

CHAPTER - SEVEN

The problem of moral value or good may be considered from four points of view, viz., (1) the logical, (2) the epistemological, (3) the empirical or factual and (4) the metaphysical standpoints.

In its logical aspect the problem of moral value centres round the question of a logically adequate definition of value. Value may be defined either extensively or verbally. But neither extensive nor verbal definition of value, we contend, is logically adequate. Extensive definition is logically inadequate because it depends solely on pointing out physically and this physical pointing out can and does fail in many cases because of the lack of precision in such pointing out. Consider, e.g., the case of a new-born baby. If all the new born babies are not numbered immediately after their birth and are kept side by side in the same room, will it be possible even for the doctor who helped them to come into this world to tell apart? The answer is obvious. Consider, again e.g., the case of the definition of a Classic. Can even the established critics like Mathew Arnold dare to give a logically adequate extensive definition of Classic? The answer is in the negative. The extensive definition of value is more difficult because values are not sensory qualities and as such cannot be pin-pointed physically or instrumentally.

As regards the verbal definition of value, we contend that value cannot be defined verbally. The basic condition of verbal definition is the conventional agreement between the speaker and the listener, the writer and the reader, to use the same linguistic expression in the same referential context

and to follow the same ~~conventional~~ conventional rules for forming complex expressions out of simple expressions to depict personal, private experience. But this is seldom achieved and even where it is achieved, it is so achieved at the cost of the uncommon elements of personal experience. Thus we find no two Shakespearean critics agree as regards the aesthetic worth of Shakespeare's works. Likewise in the field of morality there is more of clash and conflict and less of agreement. E.g., the upholders of the theory: 'Let hundred criminals go unpunished, but do not punish an innocent man' clash violently with the supporters of the theory: 'To clean the Augean Stable of corruption even innocent lives, if necessary, should be sacrificed'. Thus value, it is obvious, is indefinable logically. And we conclude that value is indefinable not because it is ^{an} absolutely simple, unanalysable ultimate but because it is unintelligible, i.e., it is experienced as an existent in a locus, yet it is logically rejected or cancelled in that ~~locus~~ locus for past, present and future. Thus it is presented unreality that appears but does not exist and as such is logically indefinable.

In its epistemological aspect the question concerning moral value is: How is value known? The question, we hold, should be answered in the negative. The value is felt while the object of which it is the value, is known. Thus the rose is known but the beauty of the rose is felt. Likewise the overt action is known but the moral worth of the overt action is felt. Hence Moore is definitely right when he holds that the value is not, whereas other qualities or properties are, constitutive of the object.

Our experience of value, we hold, comes through intuition which is of the nature of feeling. But this feeling of value is different from ordinary feeling of pleasure and pain. Like ~~an~~ ordinary feeling it is immediate and direct

but unlike ordinary feeling it does not evaporate when we attend to it. Also the ~~immediate~~ immediacy of the feeling of value is not irresistible like sense-immediacy. If we like we can withdraw ourselves from attending to the feeling of value. This feeling, unlike the feeling of pleasure and pain, is not compelling; it can impel only. The force of the value-feeling can be resisted, toned down, in some cases at least annihilated altogether. E.g., unless one can deliberately strangle one's finer sensibilities regarding the value of human lives, one cannot be a successful soldier in the army. It is a fact that values do conflict; and when they conflict in our experience we are perturbed. But how do we know or experience valuational conflicts? The conflict of values, we hold, can be felt directly. Hence the torment of the individual. We therefore conclude that values and valuational conflicts are directly or immediately felt and this immediate feeling is not infallible. It is, like knowledge, equally subject to rejection and correction and any theory regarding the ~~infallibility~~: infallible a priori feeling of value is simply untenable in the face of the evidence of experience. Thus there is no finality in our experience of value; no experience of value, we contend, can be held to be valid eternally.

In its empirical or factual aspect the problem of moral value gives rise to two questions, viz., (a) what are the different types and kinds of values? and (b) How are values to be graded and classified? Both the questions can be answered, we hold, only provisionally. In the arena of experience nothing is permanent except experience itself. Hence no empirical study can give us any finality as regards number of different types and kinds of value. Treasure of experience is inexhaustible, and any attempt to arrive at a

complete enumeration of value is a cry in the wilderness if not a child's cry for the moon. As regards the second question we also held that any classification and gradation of value is only provisional and never final. There is always the possibility of the emergence of new values in experience upsetting the existing gradation and classification. And therefore unless some way is found to set at naught this ~~poss~~ possibility, there cannot be any final gradation and classification of values that is valid for all times.

In its metaphysical aspect the problem of moral value raises two questions, viz., (a) How is value related to reality? and (b) What is the status of value in the metaphysical scheme of things and beings of the world?

As to the first question we subscribe, after Sankara, to a negative metaphysic of dualism of appearance and reality. Values, as objects of consciousness, we contend, are appearances and as such involve difference necessarily. That is, ~~values~~ values as objects of consciousness are different from consciousness. And all difference, we held, being unreal as contradicting and destroying itself, the difference between reality and consciousness is also unreal. Therefore consciousness is reality and reality is consciousness and reality is that which breaks no denial. Hence consciousness is also that which breaks no denial because the denial of consciousness must also be evidenced by consciousness. But consciousness is not an object of consciousness; it is the non-objective light that lights up objects without being itself objective. Thus consciousness is never objective, though it reveals objects which shine forth in the light of consciousness. Hence reality being the non-objective light of consciousness which reveals objects, objects, phenomenal as well as apparent, are the other of reality which is consciousness and therefore unreal and false. The objective world of things and values is thus, like the

object of illusion, an objective unreality or unreal positivity. For the object of illusion is an object, a content of experience or thought and as such is not mere nothing. And yet as negated and cancelled, it is not real either. It is thus neither real nor unreal, the negation of both being and non-being, and is therefore logically indefinable. The entire objective world (including values which are also objective) in this respect is on a par with the illusory objects. On logical criticism it dissolves into an indefinable indefinable positivity which is neither real nor unreal. The world is thus an eternally negated objectification of a non-objective reality. And all objects as well as values are thus false appearances which, though positive as content of consciousness, yet lack essential truth and reality. They are fleeting appearances, contents that are manifested in consciousness but are no real qualifications thereof. They are like the forms in a cinema show which flit over the screen but leaves no trace behind. They are appearances in reality but not appearances of it.

As regards the second question we held that values are unreal or false appearances. And though reality does not admit of degrees, of more or less, the false and the unreal may be graded as they admit of degrees. Thus falsity is graded into higher and lower; and though both the higher and lower falsity are equally false as the other of reality, yet the higher falsity can negate or cancel the lower falsity. Thus the pragmatic, the aesthetic, the moral and the religious values are all alike false, yet the aesthetic value being the higher falsity can cancel the utility value and it in its turn can be cancelled likewise by moral value which again, being lower, is cancelled by the religious value and so on and so forth. Thus all values are false appearances, and the gradation of values is a gradation of falsity the lower falsity being cancelled by the higher.

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