some kind of a whole with different parts, such as a human face is a whole with different parts (nose, eyes and so on). He says that a person could have some virtues but not all, just as a person could be missing a part of his face, an eye, for example. Like this a person could be courageous but might not be temperate or just.³

But according to Socrates, unity of virtue is stronger than the unity of a whole with disparate parts. Many virtues are simply different names for one and the same thing. For him one virtue is entailed by the other: justice is piety and piety is just (*Protagoras* 331b). At the end of the dialogue, Socrates says, all the virtues, such as justice, temperance and courage, are one and the same thing, and that is knowledge. Here Socrates uses the term 'knowledge' to indicate wisdom. In another writing *Euthydemus*, Socrates claims that wisdom is the only thing that makes a person happy and fortunate (*Euthydemus* 282 c - d).⁴

Socratic sayings "virtue is knowledge" is well known but it would be better to understand "virtue is wisdom". Wisdom is the knowledge that helps us to understand what is good or bad for us. There are no several virtues but one, and that one virtue is practical wisdom. According to Socrates temperance, justice, courage, piety and wisdom are all different names for one single thing.

The other account of virtue was expressed by Plato in his famous dialogue *Republic*. But there is no common view in the *Republic* and in the *Protagoras*

³ Devettere, Raymond J., *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks*, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 2002, p. 79

⁴ *Ibid*, p. 79

regarding the notion of virtue. Plato begins his statement concerning the human soul. He divides the human soul into three parts: appetite, spirit and reason. Each part has its own desires. Appetite (*epithumetikon*) is the part of the soul which is predominant in animals; it is lusting for bodily pleasures. Appetite is desires whatever gives pleasure and such as food, sex, power and wealth. Spirited (*thumoeides*) part originates in the emotions; it intends to find whatever is appearing good in a particular situation. When I am attacked or victimized it may appear good to charge against in anger, when faced with a danger it may appear good to back down in fear, when a family member dies it may appear good to downfall with grief, and so on. The third part, rational, (*logistikon*) desires whatever is truly good. The rational part relies on reasoning to decide in each situation whatever activities that are good or bad for my life considered as a whole.

Plato share his opinion on the different parts of the soul and then after he says virtue can be traced within the proper relation between each of its components. Reason should guide the soul and help us to determine what is right and what is wrong, spirit must follow the reason and appetite should obey both spirit and reason. According to this view virtue is nothing but a magical or accurate ratio of the components of the soul. Plato's opinion considering the conception of virtue, is that virtue can be acquired by the state of the soul, where reason is dominating and reason is followed by appetite and spirit both, can knowledge of the good and hereafter virtue will be acquired. Though Socrates and Plato both give an importance to desire for ethical-decision making, they also differ in regarding to some other points. Socrates opines that each of our desires are rational. But Plato acknowledges the existence of non-rational desires which are appetitive and spiritative. For Socrates, all the things which go wrong are due to ignorance. But in the case of Plato, it may be due to ignorance and in some cases, it also may be due to non-rational desires. For Socrates, our ethics is totally rational but Plato says that though ethics is rational we also need knowledge to shape and form our desires, educate and cultivate good habits.

3.2.4 Aristotle's Contribution to the Virtue Ethics:

Though Aristotle is treated as the protagonist of virtue ethics, it does not mean that he was the first person to deal with this topic. He was the first philosopher

who discussed ethics as a separate part of philosophy and the different kinds of virtues that form our good life. *Nicomachean Ethics* is the name normally given to Aristotle's best-known work and central text for the study of ancient virtue ethics. There is another book on ethics, the *Eudemian Ethics*, which has been written by Aristotle. It is commonly believed that *Eudemian Ethics* is written before the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The first one was named after Aristotle's son Nicomachus, and the second one is named after his friend Eudemus, who may also have had a hand in editing the final work.⁵ The *Nicomachean Ethics* is not easy reading for the new comer students, it was meant for the audience of advance students who were sufficiently familiar with Aristotle's philosophy and terminology. Both the works of Aristotle are important to grasp the inner implications of Greek virtue ethics.

Difference between “character virtue” (*ethikai aretai*) and “intellectual virtue” (*dianoetikai aretai*)

According to Aristotle, virtue is neither a passion nor a faculty, it is a state of character. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle offers a definition of virtue thus – “Virtue is a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e., the mean relative to us, this being determined by a rational principle, i.e., by that principle by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it.”⁶ Aristotle's definition proposes to adopt a middle path which has been much discussed. Virtue is considered as if it lies between two vices which are two extremes. For example, courage is the middle path between the extremes of rashness and cowardice. Such a middle course will be relative to vices of the extremes depending upon the actual circumstances of the individual.

According to Bertrand Russell, “There are two kinds of virtues, intellectual and moral, corresponding to the two parts of the soul. Intellectual virtues result from teaching, moral virtues from habit.”⁷ Aristotle says that Plato has divided the soul into two parts, one is rational and the other is irrational. The irrational part is divided into the vegetative (such as plants) and the appetitive (such as animals).

⁵ Besser-Jones, Lorraine and Slote, Michael (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics*, p. 18, Routledge, New York, 2015

⁶ Ross, David (Trans.), *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. ix, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009

⁷ Russell, Bertrand, *A History of Western philosophy*, p. 185, Unwin Hyman Ltd., London, 1979

The expression “character virtue” is used for the original Greek Word “*ethike arête*”. Though some of the translators translate “*ethike arête*” as “moral virtue” or “ethical virtue”, these translations do not signify the actual meaning of “*ethike arête*”. Firstly, the English word “moral” and “ethical” do not serve the same purpose as the notion of “character” serve. Secondly, the expressions “moral virtue” and “ethical virtue” are commonly used to denote the virtue only that is relevant to what we call today morality or ethics, though the master virtue or fundamental virtue is not “moral virtue” or “ethical virtue” but is another kind of virtue namely intellectual virtue (*dianoetike arête*).⁸

The two kinds of virtue in Aristotle’s ethics, that are responsible for the quality of life is i) ‘Ethical virtues’ or ‘virtues of character’ that regulate the desires concerning the ends to be attained or avoided by action, and ii) ‘Intellectual virtues’ (*Phronêsis*), the capacity of the soul’s rational part that selects the means to realize those ends. According to Aristotle, virtues of character is the irrational part of the soul, having the characteristic of “listening to reason’s advice”.⁹ (*Nicomachean Ethics* – Book – I 13 1102b29 – 1103a3)

Let us understand the distinction carefully between “character virtue” (*ethike arête*) and “intellectual virtue” (*dianoetike arête*) and also to understand, how the former is dependent on the latter. Some commentator thinks that character virtues are certainly acquired by habituation, they are more than habits. In fact, they are permanent states of character produced by our habit. According to Plato, character grows out of habit (*Laws* 792E) and Aristotle echoes the same idea in the *Eudemian Ethics* and also in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In the *Eudemian Ethics*, Book II, Aristotle says –

“It is clear, then, that virtue of character is concerned with pleasures and pains. Character exists, as the name signifies, because it develops from habit.” (*Eudemian Ethics* 1220a39)¹⁰

Aristotle in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, at the beginning of Book II says –

⁸ Devettere, Raymond J., *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks*, p. 66, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 2002

⁹ Besser-Jones, Lorraine and Slote, Michael (Ed.), *The Routledge Companion to Virtue Ethics*, p. 18, Routledge, New York, 2015

¹⁰ Inwood, Brad and Woolf, Raphael (Ed.), *Eudemian Ethics*, p. 19, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013

“Virtue, then, being of two kinds, intellectual and moral, intellectual virtue in the main owes both its birth and its growth to teaching (for which reason it requires experience and time), while moral virtue comes about as a result of habit, whence also its name (*êthike*) is one that is formed by a slight variation from the word *ethos* (habit). (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1103a14 – 19)¹¹

A character virtue can be thought of as a state (*a hexis*) created through performing repeatedly certain actions. There is no fixed list of character virtues, Aristotle in his writings talks about a dozen of virtues, among three of which play important roles in ancient Greek ethics: temperance, courage and justice.

It is clear for us that character virtues are basically psychological states created by habitual actions repeatedly. The Greek philosophers, when they talk about justice or courage, they do not simply talk about just or courageous actions; they talk about the character states that they considered just or courageous. No action can be just or courageous by itself simply because of its appearance. Actions that look like just or courage but performed for the wrong or foolish reason are not virtuous actions.¹² The person who gives a gun back to its actual owner out of justice, when the owner is a terrorist and wants the gun for murdering someone, is not a just act at all. According to Aristotle, the soldier, who foolishly risks his life, because he fears dishonor, is not courageous at all. In the eyes of virtue, an action can be just or courageous, if it maintains the following three conditions –

- i. It must arise out of character state called justice or courage
- ii. It must be reasonable in the circumstances and
- iii. It must be performed for the right reason.

Here the term “reasonable” focuses on a new kind of virtue which is not character virtue. This other kind of virtue in Aristotle’s ethics is intellectual virtue. We don’t need only character virtue; we need character virtue as well as intellectual virtue (*dianoetike arête*). Aristotle’s list of intellectual virtues is understanding (*nous*), science (*episteme*), philosophy (*philosophia*), skill (*techne*), and prudence (*phronesis*). Aristotle draws a distinction between two kinds of intellectual virtues¹³;

¹¹ Ross, David (Trans.), *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 23, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009

¹² Devettere, Raymond J., *Introduction to Virtue Ethics: Insights of the Ancient Greeks*, p. 67, Georgetown University Press, Washington, 2002

¹³ Ross, David (Trans.), *The Nicomachean Ethics*, p. 102, Oxford University Press, New York, 2009

one is theoretical and other is practical.¹⁴ The theoretical virtues are science and philosophy on the other hand practical virtues are skill and prudence. Prudence is the practical intellectual virtue relevant to ethics which makes our lives good and brings us happiness. Understanding is a kind of intellectual virtue that appears both in the theoretical and practical categories.

But now the question is how the character virtue and the intellectual virtue interact with one another, when they are opposite in nature. One is concerned with the irrational part of the soul and the other is with the rational part of the soul. According to Aristotle, "...virtue makes the goal correct and practical wisdom makes what leads to it correct."¹⁵ In other words, character virtues determine the ends we desire, while intellectual virtue or practical wisdom sees the right way to achieve the end.

Our brief survey of the Greek world may result in this observation that goodness implies a certain point of view. An impulse guided action, or action directed by outside agency, be it religious, social, political, may be good but not truly virtuous. This point of view, according to the Greeks is intellectual or rational and not based on emotional considerations.

3.3 Virtue Ethics in the Medieval Period:

In the medieval Western Europe, virtue theories play a central role in the ethical discourse. The term "virtue" is neither a scriptural concept, nor does this concept have obvious theological connotations like the concept of law and sin. By the third century, the concept of virtue plays a central role in Christian thought, and pastoral literature. The virtues much-admired by St. Paul, is the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, and the classical cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. However, monastic and pastoral traditions focused on few different virtues and give prominence to them; for example, humility is a virtue, which plays a secondary role in a doctrinal analysis, is regarded as a leading virtue within monastic and ascetic scriptures. The doctrinal analysis of virtue is the most familiar to us because it was popular in the Catholic thought influenced by Thomas

¹⁴ *Nicomachean Ethics* 1139a5

¹⁵ *Ibid*, p. 115; *Nicomachean Ethics* 1144a8 - 9

Aquinas. However, the monastic or ascetic conception of virtue was reflected in the medieval literature, especially, in the works of Chaucer and Dante.

Christian intellectuals, ascetics, and pastors began to discuss on the classical traditions of virtue ethics to address the practical concerns of expanding the moral sensibilities or Christian Communities. These reflections gave rise to the theoretical and practical approaches to this discussion. On the one hand, Christian intellectuals entered into philosophical debates over the proper analysis of virtues and good life. They inspired us to think the key theological concepts such as sin, grace, and conversion within the classical tradition of virtue ethics, which goes beyond the apologetic discourses.

3.3.1 St. Augustine and the Ascetic or Monastic Tradition:

The most important of these early Christian intellectuals in this period, was Augustine of Hippo (354 – 430). Augustine combined the Stoic and Neoplatonic ideas with Christian traditions of theological virtues.¹⁶ Following Plato and the Stoics, Augustine describes that all virtues are fundamentally of one quality, and one of the novel particular virtue is Christian love (*De moribus Ecclesiae catholicae* I 15). He opines that, virtue can only be achieved by the grace of God. Virtue helps a man or woman to enhance their ability to place their desires in a right manner, loving all creatures and loving God above all. Virtues of non-Christians are genuinely praiseworthy and beneficial to human community, but these are not considered as virtues, as it was not directed towards the Christian ends (*De civitatis Dei* 5.12, 14).

In the early third century the ascetic or monastic understandings which focuses on a new approach to virtues, in terms of therapies for the vices of the soul.¹⁷ The monastic tradition emphasised that men and women who are retired from the society in pursuit of salvation will achieve virtue with the continuous practice of humility, self-restraint, chastity, and obedience. So, from the monastic perspective, the virtues are no longer the qualities of character necessary to living a good life, rather rectification to vices which could potentially lead them to salvation. Thus, the constant practice of virtues was an instant task for all the lay people and for the

¹⁶ Porter, Jean, “Virtue ethics in the medieval period” in *The Cambridge Companion to virtue Ethics* Edited by Daniel C. Russell, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013 p.75

¹⁷ *Ibid*, p.76

ascetics; and who are liable to spiritual care were in focus to facilitate this process. Both, John Cassian (c. 360 – c. 435) and Gregory the Great (c. 540 – 604) understands the urgency and practicality of this kind of virtue ethics and represented the influential accounts of the deadly vices and their corrective virtues in their writings. Cassian in his writings is primarily concerned for the monks and ascetics, whereas Gregory was more concerned with the struggles of lay man. Their efforts were deeply influential and much followed throughout the medieval period. As a result of this, patristic tradition given two ways to analyse the concept of virtues: the first one tied the classical virtues with the Christian theological virtues, whereas the second systematized them through seven deadly vices with their corrective virtues.

Thus, we have seen two broad yet different approaches to the concept of virtue, one is systematic or academic, while the other is more practical or pastoral. These two different approaches continued simultaneously throughout the medieval period. The popular theme for literary works of medieval period were virtues, is found in the writings of Chaucer and Dante. The older schema of the virtues as correctives to the vices, took on unprecedented beauty and power and probably this could help them to popularise. Though their approaches were different for the virtues but both these approaches developed together and contribute in shaping the other through a creative way. The monastic writings and lectures in the medieval period enrich the literature of virtues, vices and the concept of Holy Spirit etc, which helps to form the monastic understandings of virtues. The high estimation of monastic virtues in the late eleventh and twelfth centuries achieve a remarkable advancement in the analysis of virtue.¹⁸ These advances were a necessity to recapitulate the normative implications of virtues in the light of rapidly changing social and cultural context. They develop a psychologically acute form of literature on the underlying changing aspects of human action. Thus, this monastic tradition that focuses on the reflection on virtues, vices and sin brings together practical concerns and theoretical sophistication.

3.3.2 Concept of Virtue in Peter Abelard and Peter Lombard:

It is said that the classical form of virtue that reflects the systematic analysis of virtue in relation to the overall well-being of humans and this classical form is

¹⁸ Wenzel, S. “The Seven Deadly Sins: Some Problems of Research,” in *Speculum*, 1986, p. 1–22

started with the emergence of scholastic philosophy in the early twelfth century.¹⁹ Two of the most popular and influential scholastic philosophers, Peter Abelard (c. 1074 – 1142) and Peter Lombard (c. 1100 – 1160), proposed contrasting approaches to the analysis of virtues that set the outline for much subsequent discussion.²⁰ Abelard, in his *Dialogus inter Philosophum, Judaeum, et Christianum* (Dialogue of a Philosopher with a Jew and a Christian), offered an Aristotelian way of analysing virtue as a habit that helps people to act in a proper moral way, and to merit supreme beatitude (*Patrologia Latina* 178, 1651C – 1652A). In contrast to this, Peter Lombard in his *Sentences* has described theological analysis of virtue. For him, virtue is closely connected with the grace and gifts of God (ii 27.1). His definition of virtue is influenced by Augustine's writings. According to Augustine virtue is a good quality of the mind, which God brings in us without our activity (ii 27.5). and more specifically, God brings virtue in our soul, and we are doing acts of virtue through the regular exercise of free will in collaboration with God's grace. Although grace is not directly understood as virtue (ii 27.9), but it implies that virtue and grace cannot be separated at all. One may infer from this that Christian way of analysing the virtues has no place for philosophical analysis.

3.3.3 William of Auxerre:

William of Auxerre (c. 1150 – 1231) offered a significant approach in his *Summa Aurea* while distinguishing the difference between theological virtues, which can only be acquired by the grace of God, and the political virtues, appropriate to human in society and achieved through human effort. According to him, the political virtues can be traced in fundamental principles of natural law, which can be known to all by the grace of God because supreme good is innate in all of us. For him, the political virtues have two-fold benefits, one is it prepares us to achieve theological virtues, and the other is it becomes the medium to express in external acts when God's grace is received. William claims that the fundamental principles of virtue are known to Augustine through the divine ways.

¹⁹ Kent, B. *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century*, Catholic University of America Press, 1995

²⁰ Marenbon, J. *The Philosophy of Peter Abelard* New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997, pp. 282–7.

3.3.4 Bonaventure:

The Bonaventure (1217 – 1274) developed Augustine’s understandings of virtue in a whole new way, in his last work, the *Collations on the Hexameron*, which is a discussion on the limitations of human knowledge.²¹ Bonaventure’s concept of virtue starts with a point from Genesis chapter 1, verse 4, where it is stated as – “God saw the light, that it was good, and He divided the light from the darkness...” and then he started his conception of virtue from the “most noble Plotinus” and Cicero, they believe that virtues come into human soul through an illumination by God, the cause of all virtues. Further, he claims that the pagans could not achieve the right understanding of virtue, because without revelation, nobody can have the proper understanding of the virtues. He explained that, the virtues work in the human soul by the means of threefold process –

- i. Directing the soul to its end,
- ii. Rectifying the dispositions of soul,
- iii. Healing the sickness of soul.

None of the above processes can be understood without having a revelation. According to him, the philosophers are unaware that our ultimate end is resurrection and eternal life, so, they are not able to understand how virtues connect our soul with its end. Philosophers don’t even understand that the desires of the soul can only be remedied by the grace of God and how virtues can be healing, because they don’t even know that the reason behind the sickness of the soul is their results of sin. The only possible remedy for the sicknesses of the soul is Christian charity, which presupposes faith and hope. One may claim that the pagan philosophers were not only incapable of understanding virtues, but also of attaining them. In the next section, we will focus on the virtues of the pagans which we think were actually uncooked versions of their Christian counterparts.

Bonaventure tried to establish that virtue cannot be achieved without grace of God. He clearly rejects the classical concept of virtue ethical thoughts, but it remains unclear that how far his rejection would go. There are some medieval scholars who suggested that his conception of virtue reflects that his rejection was made against

²¹ Kent, B. *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century*, Catholic University of America Press, 1995, pp. 46-58

the entire classical moral philosophy. However, if we look at the *Hexaemeron*, we can find the difficulties that he criticises the classical moral philosophy completely, because he approved the elements of Aristotelian virtue theory evidently.²²

3.3.5 Thomas Aquinas:

The scholastic philosophers in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries took their concepts from Aristotelian ethics and philosophy to develop virtue theory. Aristotelian thoughts were introduced before the Muslim translators and commentators introduced the philosophical works of Aristotle to the West. According to Cary Nederman, Aristotle's moral thought were mainly introduced through his works on logic and its commentaries, and from the writings of later Peripatetic and Neoplatonic philosophers.²³ Thomas Aquinas who is known for his innovative synthesis of Christian theology and Aristotelian philosophy, has developed his idea of the virtue within this context. Aquinas in *Summa Theologiae* moulded his concept of virtue inspired by Peter Lombard's definition: "Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God brings about in us, without us"²⁴. Aquinas criticises Lombard's definition and says it applies only to the infused virtues, by the grace of God, while the acquired virtues can be attained through human effort without grace. Aquinas interprets this definition of virtue in Aristotelian terms, as a *habitus*, i.e., a stable disposition of the intellect, will, or passions inclining the person to act in a certain way. For example, the innate capacities of a child for speech must be developed through the *habitus* of a particular language before the child start to talk. The virtues that shape our passions, will and intellect are considered as morally significant, because they incline a particular kind of action which are good without qualification.

The most innovative aspect of Aquinas' distinctive theory of the virtues lies in the systematic analysis of the virtues in terms of a metaphysics of perfection. Almost every scholastic theologian during Aquinas' period might believe that virtues are perfections of the agent, but Aquinas provides a systematic way to this belief, in

²² Kent, B. *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century*, Catholic University of America Press, 1995, pp. 46-8

²³ Nederman, C. J. "Aristotelianism and the Origins of 'Political Science' in the Twelfth Century," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 52: 179-94, 1991

²⁴ Porter, Jean, "Virtue ethics in the medieval period" in *The Cambridge Companion to virtue Ethics* Edited by Daniel C. Russell, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013 p. 80; *Summa theologiae*, i-ii 55.4, quoting ii *Sentences* 27.5

which he interprets and explained this in the light of his overall metaphysics. Aquinas interprets those actions that generally associated with certain virtues in such a way that they are perfections of specific faculties, as well as exemplifications of general ideals of praiseworthy behaviour. The passions, which are generally inclined towards desired and away from undesired through the senses, are shaped through reason towards the overall good through the virtues of temperance and fortitude²⁵. We must remember that the virtues were shaped, not suppressed – if they were suppressed then the virtues of the sensitive part of the soul would render their subject ineffective, rather than perfecting it. For example, the will, which is naturally directed towards self-love, is shaped by the virtues of justice and move from self-love to wider loves, towards the community, one’s neighbours, and finally directed towards God²⁶.

Aquinas recognizes the traditional cardinal virtues as general qualities of every praiseworthy action, and he adds a further opinion in this regard, according to which these are separate virtues, concerning the particular faculties of the soul. Thus, virtues are perfections, they are developed concerned faculties and realised through the actualisation of different kinds of good actions. Because, each of the faculty, i.e., faculties of the intellect, the will, and the desire are all very different from each other, each of them has its own virtue, identified with one of the four traditional cardinal virtues, these are;

- i.** Prudence or practical wisdom, an intellectual virtue, empowers the agent to act in accordance with rightly guided desires that expressed through particular actions;
- ii.** Justice is a virtue that guide our will towards the good for all or the common good determined by reason;
- iii.** Temperance and fortitude shape our passions to act in accordance with reason which sets forth the relation of the virtues to the different faculties of the soul in more detail.

²⁵ Porter, Jean, “Virtue ethics in the medieval period” in *The Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* Edited by Daniel C. Russell, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013 p. 82;

Summa theologiae i-ii 58.2

²⁶ *Ibid*, 58.4

Aquinas considered the classical and Augustinian theory of virtue as a diverse form of virtue, that actually is a form of one single virtue or ideal goodness, thus, he focused on the specific virtues that deals with the specific faculties of our soul. As they are coordinated with rational judgment. The virtues are always good without qualification, so, they must be coordinated with the rational judgments of prudence, in accordance with the agent's overall good and overall, the relations with God²⁷. It should be noted that the infused virtues can be described without qualification, but, the acquired virtues are formed connected rational judgement and prudence, are also genuine virtues and the essential end of human being²⁸.

Thus, virtues play an important role to develop specific faculties of our soul but it also directs an individual towards his/her complete perfection as a rational being, or might say that directs towards beatitude or happiness. Happiness can best be understood from two different perspectives, which are as follows.

- i. The first kind of happiness concerning to our natural capabilities, deals with the virtues that we achieve by the capacities of ourselves. Aquinas recognizes this kind of happiness with the practice of the cardinal virtues themselves, constituting the full development of the principles of action.²⁹
- ii. But, on the other hand the second kind is a higher form of happiness, that direct personal union with God in the beatific vision. This kind of happiness exceeds the natural capabilities; thus, it must introduce new principles of action in order to attain such end.³⁰

According to Aquinas, these new principles of action are acquired through the immediate action of God on our soul. Transformation is achieved by grace, and the means by which grace is rendered are the infused virtues that includes the infused cardinal virtues with the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity and the gift of the Holy Spirit God (*ST* i-ii 110.3). One more difference between the acquired and infused virtues is also discussed by Aquinas. The infused cardinal virtues are

²⁷ Porter, Jean, "Virtue ethics in the medieval period" in *The Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* Edited by Daniel C. Russell, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013 p. 83

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 83

²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 83

³⁰ *Ibid*, p. 83

different from the acquired virtues as they moved towards a particular end through a particular mean (*ST* i-ii 63.3, 4). While the acquired temperance takes its values from the entire well-being including physical health, which leads to a perfect self-control in food and drink. Infused temperance, in contrast, takes its values from one's desire for salvation, and maintains discipline, for example, fasting promote one's spiritual, as well as physical health. However, for Aquinas, ascetical exercises are vicious, because they damage one's bodily well-being, rather than virtuous. The acquired virtues, that concentrates finally on the overall well-being of the community, is thus transformed by the infused virtue, rather than undermining it. What we found is that Aquinas's grace perfects our nature rather than destroying it.

This is the most important and innovative aspect of Aquinas' accounts of virtues. Most of Aquinas' predecessors and interlocutors, articulated their understanding of virtues in relation to the theological virtues and political or acquired virtues. Theological virtues are necessary for salvation and depends on the grace of God, while political or acquired virtues are necessarily directed towards human flourishing and can be achieved through human participation. For Aquinas, political or acquired virtues serve as a foundation for the theological virtues, and they served as a mean through which the theological virtues are expressed. However, some scholastic philosophers hold that the theological and the acquired virtues remain in an external relation, and they don't accept infused political or cardinal virtues in this schema.

Though Aquinas is familiar with his predecessors' approach, but in the *Summa Theologiae*, he introduces even more complex differences between the theological and cardinal virtues, the infused and acquired virtues, with distinct forms of the cardinal virtues falling on either side of this line. One may think that, what compels us to introduce such unnecessary complications. Why he had done so?

One may respond to this question and may say that it lies in Aquinas' concept of grace. He had developed the concept of grace in terms of his analysis of the virtues as perfections of the agent. For Aquinas, infused virtues are the means that helps the grace to be expressed by one's own acts. What we can see in the above lines is that, the theological virtues direct the political or cardinal virtues, is inadequate to express. To be operative and effective completely in all the sphere of

human life, grace must transform all the faculties of one's soul involved in the process of action.³¹ Thus, it is clear that theological virtues alone cannot command the actions of other virtues, grace is expressed by the appropriate virtues to each faculty of the soul or in other words, expressed by the infused cardinal virtues.

Though it is inadequate to explain, why Aquinas prefers the cardinal virtue over political or infused virtues. It will be better, if we discuss the term '*secunda secundae*'. The virtues that oriented towards beatitude and the virtues that towards social aspects of human life, is too simple for Aquinas' purposes. For him, only justice, has a direct relation to the good of the entire community. In a specific sense, Temperance and fortitude both have focused on the good of individuals because they maintained a relation between passion and reasoned judgement of the individuals.

Aquinas took the Aristotelian doctrine of means to analyse the specific ideals of cardinal virtue. For Aristotle, virtues are expressed through passions and actions in accordance with rational means. So, according to rational means or the means of passions' a virtue is determined by the good of an organism, which maintains the correct relation between sensual good and whole good. So, these virtues are considered as rational means only. But the means of justice is established by the good of the entire community which reflects the objective criteria of equality and equity. Thus, the mean of justice is recognised as a means of reality as well as rationality. What we can observe here is that the infused cardinal virtues and the acquired virtues have defined by their different means, while the theological virtues are not like that, as they do not moderate with respect to believe, hope and love for God.

3.4 Virtue Ethical Thoughts in the Late Medieval Period:

In the late thirteenth century, and also in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, scholastic conception of virtue took its form by the controversy over free will and the relation between the concept of will, intellect and passion. These controversies are complex and were driven by two approaches to human agency.³² One is the Dominican masters and their defence of intellectualism. For intellectualism, rational

³¹ Porter, Jean, "Virtue ethics in the medieval period" in *The Cambridge Companion to Virtue Ethics* Edited by Daniel C. Russell, Cambridge University Press, New York, 2013 p. 85

³² Kent, B. *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century*, Catholic University of America Press, 1995, pp. 94–149.

judgment determines the choice of will. Another is Franciscan masters defending voluntarism, that gives more or less absolute priority to will. Consequently, these two approaches, leave not much space for the Aristotelian version of virtues. Aristotelian virtues start its journey from human agency as a complex phenomenon, dependent on the diverse faculties to set by two related problems, one is to explain how this coordination reach one's desirable or praiseworthy actions; and second to show that how the virtuous agent acts in accordance with the ideals of virtuous life.

Though these approaches have their differences, but they both share the similar view corresponding to the analysis of human agency either through the intellect or will, which lead us to determine choice and action. In this regard, the coordination of the diverse faculties is unnecessary because they don't have independence to generate real internal conflicts or distorted judgements. It also refers to the agent's character is which is much more connected to the sort of things he actually does. If someone's action is developed by a stable disposition and reflects the coordination of different faculties, which is determined by right judgements with a good will then that certainly is the character of an agent, so far as the late medieval period is concerned.

3.4.1 Duns Scotus' Conception of Virtue in the Medieval Period:

Duns Scotus (c. 1265 – 1308), a Franciscan theologian offers the most significant theories of will, moral law, and moral goodness in the medieval period. His conception of virtue takes even more attention, at least in the modern ethics, than that of his concept of other moral views.³³ Scotus was labelled as “the subtle Doctor” at that time and his views were critically analysed by the philosophers. Scotus defended a voluntarist theory of human agency in his later writings, though his voluntarism is qualified by the agreement that the will is informed by the intellect. The kind of voluntarism that he promoted leads him to an account of virtue that is very much different from the views of Aristotle.³⁴

According to Scotus, the will operates independently of the judgments of the intellect, as it produces actions apart from, or contrary to the judgments of intellect

³³ Kent, B. *Virtues of the Will: The Transformation of Ethics in the Late Thirteenth Century*, Catholic University of America Press, 1995, p. 352.

³⁴ Like other philosophers discussed previously, Scotus does not maintain a systematic theory of the virtues in any one text. His ideas on the virtues can be found in the *Ordinatio* III suppl., dist. 33–6.

relating to good. It is the only way that can be considered as truly free and will operates independent of passions or sensory desire. Scotus identifies a more concrete concept of by distinguishing the monastic ideas of Anselm. Following Anselm, he classifies two varieties of wills in each individual. One is to seek one's own well-being or perfection, and other one is a will towards justice or the good in general. It offers the most meaningful and sensible way to free the human agent to choose between its own well-being and justice or good. Scotus does not propose that the will towards one's own perfection, if it were properly exercised, plays a natural and proper part in human action.

Thus, Scotus' conception of virtue is a disposition to act in accordance with the will of justice, where self-interest is subordinate. It is important to mention here that virtue even in the most unqualified sense would seem to be identified with the agent's disposition to choose just or morally acceptable acts. Therefore, Scotus tried to build a theory of virtue that show how the architectonic virtues explain self-love to love of God in a proper way. He believes that virtue makes the way easy for a good action through disciplining and controlling our sensory desires but denies that virtue adds either anything to the moral value of a particular action or to the character of an agent. Scotus denies the distinction between infused and acquired moral virtues, and the dependence of meritorious acts on infused virtues. Generally, we characterise acts of charity, self-sacrifice as love of God, but if these kinds of actions become easier by the grace of God, then it becomes a necessary condition for their attainment.

The arguments as we discussed above, clearly maintain a safe distance from the earlier scholastic views on uniqueness and necessity of grace. But they actually appreciate the views on human agency and therefore the virtues. According to Wolter, Duns Scotus opposed Aquinas' view that our soul is obviously distinct from its faculties, which means he need not and perhaps cannot postulate the grace in terms of Aquinas, as a new operative principle separated from natural inclinations. Scotus doesn't believe that our soul and its faculties are completely separated from one another, as for him, whatever faculty enrich our soul must enrich overall. Both Aquinas and the earlier scholastics believes that the infused virtues are necessary, because it helps us to achieve a particular set of aims, and apprehend in the ways that go beyond natural capacities. Both agrees that infused virtues qualify different modes

of action and its final determinants too. So far as Scotus is concerned, what is important for us is that the righteous will that is engaged in the course of action and there is no need or no space for any principles to qualify or direct that will. Because of his attitude and opinions, Scotus is blamed to the scholastic virtue ethics. It is further alleged that Luther's idea of rejecting the Christian virtue is mostly influenced by Scotus. Martin Luther rejected the Christian virtue theory entirely together with Aristotle. But this does not prove that Scotus and his followers opposed the idea of virtue. Scotus' views can be traced as an alternative to the idea of virtue when he proposes the view against the Christian thinkers on the concept grace that departs radically from his Aristotelian predecessors. More specifically, while Augustine rejected his wholesale ideas, then Scotus may argue in his defence and in against to Augustine's view that "the virtues are all modalities of love, with *righteous will* substituted for *love*." It does not mean that Aristotelian virtue ethics was collapsed though suffered from an eclipse, but enjoy a revival in both philosophical and theological space. Thus, Virtue ethics is debated within a wider context of intellectual and practical spheres, and with the new ideas and views, it is expected to see diverse approaches to the virtues appearing, receding, and returning again.

3.5 The Revival of Virtue Ethics:

In the second half of the twentieth century, some highly significant changes in moral philosophy have been happened. Prior to that, moral philosophy was divided into two traditions. One is Kantianism or deontological moral theory and the another is utilitarianism or consequentialist moral theory.

Kantian moral theory proposes that morality must be universal and is based on impartial law of rationality. Categorical Imperative is the foundation of Kant's moral theory. For Kant, do not make false promises to get your desires. Because no one can will that, if someone will that, that would be a law of nature and everyone who wants to get their desires should make false promise. And if anyone further asks that why do not I will this, Kant may reply that if this happens then promising will not survive, and making false promises is not in accordance with laws of rationality.

Kant implacably disagreed with utilitarianism because it evaluates value of a particular moral theory only by comparing the well-being of human beings. Here

moral action aims at the good of human well-being and what is rational also. This theory does not aim solely at one's own well-being. It is an impartial theory because it obliges us to produce greater amount of overall well-being as possible.

In 1958, Elizabeth Anscombe attacked on both of these ethical traditions. For her, both of them speaks for a foundation of morality, such as obligation but these notions are nonsensical when there is no such law-giver (God) is assumed. As many of us do not believe in God, Annscombe suggests a foundation for ethics and this foundation is the notion of virtue as a part of human flourishing.

To explain the notion of human flourishing, Anscombe refers to Aristotle who was the main inspiration for Modern Virtue Ethics. In his *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle argued that “the best life for human being... consists in the exercise of the virtues (or the ‘excellences’)”³⁵ Aristotle talks about the necessity of *eudaimonia* and he was perhaps the most radical virtue ethicist ever. His radicalistic view on virtue can be traced when he says that “there is nothing worth having in life except the exercise of the virtues.”³⁶

To discuss the notion of virtue, few questions that frequently comes in our mind are as follows–

What is virtue ethics? One may say that it suggests us to act virtuously. We should live a virtuous life. But this is not enough to explain this theory, for example, Mill may probably agree with this line. His reason would be – one should act virtuously because it helps him/her to produce greater amount of overall well-being. And similarly, a Kantian may agree that one should be virtuous because it is an act which is in accordance with moral law, and moral laws are universal.

How does a virtue ethicist react to it? It must provide some ultimate moral reasons that are neither utilitarian nor Kantian, yet it makes some essential rationality of virtue itself. The virtue ethicist's straight-forward answer is - I should not tell lie because it is a dishonesty. Not because it is against the moral law, not because it produces greater amount of overall well-being. So, the notions of virtue are mere basic than that of utilitarian or Kantian moral theory. It also replaces the notion of

³⁵ Crisp, R. & Slote M. (Ed.), *Virtue Ethics*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2013, p. 2

³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 2

obligation, that utilitarians or Kantians are based on and moreover at least they do not need such language. Another feature of virtue ethics that makes it alienated from these two theories is its focus on moral agents and their lives, rather than focusing on one's discrete actions (telling a lie, making false promise, giving alms to beggar).³⁷

So far, we have seen, Anscombe's *Modern Moral Philosophy*, which was published in 1958, is considered as the inauguration of present revival of virtue ethics. Anscombe, discusses few topics which are in some way or other related to the idea of a revival of virtue ethics. But the main reason that attracted its importance to all is its strong criticism of modern and contemporary moral philosophers and their theories. Though the entire criticism has not been univocally made by the modern virtue ethicist, Kantianism and religious ethicist would also criticize this point. The revival of virtue ethics inaugurated by Anscombe based on two further factors in her thinking –

- i. She claims that notions such as “‘moral obligation’ require a legislative model of morality in order to make sense.”³⁸
- ii. She also claims that “Kantian ‘self-legalisation’ is not a sensible notion.”³⁹

With both of these assumptions, Anscombe argues that secular moral philosophy that has no law-giver cannot make sensible use of moral obligation and rightness or wrongness of an action become tied to moral obligation. But the problem is, how can we do ethical statements? Anscombe simply answers that ethics can be done or based on the idea of virtue and human flourishing. To explain the ideal model of ethics that everyone should follow, Anscombe lead us back to fourth century B.C. ancient Greek philosophers, Plato and Aristotle. Yet, she warns us that we do not have actual understandings of the notion of virtue because Plato and Aristotle both of them do not clarify that notion and before we say what virtue is, we must have clear conception about the terms like – ‘intention’, ‘pleasure’ and action. Hence, according to Anscombe, we must have a clear idea about philosophical psychology otherwise it is better to stop moral philosophy.⁴⁰

³⁷ Crisp, R. & Slote M. (Ed.), *Virtue Ethics*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2013, p. 3

³⁸ *Ibid*, p. 4

³⁹ *Ibid*, p. 4

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 4

We have seen that virtue ethics differentiates itself by its *aretaic* notions, such as, ‘virtue’, ‘admirability’ and ‘excellence’, which are basic than deontic notions for Anscombe and even it can replace the deontic notions, such as rightness, wrongness or moral obligations. Anscombe’s argument against the emptiness and attributions of moral obligation, clearly favours the virtue ethics and probably this is the most rigorous attack that have been made in the contemporary history of ethics.⁴¹ Thus, after criticizing those popular ethical theories and showing the inappropriateness of the recent moral theory, we should encourage our self to do an ethics Plato and Aristotle does. In other words, once we have an idea of philosophical psychology, then, we must do an ethics, which have virtue ethical commitment to make virtuous character or an ethical theory that primarily concern the character traits.⁴²

Anscombe made an extensive research and discussion on the recent development of contemporary moral theory, criticizes them and done an extraordinary achievement to the revival of virtue ethics. Yet, there are many present-day ethicists, both defenders and opponents of her theory, do not agree with the assumptions she had made in her article ‘*Modern Moral Philosophy*’. According to many contemporary Kantians, they “can make more sense of self-legalization than Anscombe supposes”⁴³, and there are few virtue ethicists who think that “deontic notions of right and wrong need to be tied to typical, familiar assumptions about moral obligation”⁴⁴, rather they naturally emerge from *aretaic* notions, such as excellence and evil.

⁴¹ Crisp, R. & Slote M. (Ed.), *Virtue Ethics*, Oxford University Press, UK, 2013, p. 4

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 4

⁴³ *Ibid*, p. 4

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, p. 4