

CHAPTER-IV

OTHER THEORIES OF THE LANGUAGE OF MORAL OBLIGATION.

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1. Preliminary Remarks

The recent ethical thought provides us with more than one interpretations of the nature and function of the language of morals. They may be called theories of moral language. The important among them are-Descriptive theory, Evaluative theory, Emotive theory, Prescriptive theory and Imperative theory. There are other functions also which are ascribed to the moral language, such as direction, guidance, exhortation, recommendation, permission and so on. But they may be conveniently taken to be included in the theories mentioned above. In the last chapter, the obligation theory of the language of moral obligation was proposed and discussed in some details. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss critically these theories, bringing out their inadequacy to explain satisfactorily the nature and function of the language of moral obligation.

It is to be realized at the outset that there is a great difficulty in formulating these theories specifically with regard to the language of moral obligation. These theories pertain to the moral language in general, and are not the specific theories of the language of moral obligation like the obligative theory. Of course,

what applies to the moral/morality in general, applies certainly to moral obligation. On the basis of this understanding, the general theories of moral language mentioned above will be treated here as the theories specifically of the language of moral obligation and will be evaluated as such. Thus, whatever, these theories say the nature and function of the general moral language is, will be taken to be the nature and function of the particular language of moral obligation. The general nature of these theories naturally puts a limit to their specific application. What we can do at best is to bear in mind this limitation while considering their adequacy to explain the nature and function of the language of moral obligation.

2. Descriptive Theory

By descriptivism is meant the theory which states that the nature of moral language in general, and the language of moral obligation in particular, is descriptive; that it's primary and essential function is to describe a fact'. In other words, the logic of moral discourse is similar to that of empirical discourse. As Nowell-Smith¹ points out, the cardinal point of such a discourse is that the truth or falsity of an opinion depends wholly on what the facts are, not on whether anyone holds it. That is, the moral qualities like 'good', 'right', 'obligatory' are as natural and objective as empirical ones. As Nowell-Smith² says, it is in the empirical discourse that the objective expressions have their most typical standard application and to accept that they are applicable to the obligative discourse also is to accept descriptivism.

As for the nature of descriptive language, Wellman³ says that "the three fundamental features of any descriptive sentences are indication, quasi-comparison and assertion-denial "These three represent broadly the subject, the predicate and the mode of predication-positive or negative. For him "This is red" could be a model for the logical structure of description, in which — This indicates "red" quasi-compares and "is" asserts. Wellman further gives three important semantical presuppositions"⁴ of any descriptive sentences as — (a) the object or objects which is purports ? to indicate actually exist : (b) the quasi

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1. *Ethics*, p. 50
 2. Loc.Cit.
 3. *The Language of Ethics*, p-160.
 4. Ibid. p.p. 181-182.

— comparison claimed to apply to the subject be conceivable; and (c) there be some possible evidence for or against the description.

From the above brief account it will be evident that it is the empirical discourse which uses the most standard descriptive language, that the empirical language is the ideal form of the descriptive language. Let us now see, first, what is it that leads us to think that the moral and the empirical discourses are similar; that the language of moral obligation is descriptive?

Hare⁵ compares the two statements — 'M is a red motor-car' and 'M is good motor-car' and brings out certain similarities between the two which lend support to descriptivism. Firstly, both can be and often are, used for conveying information, of a purely factual or descriptive character, and what is conveyed is called meaning'. The second similarity is that, sometimes we use them not for actually conveying information, but for putting, our hearer into a position subsequently to use the word 'good' or 'red' for giving or getting information. Thirdly, both 'good' and 'red' can vary as regards their exactitude or vagueness of the information which they do or can convey.

On this, Hare himself remarks that, in view of these resemblances between 'good' and 'red', it is very easy to think that 'M' is a good motor-car' means neither more nor less than 'M has certain characteristics of which "good" is the name'. But he denies this 'easy' conclusion. He shows that, though 'good' has both descriptive and evaluative meanings, its descriptive meaning is secondary to the evaluative one. For this, he gives two reasons; (a) the evaluative meaning is constant while the descriptive meaning changes with classes of objects; (b) we can use the evaluative force of a word in order to change the descriptive meaning for any class of objective. Hare is, however, aware of the fact that, although the evaluative meaning of 'good' is primary, the secondary descriptive meaning is never wholly absent.

What Hare says of 'good' holds equally for 'obligatory' or 'ought' with suitable modifications. It would then mean that the descriptive meaning of the language of moral obligation is secondary to its obligative meaning, though it is

5. *Language of Morals*, p.p. 111-116.

never wholly absent. We agree with Hare in rejecting the descriptivistic contention that the primary and essential meaning of the language of moral obligation is descriptive.

From Nowell-Smith's⁶ discussion in this regard one thing becomes quite clear, that, the analogy of the moral discourse with the empirical one can not be stretched too much. The view that moral language is objective does not necessarily entail that it is empirical, though the most typical expression of objectivity is found in the empirical discourse. Because, to accept the entailment logically, means to hold that objectivity is always empirical, and to hold this is to unnecessarily limit the field of objective discourse only to the empirical one, as is done by the logical positivists. This is regarding the relation between the empirical and the objective. Also important for us is the relation between the descriptive and the objective. Nowell-Smith is not explicit on this point. But he says that moral judgements like empirical statements refer to facts, and to do this is necessary for any use of the objective language. The crux of the whole analogy is the meaning of fact. And, the question is, if we distinguish between the moral and the empirical facts, is there any significance in using the analogy at all? Even G.E. Moore says that there are differences as well as similarities between 'good' and 'yellow', that is, non-natural and natural properties, though as Nowell-Smith rightly remarks, "This is precisely the sort of difference that is denied by calling 'goodness' a property"⁷

The main questions which must be answered in this regard are (a) Does the language of moral obligation describe or refer to 'facts' at all and if, yes, (b) Is description its only function? and, if it has some other function or functions, (c) Is description its primary and essential function?

The answer to the first question need be only short. Moral language says something about men and their conduct in regard to their goodness, rightness, obligatoriness and so on. Now, to say, that moral language describes facts would be to say that goodness, rightness, obligatoriness etc. are facts or empirical properties. The moral judgements 'X is good', "X is obligatory" etc. are certainly meaningful. But the question is, are we here describing X as

6. *Ethics*, pp 48 - 51

7. Ibid p - 65.

good, obligatory etc. in the same way in which we may describe X as red or sweet? In other words, are the moral terms just informative? or, do they stand for empirical properties ? It is clear that by knowing that 'X' is good, we do not add anything more to our empirical knowledge of X as Ayer⁸ says. If, however, by definition good means a group of empirical properties, for example a strawberry's being good means its being large, red, juicy and sweet⁹, then of course, to say that strawberry is good is to describe it. But then, here, good is not an empirical property itself, but a name given ex hypothesi to a group of empirical properties. We are not discussing such use of good.

This likeness of a moral term to an empirical property diminishes when we pass from 'good' to 'right' and 'obligatory'. 'X is right', it is evident, does not describe X in the ordinary sense of the term, judgement is put in an ought form as 'X ought to be done'. From the point of view of the concept of moral obligation, the ought-language is very important as it clearly differentiates the language of moral obligation from the descriptive empirical language. It is still possible to hold that it describes the facts of obligatoriness, being under obligation etc. which may be called moral facts. But they are so dissimilar from empirical facts, that we cannot say that we are describing X by saying 'X is obligatory'. All this means that moral judgements, at least those of obligation, do not describe facts in the ordinary sense of the term.

If this is so, then what about the resemblances between the moral and the empirical discourses, as for example pointed out by Hare? Let it be noted first that the resemblances may hold good so far as the concept of good is concerned. Even in that case, as Hare shows, its descriptive function is secondary, that is, its moral function is not descriptive but commendatory. In case of the concept of moral obligation the possibility of resemblance is even more remote. Take the judgement, you ought to speak the truth. What factual information do we get regarding speaking the truth by describing it as 'obligatory' except that it is obligatory which is not at all an empirical characteristic? The term 'obligatory' has a reference mainly to doing or requirement of an act, and only indirectly to the act proper. The logic of the quality of an act is bound to be different from that

8. *Language, Truth and Logic*, p. 107.

9. Hare : *Language of Morals*, p. 111.

of the quality of a thing.¹⁰ There again, if it concerns more with doing an act, rather than the act itself, then the logical will be still more different. This is precisely the case of obligatory. The ought language removes even this doubt of similarity, and clearly brings out the differences between the functions of the two discourses.

There is, however a sense in which we can say that a genuine element of description is involved in the obligative language. It is by implication; as for example, the ought-sentence. He ought to have spoken the truth 'or' I ought to do X' may, by implication indicate factual, psychological state of decision on the part of the speaker. Again the indicative function of ought is conceived in an interestingly different way by A. Campbell Garnett.¹¹ According to him, ought has two functions imperative and indicative. The imperative function is to urge or demand a certain course of action, while the indicative one is to declare that there are good reasons, that is, reasons developed by enlightened understanding, for the action. The indicative function as conceived here, it will be seen, amounts to showing that the ought language is objective and rational, by the help of concrete reasons. Even here it is the imperative function which is primary.

It will be relevant to note that Toulmin and Baier¹² maintain a distinctively significant view of description. In their view, "description is not a word parallel to the phrase 'statement of fact'; it refers rather to a type of use to which a sentence may be put".¹³ In brief, the term 'description' applies not to the sentences, but to one of the uses to which sentences can be put. In fairness to Baier it must be said that he admits that passing a moral judgement on something is not the same thing as describing it. Their main contention is two-fold — (a) Description is not a statement of fact, but a type of use of language; and (b) moral words or sentences can be used either for passing moral judgements or for describing or again for both the purposes at the same time.

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10. Cf. Hall, E.W. *Our knowledge of Fact and Value*, Ch. II, for alike dissimilarity between negative verbs and verbs of action.
 11. "The Indicative Element of Decentological words", (*Ethics*, 56 - 57, p. 42).
 12. Baier, K. : "Decisions and Descriptions," (*Mind*', p. 181) and Toulmin, S.E. and Baier,K, : "On describing" (*Mind*' 52. p. 13)
 13. Ibid. p. 17.

It may be accepted that description is broader than 'statement of fact,' in the sense that there may be description of things other than (empirical) facts. But technically, what is the object of description is not as important as the possibility of the application of the logic of description to moral sentences or language. On the test of this logic it will be found that it is to the language of empirical facts that the logic of description applies perfectly, not to the language whose primary and essential function is other than description. That is to say, the essential use of the ought-language is not descriptive.

Further, it will be a mistake not to consider the distinction between 'describing' and 'prescribing' simply because an element of both is present in both the types of sentences. This is because the important question is, "is 'description' the essential and primary function of the language of moral obligation, if not the only one?" The analysis of the nature and function of the ought language in which obligations are expressed, gives answer to this question in the negative. In other words, though an element of description may be present, in the broader sense of 'description', in the language of moral obligation; yet, its essential and primary nature and function is obligative, and not, descriptive. This is so for the reason (i) moral fact is different from empirical fact; (ii) the logic of description does not apply to the language of moral obligation; and (iii) the ought-language is obligative rather than descriptive in essence. To say the least, to say that 'moral language describes moral facts' is to use a metaphor from the empirical discourse to which only, the terms 'fact' and 'description' are strictly applicable.

3. Emotive Theory

Emotivism is said to be the ethical offshoot of the general philosophical theory of Logical Positivism. but even though it may be the case, it does not mean necessarily that the refutation of the one is also the refutation of the other. Emotivism as an ethical theory has every right to be considered on its own merits without being made completely dependent on Logical Positivism.

The general problem with which the theory is concerned is regarding the roles played by reason and feeling in our moral judgements. Emotivism as an answer to this problem can be said to be the culmination of Hume's view in

this regard. The exponents of this theory are many in number, but we cannot say that the same view is held by all in toto. Vincent Thomas¹⁴ refers to different versions of the emotive theory as presented by Broad¹⁵, Carnap¹⁶, Russell¹⁷, Ayer¹⁸ and Stevenson¹⁹. According to him Stevenson's is the most standard version of the theory. But Ayer has stated the basic position very clearly, emphatically and effectively, and Stevenson has elaborated it with some modifications. We shall, therefore, base our discussion of emotivism primarily on these two thinkers' account of it.

Ayer says, "The presence of an ethical symbol in a proposition adds nothing to its factual content. Thus, if I say to someone, 'you acted wrongly in stealing that money,' I am not stating anything more than if I had simply said, 'You stole that money.' In adding that this action is wrong, I am simply evincing my moral disapproval of it."²⁰.

In other words, ethical concepts are unanalysable because they are not real concepts at all but only pseudo concepts.' Ethical predicates like 'good', 'wrong', 'obligatory' etc. are not real predicates. They only evince the moral approval or disapproval of the speaker. The judgement of the type 'X is good' is neither analytical nor empirically verifiable, and hence it can not be either true or false. The primary function of the ethical terms is just to express the emotions of moral approval or disapproval. They are also meant to arouse the same feeling as that of the speaker's and further, to stimulate action in the hearer, accordingly. As Ayer says - "It is worth mentioning that ethical terms do not serve only to express feeling. They are calculated also to arouse feeling and so to stimulate action "²¹.

The function of the ethical symbols is thus two-folds; they express the emotions of moral approval and disapproval, and they also try to arouse the same feelings in others. Stevenson calls the latter the emotive meaning of the

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14. Ethical Disagreements and the Emotive Theory of Value, *Mind*, 51,p.205.
 15. *Aristotelian Society*, 1934.
 16. *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, 1935 pp. 22 - 26.
 17. *Religion and Science*, 1935. Ch. IX.
 18. *Language, Truth and Logic*. Ch. 6 and Introduction Second Edition, 46.
 19. Ethics and Language. The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms; *Mind*. 1937.
 20. Op. cit. p. 107.
 21. Ibid, p. 108.

ethical terms. As he puts it, "the emotive meaning of a word is a tendency of a word, arising through the history of its usage, to produce (result from) affective response in people. It is the immediate aura of feeling which hovers about a word."²² The ethical words are what he calls 'magnetic.' They have a meaning that is approximately and in part, imperative²³ and they are used more for encouraging or redirecting people's aim and conduct than for simply describing them.²⁴ The major use of the ethical judgements, according to him, is not to indicate facts, but to create an influence. They have a 'quasi-imperative' force which readily permits one to begin to influence, to modify, other's interests. There are two purposes, he says, of using language; descriptive (record, clarify and communicate beliefs) and dynamic (give vent to feelings, create moods, incite people to actions or attitudes). The emotive meaning is dynamic and not descriptive. May be, that disagreement in interest is rooted in disagreement in belief. But, "empirical facts are not inductive grounds from which the ethical judgements problematically follow."²⁵ The ethical judgements are related to the reasons. So far as the question of truth is concerned, "the emotive meaning of an ethical judgement has nothing to do with truth or falsity"²⁶.

Brandt very ably sums up Stevenson's theory in a few propositions in his "Ethical Theory".²⁷

(1) People have attitudes that often clash. This is clearly a factual statement.

(2) To have an ethical conviction is to have an attitude. Consequently, disagreements in moral discourse are really those in attitudes. Along with attitudes, man also has beliefs and disagreements in beliefs. They can, however, be settled by an appeal to facts. This is not the case of attitudes. Only in cases where attitudes depend on beliefs, can attitudes be changed with beliefs. No, ethical sentences essentially express attitudes.

22. Stevenson: "The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms" *Mind*. 1937, p. 23.

23. *Ethics and Language*, p. 26

24. *Ibid*, p. 21.

25. 'The Emotive Meaning of Ethical Terms,' p. 29.

26. *Ethics and Language*, p. 154.

27. Brandt, R. B. *Ethical Theory*, Ch. 9 p.p. 206 - 211.

(3) Ethical utterances have magnetic effects on others' attitudes. Moral language performs the function of persuading others to change their attitudes to the speaker's as well as expressing the speaker's attitude.

(4) To support an ethical statement by a reason is to mention a fact that will influence the corresponding attitude. The theory admits that men try to support their ethical statements with reasons. But these, ethical reasons are different from those of empirical sciences. The relation between the reason and the statement supported by it, is contingent in moral discourse, while it is necessary in the empirical sciences. Thus, moral reasoning is really persuading others to change their attitudes.

(5) Ethical sentences do not state facts; if they state them at all, they do so only secondarily, their primary function being to convey the attitude of the speaker and therethrough to change the attitude of others.

Thus, emotivism is against both naturalism and absolutism in ethics. It is non-cognitivism which, as Henry Veatch says, "is antithetical alike to the objectivity, and to the knowability of goodness.²⁸ By making the emotive element of 'attitude' central to moral discourse, and conceiving no necessary relation between attitude and belief, emotivism takes away objectivity and certainty from it and leaves it to remain subjective and relative.

So far as the general points of criticism of this view are concerned, it has been pointed out, firstly, that it cannot account for the universal conviction of man that moral sentences state facts and that they are capable of being either true or false. This is not so serious a criticism as it looks, because it is arguable that the universal conviction referred to, itself may be unfounded, or if at all moral sentences state facts, the nature of these facts is so dissimilar to empirical facts that they cannot be properly said to state facts at all.

More formidable is the second allegation that it cannot account for one's change in moral convictions as when one says, "my previous view was mistaken". Such a remark in connection with moral view is impossible in the frame of Emotivism. In other words, in moral field, there is no error properly so

28. Non-Cognitivism

called which requires a principle for its determination. It makes valuation of the past impossible.

Further, if goodness or obligatoriness is determined by subjective attitude, it is external to the thing or the act which has it. If this is true, then anything can be good or any act obligatory, provided that we have the necessary moral attitude towards it. It leaves no basis in the object itself either favouring or disfavouring it, thus making reflection about values far more irrational than in fact it is.

In short, to accept Emotivism as it is, is to annihilate objectivity in ethics.²⁹ Morality becomes a matter of emotion and attitude rather than reasoned thought and belief. Appeal to beliefs and facts helps only persuasion and not proof. There is no rational settlement of moral disagreements, but only emotional appeal.

As Blanshard³⁰ says, we can agree with the theory so far as it states that we can infer attitudes from moral judgements, and that moral sentences affect our moral feeling and attitude to some extent. But when the theory goes beyond this to state that the only important function of moral symbol and language is to express and evoke attitudes, we cannot fall in line with it. Infact we favour a thing or act because it is good or right. Emotivism reverses this order and says that the thing or act is good or right because we favour it; and this is unacceptable.

Emotivism becomes even less satisfactory when it is specifically applied to the concept of moral obligation. As is obvious, the concept of obligation can be looked at from two points of view-Agent's and Act's. The one gives birth to the characteristic being 'under obligation', and the other to 'obligatoriness'. The use 'obligatory act' is capable, though feebly, of being interpreted emotively as it has a resemblance to the use 'good'. But what about 'being under obligation'? What is its emotive meaning? Similarly, the whole ought language in which the judgements or moral obligation are expressed, cannot be interpreted adequately in emotive terms or given any emotive meaning. The judgement 'you ought to do X' would mean emotively, that - " I have favourable attitude to your doing X; have you that same." As is obvious, this is not the whole meaning of the above

29. For an elaborate criticism, see : *Reason and Goodness*, Ch. VIII by B. Blanshard.

30. Ibid, Ch. VIII.

judgement, which has a ring of objectivity in it. Moreover, it asks one to do X, and not to have an attitude to doing X. It is true that we can infer from this judgement speaker's attitude to 'X' and 'you' doing X, and also his desire that the same should be the attitude of 'you'. But this is secondary implication, not the primary meaning of the judgement. The complex ought sentences like "He ought not to have done X" are far beyond the scope of emotive way of determining meaning.

The above brief discussion, it is hoped, shows, that it is difficult and inadequate to ascribe emotive meaning to the moral sentences expressing, at least, the judgements of moral obligation. They are not just expressions of emotions or attitudes and persuasions, but are 'demands' as it is already seen. If we accept the three-fold division of mind, in old psychology, into cognitive, affective and conative aspects, then, we can broadly say that descriptive refers to the cognitive, emotivism to the affective and obligative theory to the conative aspects of human personality though, of course, all these three are intimately interrelated, and therefore, cannot remain completely independent of each other.

In spite of its inadequacy, Emotivism still has significance of its own. It rightly lays its hand on the 'common denominator' of moral life and language, namely, the emotions of approval and disapproval and their importance. It, further, brings home to us the practical realization that, when argument fails, persuasion or change of mind' is the only alternative way of 'wining over' others to our view and thus 'dissolve' rather than solve, the disputes.

Lastly, though, as the obligative theory already discussed, says, the language of moral obligation is a demand-language, expressing the demand of the 'Ideal', it presupposes 'commitment' to the Ideal. And, who known that this commitment is entirely intellectual? May be, that it is 'emotive' also, the Ideal being appointed by one's own nature. Emotivism like other theories suffers, not from untruth, but from partial truth, as it claims to be all-in-all while it is only an aspect of that evasive 'truth' which escapes extreme one-sidedness and defies easy realization.

4. Evaluative Theory

By evaluative theory is meant the theory according to which the sentences expressing moral obligations are of the nature of evaluations. The central evaluative moral concept is 'good' alongwith its opposite, in its adjectival use. 'Right' and 'Wrong' may be said to be evaluative only partially. 'X is a good act or 'Y is a good man' (morally) express the evaluations of 'X' and 'Y' as an act and as an agent. 'Right' is applicable properly to acts only. In case of agents the proper form of the sentence will be 'Y' is right in doing 'X' which means 'X' is the right act, or in doing 'X', 'Y' follows the right course of conduct or simply, doing 'X' is right. This applies by implication to the choice of act made by an agent from among the various alternatives. Thus, in passing moral judgements we evaluate either the agent or the act or the agent's choice (decision) or his doing the act etc.

Thus, according to Evaluative Theory, moral sentences have evaluative meaning and they serve to express the judgements of moral evaluation of agents and acts showing their moral 'worth'. We have already noted the points of similarity, pointed out by Hare³¹ between descriptive and evaluative discourses, in connection with Descriptivism. In spite of these similarities there are serious differences between the two. It only means that good has also descriptive meaning in addition to its primary evaluative meaning. Hare gives two reasons for considering evaluative meaning to be primary and descriptive one secondary : Firstly, the evaluative meaning is constant while the descriptive one changes. Here it is to be noted that he takes 'commendation' to be central to the evaluative meaning. Secondly, we can use the evaluative force of the word to change its descriptive meaning.

Logically, the concept of evaluation implies certain principle³² or standard, in short, certain measuring rod applying which we evaluate things or acts etc. It is thus a relative concept in itself. If, however, the measuring rod itself is found

31. *Language of Morals*, pp. 112 - 115.

32. As Pepper says, "An evaluative judgement involves reference to some criterian in virtue of which the presence of a value is established or the amount of it measured" (*The Language of Value*) "Evaluation and Discourse" - by S. C. Pepper, p. 77.

to be constant, then it remains only singly relative. But there is also another dimension to it, namely, situation. Evaluation may change not only with the standard, but with the situation as well. In this sense, it becomes doubly relative.

Evaluation, as Pepper³³ puts it, is a judgement about the presence of an amount of value of any sort in an object. It requires a two-fold criteria, qualitative and quantitative. The former is always the definition of value involved in the discourse and the latter, which is in fact the standard of measurement, depends for its relevance on the definitional criterion. The definition of value, serving as the ultimate criterion, is descriptive of selective systems which become natural norms of selection since they determine the content of the definition of value. Thus, "the evaluative standards come out of the facts themselves."³⁴ In case of a teleological definition of value, the drive-charged anticipation of the super ordinate goal is the actual selective agent in this process and the ultimate factual criterion for the achievement value of sub-ordinate goal object. This seems to be true in case of moral value at least.

What Pepper says is substantially true, especially his teleological interpretation of the criterion of value. But he seems to place emphasis more on purpose or goal than on criterion or principle. Further, his insistence on factual verification makes him a naturalist and it is very difficult to hold exclusive naturalism at least in the moral field. His views that evaluative standard comes out of facts themselves is true only so far as it goes; but it goes not far enough. Taken along with his teleology, it means that the goal in terms of which the natural norm of selection is defined, is natural. This is true in a sense; but in another sense, it is not just the product of 'is', it lays down 'ought' and determines 'is' itself. Our theory gives a teleological definition of moral value, no doubt. But it does not ignore the importance of deontological nature essential to the concept of 'ought'.

Can this theory explain adequately the nature and function of the language of moral obligation? While answering this question, the first thing that strikes us is that it is the concept of good which is directly involved in 'evaluation'. 'Right' is also involved, but partially; and 'ought' is only indirectly related to it. This fact, at

33. Ibid, p. 93.

34. Ibid, p. 89.

the outset, weakens the possibility of the language of moral obligation being evaluative. A genuine ought sentence like 'You to do X' can hardly be said to express evaluation, save indirectly and secondarily. It is an injunction to do, a demand as we have already seen, and not an evaluation. Certain ought-sentences, especially the post-eventum ones, do have indirect implications which are evaluative. For instance, "You ought not to have done X" implies that" you were wrong in doingX" or "X is not a good thing for you to do". But these are not the primary meanings of 'ought'.

As we shall see, (a) the concept of moral obligation is bilateral, involving considerations of others' claims; (b) it is deontic as well as teleological; (c) it is necessarily binding; and (d) it rests on impersonal objective ground. So far as evaluation is concerned, it is not bilateral. It involves reference only to a criterion and not to others claims etc. Further, evaluation, by nature, cannot be deontic, 'value' being a teleological concept.³⁵ Thirdly, like obligation, evaluation is not a binding of any sort. It is characterization in respect of worth. A binding may rest on it; but in itself it is not a binding but commendation or pro-con attitude and so on. Lastly, it is true that, theoretically, evaluation is based on the objective ground of the definition of value. And yet, the whole concept of evaluation has a strange tinge of personal or subjective preference. It leaves a broad scope for individual choice of values.

This shows that the two concepts of evaluation and obligation belong to two different realms of value and duty, of being and doing, of teleology and deontology, of evaluation and demand. They, in fact, intimately inter-related. It will be seen that ultimately obligation rests on the teleological interpretation of value in terms of ideal. This is brought out clearly in our obligative or demand theory of the language of moral obligation. Yet, obligation can never be reduced to value, and judgements of obligation to evaluations.

We have seen that it is out of our commitment to the supreme value in the form of Life-Ideal, that our moral obligations arise. This only means that naturally grounded values bear in their bosom the seeds of binding to the form of obligation.³⁶ But in no sense can the whole concept of moral obligation be

35. The Concept of *Purusartha* is significant in this context.

36. See Urban : *Fundamentals of Ethics* pp. 240 - 243

reduced without reminder to that of evaluation as the Evaluative Theory states. Value judgements are a very important part of moral discourse; but the judgements of obligation form equally important part of it and the two together constitute the essential nature and function of moral discourse. It is neither necessary nor possible to reduce the one to the other. 'Ought' has its own distinct individuality and force as much as good has its own. The nature, function and logic of the one are different from those of the other.

5. Imperative Theory

According to the Imperative Theory the judgements of moral obligation are imperative in character. The sentences in which they are expressed have imperative meaning and their function is primarily to express commands. The imperative mood, how ever, serves many purposes. As Rescher³⁷ says, imperatives form a wide grammatical category, while commands represent a rather narrower functional grouping. He further points out the various uses to which they can be put, for example giving consent or advice, reproaching, denouncing, imploring aid or requesting co-operation, making prayers or supplications, and even, in some cases, making a purely factual assertion.

Carl Wellman³⁸ prefers to speak of 'directive' meaning in place of 'Imperative' and according to him, any sentence which directs action or tells someone to do something may be said to have directive meaning. He also points out different kinds of directive sentences, for example, requests, demands, orders, advice, recipes, instructions, exhortations, laws, rule and so on. But this is a very broad use of the concept of imperative or directive. Though the imperative language serves many purposes or performs many functions as stated above, its basic nature is imperative and its primary function, so far as moral discourse is concerned, is to express commands. That is, an imperative language is essentially a command-language expressing explicitly or implicitly, commands and governed by the logic of its own. Resher³⁹ also deals only with

37. Rescher, Nicholas : "The Logic of Commands", p. 1.

38. "The Language of Ethics", p.228.

39. Op. cit. p. 2.

commands in which he includes orders, directives, injunctions, instructions and prohibitions or negative commands. For our purpose also, by an imperative theory is meant, here, a command-theory which, when applied to the language of moral obligation in imperative, that is, it is a command-language and its primary function is to express commands, in this case, moral commands.⁴⁰ We have, then, to see whether the judgements of moral obligation express, adequately and completely, moral commands, whether the logic of command is adequate to govern the discourse of moral obligation.

First of all, it is necessary to discuss and clarify the exact nature of 'imperative language' itself, and also the logical characteristics of 'command' expressed by it.

We begin with Hare's view. According to Hare,⁴¹ imperatives form a part of prescriptive language which, in addition, contains value-judgements also. Confining ourselves to his view of imperatives alone, we see that he also points out that imperatives are a mixed bunch, and include in them, military orders, specifications, instructions, advice, requests etc., as pointed out by others. He covers all these functions by the single term 'command.' He says "I shall therefore follow the grammarians and use the single term command to cover all these sorts of thing that sentences in the imperative mood express"⁴² He further says that imperatives cannot be reduced to indicatives, as the naturalists do. The essential distinction between the two is that, while an indicative sentence is used for telling someone that something is the case, an imperative is used for telling someone to make something the case. Rightly enough, he criticises strongly the theories which try to reduce imperatives to indicatives strongly the theories which try to reduce imperatives to indicatives. Hare has done a great service in giving imperatives their rightfully proper and distinct place. Some distinctions which he makes in course of his arguments are important. He says that the processes of telling someone to do something, and getting him to do it, are quite distinct logically, from each other. This distinction he draws in connection with the view, as advocated by Carnap, Stevenson and others, that the function of command is to affect the hearer

40. More properly, it should be *judgements of command*. But in case of commands it has no distinct meaning.

41. *Language of Morals*, p. 3.

42. *Ibid.* p.4.

causally, or get him to do something. He aptly points out that this view is misleading because the function of command is only to tell somebody to do something, and not to get him to do it. The most important conclusion drawn by Hare from this is that commands, however much they differ from statements, are like them in this, that they consist in telling somebody something, not in seeking to influence him. It is because of this similarity of commands with statements that they can be said to belong to a rational, objective discourse, and to be governed by logical rules just as statements are. His attempt to establish rationality of moral discourse even in its imperative form is certainly very significant. Kant's doctrine of Categorical Imperative is an outstanding instance of rationality of moral imperatives.

We may summarize further, the logical characteristics of imperatives or command given by Hare. Firstly, sincerely assenting to commands involves (on the appropriate occasion and if it is within our power), doing something. Secondly, command may contradict one another and to avoid self-contradiction a command must observe certain logical rules. Thirdly, there are also entailment relations between commands. Universal imperative sentences together with indicative minor premisses can give rise to singular imperative conclusions. The rule is, "No imperative conclusion can be validity drawn from a set of premisses which does not contain at least one imperative."⁴³ Lastly, the difference between statements and commands lies in their neustics, the phrasitics being the same for both; as

Shut the door = Your shutting the door in the immediate future,
please.

Your are going = Your shutting the door in the immediate future, yes.
to shut the door.

The logical characteristics of a command given by Hare are primarily intended to show that the imperative moral discourse is as rational as the indicative discourse is. We, however, want to know the nature of command itself in some detail so as to determine whether the language of moral obligation is an imperative or command language. From this point of view, some points in

43. Ibid, p. 24.

Hare's view seem to be somewhat doubtful. Firstly, his placing imperatives along with value-judgements, under prescriptive language needs reconsideration. Commands, strictly speaking, are not mere prescriptions, but form a class by themselves, as they have a distinct force of their own. Secondly, his inclusion of all the functions performed by imperatives in the concept of command unnecessarily broadens the concept and makes it some what loose. 'Imperative' may be conceived broadly to include other functions along with command, but the concept of command itself can not be and need not be so widened as to include all the functions of imperatives. However, whether the concept of 'imperative' includes the concepts of advice, instruction and other so called functions of imperatives than command, is itself doubtful. As we have said earlier, strictly speaking, though imperative serve many purposes, the essential function of an imperative as a distinct concept is to express command. Other functions are 'contextual implications' so to say. Lastly, though commanding is telling someone to do something, yet there are ways and ways of telling, and therefore command can not be on par with advice, request, instruction and so on. Wellman⁴⁴ also concedes this. Mayo's⁴⁵ suggestion, however, that imperatives are not about any thing in the strict sense, on the ground that they are always about future acts, is not satisfactory, because, even the future acts have as much content as the past and the present ones. But its implication that, the field, of imperatives is limited only to actions which lie in the future, that is, to ante-eventum judgements only, is true of a command strictly conceived. To elucidate the nature of command farther, we have to see some other relevant factors also.

Rescher gives certain 'facts' of a command. He distinguishes between 'giving of a command' and the 'command given' of which the former is a performance. Further, a command, has its as source of issue in a person. Rescher says that this feature of a command is very important as it "serves to differentiate commands from moral imperatives and from 'commandments' which not only can but *prima facie* should be regarded as sourceless.⁴⁶ Every

44. Op. cit. 232. ".... none are strictly commands.

45. Mayc B. "The varieties of Imperatives", *Aristotelian Society. Suppl.* 31 : 165 - 67 (1957)

46. Op. cit. p. 10.

command, again, has a recipient, and there can be a chain of commands. Further important point is that the source should have some authority or, what he calls, entitlement for giving a command to its recipient. Moreover, a command generally has some justification, that is, the source should be in a position to provide a rationale of the command issued by him. A command can thus be questioned both as regards the authority of its source and his grounds for giving it. Consequently, there can be inappropriate commands which may be either improper or overreaching or absurd.

We have, upto no, dwelt on characterizing the essential nature of the concept of command as also the nature and function of the imperative language. Bringing all the threads of the above discussion together, we may, for our convenience, summarize its results. Though an imperative language may perform various functions, its essential function is to express commands. Command implies source, its authority, recipient, and, content. It belongs to rational discourse, being amenable to justification, contradiction and entailment. There is a distinction between giving a command and the command given, which puts emphasis on source. It is primarily confined to the field of acts yet to be performed, that is, roughly, future acts.

We may add to this characterization a few more points. Firstly, even though we may question the authority of the source and even the ground for the command given, Ultimately, however, a command is to be obeyed only because it is a command, and for no other reason. In other words, here is a consideration of ground to issue command on the part of the source, but, on the part of the recipient, there is no ground for obeying it, other than it is a command.⁴⁷ Secondly, this implies that in case of a command, there are no alternative from which to choose or decide; there is no scope for genuine choice or decision, no freedom. This is why fullfieldged imperative mood is used to express commands thus selecting its own appropriate language. Thirdly, it does not fit in the logic of command to speak of a 'generalised or universal command' (applicable to all for all times, so to say); that is to say, there is no universal principle behind

47. As Nowell Smith says. *But commands differ from ought sentences in that a man who gives a command is not logically bound to give any reasons why it should be obeyed.* (*Ethics* - p.191).

commands. This follows from the fact that their sources are personal, having personal authorities. Further, a command has very little to do with man's nature and aspirations by way of their satisfaction or achievement. And lastly, the interests of 'others', their claims and other social considerations are not at stake in a command-situation, as they are in a moral situation. That is, a command has its own narrow personal field of operation and is least concerned with outside consideration.

Now, our problem is whether the imperativ theory is adequate to explain the nature and function of the language of moral obligation. The answer, in anticipation, is that it is not. This is because the language of moral obligation is not purely imperative, nor is its function to express commands, pure and simple. It is more complex and therefore, more subtle. This becomes clear when we analyse the concept of moral obligation. The requirements of this concept are not satisfied by the imperative language and by 'command', expressed by it. Let us note the differences which will confirm our conclusion.

Moral obligation is a binding, no doubt, but it is a freely chosen binding, which is not the case with a command. There is some principle, some ideal, involved in the concept of moral obligation; it is not so with the concept of command, as the sources of command are personal. Both command and moral obligation possess a force of their own; but the force of a command is much stronger and compelling than that of a moral obligation though it is more than a mere prescription. Further, moral obligation has universal application which command lacks. This is because the ground of the authority of moral obligation has a universal appeal while that of command has only local and temporary appeal. A command as we saw, is least concerned with the consideration of others' interests, while, it is out of such considerations that moral obligations arise. Since, again, the choice of being bound by, or putting oneself under moral obligation is a free, rational choice, the moral commitment is not forced but comes from within. This means that it has a individual as well as social aspects. And this aspect touches the very heart of man's personality, his goals, and aspirations, his rationality, sociality and above all humanity. A command - situation is devoid of all such warm springs of action.

A command, further, is applicable in case of only future acts, and not past

ones. Though, the particular judgements of moral obligation also apply generally to future acts, still, obligations expressed in the form of universal laws or rules are applicable for all time, and therefore, post eventum ought -sentences are possible. This is a very important distinction. Similarly, while a command is given properly in the second person, judgements of moral obligation can be expressed in sentences in all the three persons.

The most basic difference between the concepts of command and moral obligation is that while the former has personal source, the latter has impersonal one, making it virtually sourceless. This source is not external, coming from within. this impersonal and inner authority of the source of moral obligation unmistakably distinguishes it from the concept of command which implies a personal source. Rescher points out this distinction quite clearly. In fact, he is ready to believe, at least *prima facie*, that the moral imperatives are sourceless. As he says, "Keep your promises' need not and indeed should not be regarded as a 'command of God' nor 'of society' nor 'of conscience'. Apart from far-fetched theories regarding the nature of their sanction, moral imperatives fail to be commands precisely because of their lack of a source".⁴⁸ Now, Rescher uses the term 'moral imperative' like 'keep your promises'. This is already in imperative mood; and even this is not to be taken as a command, pure and simple. If this is so, then the possibility of ought-sentences being commands is even more remote. In fact, in the foot-note⁴⁹ he distinguishes the commands from the point of view of deontic logic and says that moral imperative form a link between the two. The point is that the ought-sentences are not governed by the logic of commands but by their own logic.

The inadequacy of the imperative theory to explain the nature and function of the language of moral obligation becomes obvious when we consider the languages of command and moral obligation; the former is an imperative language while the latter is an ought-language." Speak the truth" is a command, while," you ought to speak the truth" is a judgement of moral obligation. The first thing that stikes us is the absence of imperative mood, so characteristic of command, in the ought-sentences. Obviously, "Speak the truth" and "You ought

48. Op. cit. p. 10. Of. Nowell-smith, P.H. : *Ethics*, pp. 1991 - 192.

49. No. 5, Loc. cit.

to speak the truth" are not the same, as "ought' along with the whole of its significance and force is absent in a straight formal command. 'Ought' is a much more complex concept than the concept of command. Thus, the imperative theory of moral language is inadequate to explain completely the nature and function of the language of moral obligation. We have proposed, in our theory, that moral obligations can be better conceived as 'demands' rather than as 'commands' and the language as a demand-language rather than an imperative language.

6. Prescriptive Theory :

Though better than any other theory, prescriptivism is still incapable of accounting for the essentials of the language and concept of moral obligation. It is indeed a bold thing to say this because even a casual glance at the recent ethical writings is sufficient to point out the general acceptance of the view that the language of moral obligation is a prescriptive language, that the function of ought-sentences is to prescribe a course of conduct. To bring out its inadequacy requires analysis of the concept of prescription, and also, reconsideration of its applicability to the language of moral obligation. We propose, here, to make a modest attempt at this.

According to the prescriptive theory, the language of moral obligation is prescriptive in nature and its function is to prescribe to a moral agent to do a certain act. A detailed and sound exposition of this theory, as applied to the concept of moral obligation, is found in Ladd's "The Structure of a Moral Code".⁵⁰ The concept of prescription is also elaborately discussed by Paul Taylor,⁵¹ and to some extent, by Hare⁵². We shall, therefore, base our views of prescriptive theory on its account given by them, especially, by Ladd and Taylor.

The concept of prescription, according to Ladd, accounts completely for both the morality and the obligatoriness of 'moral obligation.' He hopes, by means of this concept "to account for the so-called" normativeness' and 'ideality'

50. Ladd John, "The Structure of a Moral Code" Chs. V, VI and VII.

51. "Normative Discourse" Ch.7.

52. "Language of Morals" Ch.1

of moral conceptions, as well as the directive function associated with obligations in general."⁵³ For him, prescription is a generic term standing for directives which are given or stated when the most important moral question, 'What I ought to do?' is asked. The usual expression of a prescription is an ought-statement. Deliberate decisions are self-imposed prescriptions.

He gives three characteristics of prescriptions which are found in obligations, hypothetical or otherwise. Firstly, they are 'ideal' in the sense that they involve an imagined rather than an actual course of action. (This may be called 'an action in view'.) Secondly, they tend to be constraining, since they demand that contravening desires be suppressed. And finally, "they are directive in the sense that they tell us which way to act, and to which factors in the situation we should pay attention."⁵⁴ He says that it is these three characteristics he wishes to comprehend under ought-statements, statements of prescription respectively. And then, in the next sentence, he gives us almost a definition - "A prescription function as an action-in-view which is constraining and directive."⁵⁵ Thus the functions of prescriptions are directing, guiding and constraining. But, so far as the job of a moralist is concerned, he does not prescribe, but rather commands prescriptions. This modification is very significant, as it hints at the absence of a personal prescriber. It is also to be noted that a prescription is different from a command emanating from an authority.

Further, we have to distinguish between 'acceptance' of prescription and its' fulfilment'. In fact, the key-concept, according to Ladd, is 'acceptance of prescription'. to be exact. There are three distinct entities here, namely, prescriptino itself, its acceptance, and its fulfilment. though a prescription is meant not only to be accepted, but also to be fulfilled, yet the actual fulfilment of a prescription is a separate consideration by itself and is not directly involved in the meaning of the concept of prescription or of moral-obligation to be defined in terms of prescription. Again, prescriptions differ from proposition or fact-stating indicatives in that they are practical, that is, (a) they have direct relevance to action; and (b) their acceptance creates demands on the agent's will and

53. Ladd, Op. cit. pp. 84 - 85.

54. Op. Cit. p - 87.

55. Loc. cit.

entails some degree of expectancy of conduct in conformity with it.

As regards the linguistic form, prescriptive statements share in common with imperatives the peculiarity of having an objective which is distinct from a fact. But it is not wholly imperative for that matter because" the imperative formulation lacks the objective and impersonal character of prescriptive statement."⁵⁶ Thus according to Ladd prescriptions cannot be reduced to imperatives for two reasons: (a) the imperative is an accidental grammatical form or category the use of which is not essential; and (b) an imperative lacks the impersonality of prescriptions, which is communicated by putting them in the indicative.

Paul Taylor also has discussed this concept at same length and holds similar views in this respect. According to him, "To prescribe is to tell some one what he ought to do", and he goes on to say that' what he ought to do is the best alternative open to him".⁵⁷ He further clarifies that to prescribe an act to someone is not to force or compel him to do it. As he says, "prescribing is one way of giving advice, making a recommendation, or offering guidance".⁵⁸ Like all advising, prescribing is a rational act. It presupposes its own justifiability. Therefore, it must always be legitimate and proper for the person, to whom one prescribes to demand reasons for his doing the prescribed act. As for the function of prescriptive language, Taylor, says, that the function of an ought-sentence is, "simply to prescribe the doing of the act. It is to exert an influence on an agent's behaviour or choice, but a rational influence, not any influence".⁵⁹ This he says, perhaps, to distinguish its influence from emotive influence which is irrational. Taylor, thus, brings out emphatically, the objectivity and rationality of prescriptions.

In contrast to this somewhat restricted view, so to say, of the prescriptive language and the concept of prescription, we have a much broader view presented by Hare. According to him, prescriptive language is broad enough to cover both imperatives and value-judgements. He classifies⁶⁰ it follows :

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- 56. Op. cit. p. 95
 - 57. Taylor Op. cit. p. 207
 - 58. Op.cit. p. 209
 - 59. Op. cit. p. 211
 - 60. Hare, op. p.3

Prescriptive Language	(1) Imperative -	(a) Singular
		(b) Universal
....(2)	Value-Judgements -	(a) non-moral
		(b) moral.

According to him, "the word 'ought' is used for prescribing." This means that ought-language is a prescriptive language having two components of imperatives and value-judgements. There seems to be some ambiguity in his conception of 'ought'. Because, on his view, 'ought' performs both the functions of imperatives and value-judgements;" you ought to do X" can be both an imperative and a value-judgement. This is plainly not possible. There may be a logical relation of entailment as he himself says,⁶¹ between the two. But the single concept of 'ought' cannot be said to have both imperative and evaluative meaning at the same time, as Hare seems to suggest. Further, his conception of a value-judgement also is not clear. An ought-judgement like "I ought to do X" is, he says, a value-judgement. But while discussing 'evaluation' he discusses the concept of 'good' rather than that of 'ought'. In fact all the three concepts of prescription, imperative and value judgement, which he brings together, are quite distinct, though interrelated, concepts. We have already seen how Ladd himself says that prescriptions can not be reduced to imperatives, and also how he distinguishes them from propositions or indicatives. This means that the inclusion of imperatives under prescriptive language as is done by Hare, is not warranted. Further, a prescription also, is distinct in nature and function, from an evaluation. All this goes to show that his classification of prescriptive language is not acceptable. His general stand seems to be that 'ought' is a prescriptive concept; and that, value-judgements entail imperatives, wherein, by value-judgements, he means, in the context of 'ought', 'ought'-sentences used evaluatively. As he says, "I do no wish to claim that all ought-sentences entail imperatives, but only that they do when they are being used evaluatively."⁶²

Since, there is difference in the accounts of prescription given by Ladd

61. Op. cit p. 163, 'Value-judgements must be held to entail imperatives'.

62. Op. cit. p. 165

and Hare, the question is, which of these accounts is to be accepted as more satisfactory. We have already noted the difficulties in Hare's account. Primarily they are two : (a) prescriptions, however strong, cannot by themselves, become prescriptions, as Hare thinks. This, then, decides, the issue in favour of accepting Ladd's view that the nature of the language of moral obligation is prescriptive, and its functions is to direct, to restrain, to guide or to recommend, its character being ideal, constraining and directive.⁶³

Now, though the concept of prescription itself is thoroughly discussed by Ladd and Taylor, its applicability to the language of moral obligation seems rather to be taken for granted than demonstrated. Since our purpose is to consider this applicability critically, we have to analyse further the concepts of both prescription and obligation, and see whether the nature of functions of the language of moral obligation are explained quite adequately in terms of prescription.

According to the College Oxford Dictionary, the meaning of 'to prescribe' is two-fold. In one sense, it means 'to advise, or recommend' as in the case of a doctor prescribing medicine to a patient; in another sense, it means 'to command' or 'lay down or impose authoritatively', as in the case of an authority ordering his subordinate. Of these, the recommendatory use is more common, and perhaps, more proper too. Even on ladd's analysis the meaning of 'command' falls out, at least in the moral idiscourse. Hence, the chief function of prescription is to recommended, direct, advise and the like, as pointed out by Ladd.

When we further consider prescriptions in this capacity, we find that they possess certain broad characteristics, which Ladd and Taylor have not stated, but which are important, nonetheless, for our purpose. They may be stated as follows.

(a) A prescription is unilateral and not bilateral. By this is meant that a prescription does not necessarily involve consideration of 'other' or 'alters' to use Talcott Parson's⁶⁴ term as a matter or right or claim. 'Other' may

63. Cf. Wellman, Carl : *Language of Ethics*, Ch. IX.

64. Toards' a General Theory of Action.

be considered, but only in so far as they affect interests of the prescribed and the prescribee.

- (b) A prescription cannot be categorical but only hypothetical. Being of the nature of recommendation, it lacks the force which categoricity implies. It is much milder. The standard expression of this force is seen in a command or an imperative; and some what less strong expression is found in the moral 'ought'. This is because, perhaps a means-end consideration is explicitly involved in prescriptive-situation, implicitly and indirectly involved in a moral situation, and is not involved at all in an imperative situation.
- (c) Further, a prescription is not necessarily binding on the prescribed. It is an advice, in this respect. In other words, though a prescriber certainly wishes his prescription to be accepted and acted on, still, the prescribee is not under any obligation to accept and act on it.
- (d) Again, the ground of a prescription need not be objective. It may be backed by the prescriber's own personal reasons and prompted by his motives. Because of the personal factor prescriptions may vary, there being no objective principle of prescription.
- (e) And lastly, the source of a prescription like that of a command, is personal, and not impersonal. This characteristic of a personal source is common to both the prescriptions and the imperatives alike.

It will be seen that (d) and (e) differ from Ladd's account of prescription as objective and impersonal.

We have, now, a fairly comprehensive account of the nature and function of the prescriptive language and of the concept of prescription. As for the nature of the language of moral obligation, we have already discussed it, in sufficient detail, in the last chapter. It is not necessary, therefore, to repeat that discussion here; suffice to summarize the relevant results thereof.

We saw that it is in and through ought-sentences that the judgements, of moral obligation are expressed. There are many kinds of ought-sentences, ante-eventum and post-eventum, universal and particular, in first second and

third persons-singular and plural. The general upshot of the analysis of all of them was that, though the ought-language has other functions, which may be collectively described as 'prescriptive functions', namely, directing, recommending, advising, guiding etc., they are all secondary, and, in so far as the ought-language expresses genuine judgements of moral obligation, its chief function is to express moral binding in the form of 'demand'. We also suggested to call this function 'obligative function' and the language 'obligative language' to which belong the family of terms like requirement, expectation, owing, claim and demand etc.

Both ought-judgement and prescription 'tell someone to do something' 'like an imperative. But this is not a sufficient reason to call ought-language prescriptive. The fact is that, prescriptions, imperatives and judgements of obligation, all of them tell somebody to do something', they direct but the ways in which they 'tell', are quite distinct; the one recommends or advises, the other commands while the third demands. The characteristics, again, of the concept of prescription are not quite suitable for expressing the judgement of moral obligation. Ladd has given three characteristics of - 'ideal', 'restraining' and 'directive'. If we consider carefully, they are only partially applicable to moral obligations. 'Ideal', for example, is not applicable to post-eventum, ought-sentences. Further, 'restraining' does not mean only suppressing contravening desires, which is in negative meaning, but positively, it means 'binding' to do, in the moral discourse. There may or may not be 'suppressing', but 'binding' there is. Lastly, 'direction' does not exhaust the whole purport of 'obligation'; it is a broader term.

As noted above, there is a difference of opinion between Ladd and ourselves, so far as the objectivity and impersonality of prescriptions are concerned. Ladd says that they are objective and impersonal, thus differing from imperatives. But we have suggested the opposite view. Ladd holds this view because, perhaps, he takes, the applicability of the concept of prescription to the ought-language, for granted, rather than demonstrating it. That is why, it was easy for him to transfer the objectivity and impersonality of 'ought' to 'prescription'. But analysing the bare concept of prescription, we are led to conclude that prescription has always a personal source, like advising, recommending etc., and further, like them, it need not be necessarily objective.

If this is true, then the difference between 'ought' and 'prescription' becomes obvious. Overlooking the possibility of this difference, Ladd (and Taylor also) assumes that 'ought' is a prescriptive concept while, in fact, it is an obligative concept. This is clear from the function, called prescriptive, enumerated by Taylor himself namely, giving advice, making a recommendation, or offering guidance all of which imply a personal source.

That the prescriptive theory (the central concept of which seems to be 'should' rather than 'ought') is inadequate to explain the nature and function of the language of moral obligation. It becomes even clearer when we consider the characteristics of the concept of moral obligation, in comparison with those of the concept of prescription. Obligation is bi-lateral while prescription is unilateral. Further, moral obligation is categorical, or at least can be categorical, while prescription can not be so. Again moral obligation is necessarily binding while prescription is not. And lastly, the source of moral obligation is impersonal, while that of prescription is personal. Similarly, the ground of moral obligation is necessarily objective, as it involves reference to some principle, while that of prescription may not be objective as there is no necessary reference to a principle determining prescriptions. This, however, does not mean that prescriptive discourse is not rational. Reasons may be asked, but the terms in which they are given may differ from those in which reasons are given in moral discourse.

Thus, the concepts of prescription and obligation (especially moral), are quite distinct concepts, and that it is not proper to interpret the one in terms of the other, particularly, obligation in terms of prescription which lacks in its force. We are, therefore, led to conclude that, the prescriptive theory is to adequate to explain, satisfactorily, the nature and function of the language of moral obligation. We have, therefore, to seek for some other adequate concept in terms of which, the concept of moral obligation can be satisfactorily explained. And, it turns out to be the concept of 'demant'.

We have completed the discussion of the Descriptive, Emotive, Evaluative, Imperative and Prescriptive theories, with a view to see how far they are adequate to explain, satisfactorily, the nature and function of the language of moral obligation. And the conclusion of the whole discussion is that none of

them is adequate enough. This is not to say, however, that they are all completely false or irrelevant. To judge among theories is very difficult, to judge categorically is still more difficult, almost impossible. We judge only comparatively, and, if necessary and if we can, improve upon the existing theories. All the theories, which we have considered, do contain a substantial element of truth in them. They suffer not from untruth but from partial truth. Similarly, what they exclusively emphasise is not unimportant but of secondary importance, since they fail to do justice to the full force of 'ought'. The elements of description, emotion, evaluation, command and prescription emphasised by the respective theories, are certainly present in the vast and complex field of moral discourse; but so far as the concept of moral obligation is concerned, they are of secondary importance only. Ought-sentences in a way describe the fact of obligation; they also evince favourable emotive response and express the attitude of approval; similarly, they imply evaluation, have the force of categorical imperative and also prescribe a particular act or a course of conduct. But all these functions are secondary. Their essential function, as claimed by us, is to express moral demand.

These various theories have two-fold significance. Firstly, they clearly bring out the vastness and complexity of moral life and discourse. And, secondly, they remind us that the manifold elements emphasised exclusively by them, are, all part and parcel of the complex moral discourse; they have their own place in it. Only that, we should be able to give them their proper place. Accordingly, we have tried, in these pages, to give the concept of demand its proper place in connection with the concept and language of moral obligation.

7. Analysis of Model

We will, now, consider the models of ought-language suggested by some moral philosophers and see whether they are applicable to the judgement of moral obligation.

(I) In his "Ethics and Language", Stevenson suggests a model according to which the ought-sentence 'You ought to do X' can be meaningfully transformed, with necessary modification, into "I disapprove of your leaving X undone; do so as well."⁶⁵ The model has two elements as Stevenson himself

65. Op.cit.p. 21

says, viz, speaker's disapproval of X being left undone, and an imperative commanding the addressee to do the same, that is, disapprove etc. I do not know why Stevenson chose to use the negative form, when the ought-sentence is clearly positive. Its positive form will be "I approve of your doing X, do so as well"

The first 'approval' part is the 'emotive' aspect and the second is the imperative-which is addressed in order to change or intensify the attitudes of the hearer ('emotive' aspect describes the attitudes of the speaker). This model, then, is the expression of the 'attitude theory' according to which, the function of an ought-sentence is two-fold; (a) to describe or express attitude towards the doing of an action by the hearer, and (b) to evoke the same attitude in hearer or change or intensify it towards his own doing the actions.

Some points are to be noted in this connection. (i) The attitude expressed is not towards the action X, but towards the action X, but towards 'doing it by the hearer' (attitude to X is to be inferred from this indirectly). (ii) Consequently, the thing towards which the hearer's attitude is to be changed or intensified or created is not the action X, but one's own doing it. (iii) All that the imperative aspect aims at is 'change in, or intensification of, hearer's attitude, may be, towards doing X. This is, in other words, to ask to do about X, not to do X proper.

If this is a true understanding of Stevenson's model, then it is evident that it cannot work because it is not a satisfactory analysis of the language of moral obligation for the following reasons :

- (1) Moral Obligation is not concerned merely with attitudes, but primarily with doing X.
- (2) It is a combination of emotive and imperative languages. If both these kinds are insufficient to connote moral obligation, then this model also fails.

The approval in this model is only of the speaker, that is, of an individual, while in moral discourse it is believed that if an act is good or a duty etc., it will be approved by all. This universal element is lacking in this model.

- (4) His original model is negative, which does not fit in with a positive moral obligation.
- (5) Approval is certainly a precondition of doing a thing but mere approval is not sufficient to arouse one to do it.
- (6) It lacks the capacity to express the binding force, impelling or 'demanding' the agent or the hearer to do thing, which is the characteristic of moral obligation.
- (7) This model now we discuss is the model which is proposed by Hare in his *Language of Morals*. In the last chapter he gives us an analytical model for various ethical terms. I shall discuss his model for 'ought'. Distinguishing, first, between the two parts of a sentence, as 'phrastic' and 'neustic', which in the case of universal imperative sentence, are "All P's being Q, please", he defines the artificial 'ought' as follow :

"If we take a proper universal sentence 'All P's being Q, please', we may, instead of the latter sentence, write 'All P's ought to be Q'⁶⁶. This is a definition of a universal' ought'.

Comparing this with the analysis he gives of a command' as for example, 'Shut the door' is equal to 'you shutting the door in the immediate future, please,'⁶⁷ we see that there is no significant difference between the two except some modifications that are necessary to make it applicable to universal form of ought. Even his further clarification about particular ought, namely, that it should be analysed through universal ought, does not affect the above equation, of command with ought-analysis. This means that, for Hare, 'ought' expresses primarily a command, though there are other uses of ought. Of course, Hare is aware that this model does not do justice to all the uses of natural 'ought'. We have to consider, whether even this analysis is sufficient or not.

According to this model, "You ought to do X" is equal to 'If you do not do X, you will be breaking a general' ought-principle' to which I hereby subscribe"

The two forms-universal and particular seem to be different. Instead, we

66. pp. 190-191.

67. pp. 17-18

could have" You ought to do X" as equal to "Your doing X, please" (command type). I do not know why this command form is used only for the universal and not for the particular ought-sentences. Since 'ought' means the same in the two cases, he should have used the same model basically.

Let us consider both the models.

- (A) You ought to do X = Your doing X in the immediate future, please.

In connection with this model the following points arise:

(1) In this model, why the neustic 'please' is used and not other ones such as required, commanded, demanded, etc.? Because 'please' does not connote a 'command'. If, however, it does so' by definition', I shall agree for convenience.

(2) It is applicable only to future acts. This difficulty Hare overcomes by giving a tense-free or neutral model as -" Your doing X, on so and so date, at such time, etc, please". This is not necessary because command applies only to the future acts and though, ought is wider than that, his imperative theory would not admit it.

(3) This model does not add to our understanding of the concept of 'ought' or 'moral obligation', because it is just a transformation of ought sentence in a refined? form. The only new thing we learn is that the difference between descriptive or indicative and imperative or command lies, not in the phrasic, but in the neustics. But this again amounts to saying just that command is different from the indicative. This is so because, the phrasic etc. is a refined form and not an evolved one out of analysis.

(4) 'Please' does not connote the force of moral obligation or ought.

(5) If the imperative or command-theory of the ought language is rejected, this model also fails.

(B) You ought to do X = Your not doing x breaks a genral ought-principle to which I hereby subscribe.

In connection with this version of the model, the follwing points may be made :

(1) This looks like a syllogism in a concealed form and whose major premise is taken for granted. It is -

'You ought not to break a general ought-principle to which I subscribe.'

Your not doing X breaks it.

Therefore, you ought to do X.'

It is evident from the above syllogism that the two sides of the equation in the model correspond to the conclusion, and the minor premise respectively. This cannot be maintained. Moreover, this is not the meaning of moral obligation but a reasoning to support the moral judgement 'you ought to do X'.

(2) It has a negative element while the ought sentence is positive.

(3) The reference, here to a general ought-principle, though proper, is incomplete, because, obedience to it is just taken for granted, 'why' should one obey a general ought-principle, the 'why' of the principle is not stated.

(4) 'I hereby subscribe' gives it a personal colour while obligation is universal.

(5) It lacks the 'binding' force of 'ought' and leaves room for an option for not doing in the sense of not accepting the general principle itself but 'demand' is not recognised here as the meaning of moral obligation.

8. Conclusion

From the above discussion of the two models, it becomes clear that they are both inadequate to bring out completely the nature, function and significance of the judgement of moral obligation. The complexity involved in the concept, and consequently in the judgement, of moral obligation cannot be brought within the ken of these models. Hence the necessity of new model capable of doing justice to the complexity of the judgement of moral obligation. We have tried to incorporate in its formulation all the essential constituents of the concept of moral obligation, or what may be called, the referents of the obligative language.