

Ethics
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Module No. #01
Lecture No. #33
Some Ethical Issues (Applied Ethics)
Discussing Peter Singer's 'Famine Affluence & Morality' - Part - 2

We talked about assumptions, or the end of the assumptions, in the last class. And, talked about proximity, that well, how in spatial and relational terms, that the event becomes immaterial.

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Assumptions

- ... suffering and death from lack of food, shelter, and medical care are bad.
- if it is in our power to prevent something bad from happening, without thereby sacrificing anything of comparable moral importance, we ought, morally, to do it
- The above principle is crucial, apparently appealing but implying great changes, if applied.
 - Proximity, (both in spatial or relational terms) from the event becomes immaterial
 - The actions (assumed or actual) of others, 'similarly placed' ought not to make a difference to one's actions

The other aspect, we need to talk about a little bit, which said, that well, the actions of others, assumed or actual, similarly placed, ought not to make a difference to one's actions. So, what it is simply saying, that well, how others react to a situation, how others react to a moral requirement, will influence or determines, how one agent's reaction to it.

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Numbers lessen obligation

- As in the described situation, there are a large number of agents who could act to make a difference: but does this possibility reduce the moral onus on each agent?
- Why should I give more than anyone else in my situation?
- If everyone in my situation makes a contribution of XX currency units, the crisis is solved. so, I should contribute XX?
- The premise is in the form of an hypothesis whereas the conclusion is given a factual status – that's the fallacy!
- Utilitarian reading: 'if everyone does what he ought to do, the result will not be as good as it would be if everyone did a little less than he ought to do, or if only some do all that they ought to do. Excess sacrifice would be a waste – unnecessary suffering caused, including the deficiency at the donor's end!
- 'The result of everyone doing what he really ought to do cannot be worse than the result of everyone doing less than he ought to do, although the result of everyone doing what he reasonably believes he ought to could be.

Now, this is a crucial, or this is the basis of the next, or the same claim, that he makes, that well, numbers lessen obligation. So, now for a famine in Bangladesh, there are numerous countries that can pitch in, to make a difference. So because, the moral responsibility is perhaps divided, into the number of agents and country. So, it lessens the obligations on an individual country, or an individual citizen. And, the question comes forth, that well, why should I give more than anyone else in my situation.

As in the described situation, there are a large number of agents, who could act to make a difference. But, this possibly, reduces the moral onus on each agent. So, numbers lessen obligation. Now, what are we thinking about this. That, we started talking about it, that well, and this example in the article, that is given, that well, a drowning child. Now, if you are the only one, walking across the drowning child, perhaps you are obliged, or morally required to, go and rescue the child.

But, if there are many people around, that lessens your obligation. Now, Singer's claim is that, well, first he says that, if everyone in my situation, makes a contribution of some currency units, the crisis is solved. So, I should contribute this much. The premises in the form of a hypothesis, whereas the conclusion is given as a factual status. So clearly, Singer is not in favour of the theory, that numbers lessen obligation.

But, it is a matter of common practice, that well, numbers do lessen obligation, where responsibilities pinned down on an individual, or at a limited agency, then the obligation is stronger. But, when it is put out, what so. When we have a random call for volunteers, all across an organisation, require the moral obligation for anyone to come up, is much lesser. Whereas, if we have a pinpointed call for volunteers, from a particular section of the organisation, perhaps the reaction is much stronger.

This is the common. So, Singer is in a way doing, what philosophers in the conventional sense are supposed to do. Revise the current standards. So, the current practices and standards are, that well, numbers do lessen obligation. And, Singer is of the opinion that, no, numbers do not lessen, and should not, need not lessen obligation. And, the fallacy that he points out, is that well, the premises in the form of a hypothesis, whereas the conclusion gives a factual claim.

So, the premises, that well, if there are 20 people to help out this, or there are 100 nations to help out Bangladesh. And, each one contributes, say, a fixed amount of resources, it should be done. And therefore, as and in one of those 100 nations, we are obliged to pay, only that much. But then, well, what he points out as, that the premise is in the form of hypothesis, that if everyone contributes, and therefore I should contribute this much.

So, that is the fallacy, points out. The Utilitarian reading, is that, if everyone does what you ought to do, the result will not be as good as it would be, if everyone did a little less than, we ought to do. Or, if only some do, all that they ought to do. Excess sacrifice, would be a waste. Unnecessary suffering caused, including deficiency caused, at the donor's end.

So, one common claim has been, that well, if each one of us is, such a passionate fanatic contributor, or takes this moral responsibility so seriously, it would perhaps lead to a generation of excessive resources for the affected. And, that would again, slowdown. In the Utilitarian moral calculus, it would cause a deficiency in the donor itself, so if everybody is passionate enough.

Now, the way the world works, what Singer points out is, that well, there are very few people or few agencies, which are so passionate. And, it is rarely that resources are generated, exceeding

the requirements. But then, we have some of examples, even in the world today. Where, we find that well, a properly known calamity, has many times attracted, much more resources than, what is required for its resolution. There have been cases like this.

And then, there leads to be an accumulation of excess resources, which comes at the cost of excessive sacrifice, at the end of the donors. And, almost a distribution problem, at the point of the calamity. So, Singer addresses his own critic, saying that well, the claim is that, the result of everyone doing, what he really ought to do, cannot be worse, than the result of everyone doing, less than what he ought to do. Although, the result of everyone doing, what he reasonably believes, he ought to, could be.

So, simply put, that well, if you all do, go by our moral conviction, and do much more, then it will bring about, in the Utilitarian calculus, a lot of suffering or a deficiency at the donor end. And, that would be unnecessary. Because, you will find, the resources required at the end of the catastrophe or calamity, far less than what is being generated.

“Professor - Student conversation starts” so, what do you guys think of this. This is when, this critic happens. That well, if everybody starts doing, or living up to their moral duty, then it turns out that, more resources are generated. And, it is almost like, at the cost of the donors. It is almost like, he is trying to bring about, however trivial it sounds, almost a logical problem with having, or if everybody succumbs to the call, for passionate donation, that Singer is talking about.

He himself provides. Yes. It is not that, everyone acts simultaneously. Yes. And, so different people donate at different point. And, as time goes on, the calculations will show that the amount, that is required is changing. And so, at any point, when a person is donating, they would attend to what is required, and respond accordingly. So, in reality, it does not work out like that. That, everyone donates a fixed amount. Excels. Yes. Yes.

And, that if everyone donates very phonetically, do the most of their possibility, the accumulation of excessive resources. So, it is almost like, when you call for group of volunteers, or call for a

donation, you really know that intuitively, know that perhaps, your collection will not be as much as you expect. Or, the call will not, or will rarely materialise in to 100% call for volunteers, or contribution, that it will always be less than, what is expected.

So, if everyone goes overboard, the logical problem, is that well, we accumulate much more. And, which is an unnecessary burden. Everyone does, what they really ought, supposed to do. Yes. Yes. But, it is a problem, that it can have practical solutions. That, the receiving agency, can stop receiving, as they have received the amount, or the amount that is needed. It can say, stop donating now. Yes, that we have had enough, and we require no more. Okay.

I would also think that, it is a kind of a, in principle trivial logical objection raised, that well, that everybody going overboard. Now, good that you made the correction between, overboard and doing one's duty. Because, that brings us to, what we are going to talk next. Is this particular difference between, yeah? When we are talking about the second point, is like that, am I should give more, than anyone else in my situation. I think, he is, here talking about the, very psychological stand point.

It happens like, as a human being, they are thinking that, why should I give more than others. It is like, it is our psychological attitude. And, if you apply the third point, that everyone in my situation makes a contribution of some currency, then the crisis is solved. So, I should contribute some currency. So, here, he is talking about the majority. He is not saying that, everyone there means like, (Vocalised voice 09:33 to 09:35) he is talking about the majority.

And, if the majority will give something, then automatically, it creates a balance between the society, poor group, as well as the rich group. And, he is saying that, if may be, it is a small currency, a small amount, still it creates a huge amount, in the last moment. Then, we can contribute this amount to the, like the society, which are facing their family problem. So, I think, he is trying to collaborate, or he is trying to adjoin, relationship between the poor as well as the rich group

And here, he is not indicating that, why I should. It is the psychological step. And, in the third

one, I think, he is trying that, even if it is the small amount, then you have to care. That, does not mean that the small amount, it will not create something else. But, it can also help to eradicate suffering from our society. When you are talking about like, Jenny Jennifer, and like small drop of water is most important, to create a huge amount.

Yes. Perhaps, let me put an analogy for the question, that he is putting forth. Suppose, we are a class of three. Okay. And, one of us, falls sick. And, we are all, far away from home. And, we require medical attendance. Okay. Now, there are 24 hours in a day. And, if one of us fall sick, there are two people, who can render the assistance. And so, each one does 12 hours.

So, Singer's claim is, that well, if there are two people, who are going to help or assist the patient. And, there are 24 hours in a day. So, I should do my 12 hours. And, with that 12 hours, I should walk away. So, this question, that if everyone in my situation, makes a contribution of fixed unit, then the crisis is solved. So, in principle, if each one of the two people, who are well, stand assistance for 12 hours each, then a day is covered.

So, assuming that, that is an assumption. So, when he points out in the fourth bullet, that well, the premises in the form of a hypothesis. So, what is the premise here, that well. If two attendance gives 12 hours each, a day of attendance is done. Therefore, what is the factual conclusion. Therefore, I should give 12 hours, or stand 12 hours of assistance. But, would that be the case.

Now, that assumes, that everyone else will donate that much. So, Singer's call is that, well, this is not a justifiable claim. Because, it starts as a hypothesis. That well, surely, if the second person does not turn up, the first attendant perhaps would not walk away, trying to think, that well, if both do 12 hours each. 24 hours is covered. A day is covered. So, let me do my 12 hours, and then, that is the obligation of the other.

But, Singer's claim is that well, why should we excel, or exceed, in what is an average expectation from us. So, the fallacy here, is that well, we are assuming that, everybody will contribute. May be, the other person wo not turn up. So, would you abandon the patient, and go

back home. May be, he is talking about, the concept of duty in one sense like, as a human being, we have some relation to other human being. So, we have to do our duty properly.

So, yes. His call is that, the duty should not be measured, in terms of the other agents. That well, I will do, as much as I can do. So, he is making a very fundamental claim, that he is isolating the individual. That, there is a crisis, and I am an agent. How others react to it, should not influence my decision. Yeah. So, it is almost a very, a new Western basis of human functioning. That well, I am an individual. And, how others react to a situation, that does not affect me, should not in turn affect me.

So, if I am to do, what I need to do, or what is the most I can do, then let me do that, irrespective of what others do, or what others are expected to do, or what others can do. Again, it will be a problematic for him also. Because, he is coming under the Utilitarianism. For utility, sometimes we have to sacrifice, our own like goodness, our own happiness, for others. That is exactly, what he is saying. That, why not sacrifice, as much as possible.

Because, when the question is that, if everyone in my situation, makes this much contribution, so everyone sacrifices a little bit of happiness, to take care of the problem there. So, that is one way of working, that well. If there is a famine in Bangladesh, so I should. If India has 100 crore citizens. So, each citizen gives a one rupee. And therefore, Bangladesh gets 100 crores, which is assumed enough to satisfy, the situation in Bangladesh.

So, I should contribute one rupee. So, sir, each and everyone is talking about duty prospective, that I have to give only one rupee. But, when he is talking about like donation, or the charity, I think, it is like one's private, like interest, to give something, or some more money. Well. He does not regard it as a private interest. In fact, when we talk about duty and charity, he is asking that, you must give, as much as you can give. As much as possible.

But, why? (Vocalised voice 15:18 to 15:35) it is because, both the claims, the premise and the conclusion, do not belong to the same category of statements. Whereas, the premises in hypothesis, and the conclusion is a factual claim. So, when we suffer with, if and then. So, when

the premises itself is a hypothesis, the truth claim of the premise, is not there.

Because, a hypothesis is neither true, nor false. So, basing on that, how can one make a conclusion as, true or false. After an analogy, if the premises, if it rains, the floor will be wet. Now, if the antecedent is not satisfied, if it does not rain, can we say independently, that the floor will be, the ground will be wet. I cannot say that. The ground will be wet, only if the antecedent condition is satisfied, that if it rains. So, only everyone in modern consideration, makes that contribution.

And, it is time to prove that. So, stronger rebuttal is that, well, the premises does not have a truth value. The premises have to have a truth value, to connect to the conclusion. Now, shall I ask one question. When he is talking about the utility, he is talking about, what type of utility. Is there any specific utility, he is talking about? Because, there are different types of utility. So, which group of utility, he is talking about, in this article. Okay. He is bringing about alleviation of suffering.

So, the standard Utilitarian is to bring about, happiness of the majority. Which is also understood as, alleviation of suffering, for the maximum people. So, utility is, what resources. Say, he talks about, downright money. That, what happiness money can get you as an extra, as a citizen, or as a comparatively prosperous and wealthier citizen, why not spare that much of utility, and pour it into the elevation of suffering, elsewhere.

I agree with you. But, my question is that, which theory, he is applying here. Because, there are many branches, or many sub theory of Utilitarianism also there. So, which utility theory, he is applying exactly. What kind of utility theories, are you talking about? Unlike classical utility, or Bentham, or modern utility, or marginal utility, which utility, exactly he is talking about. Okay. What you would perhaps like to, look at it this way, that he is expressing his views, which can be classified into a theory.

It is perhaps not, that there is an abstract theory, and he is trying to fit in the raw input data, or the empirical data, that he is receiving, and putting it onto the situation, and trying to get a

solution. Right. So, it is not that, he wants to be a Utilitarian philosopher of this particular model, and thereof he is finding this kind of a solution. It is rather, the other way around, that he is trying to find the solution. It is the eternal relation between, theory and practice.

So, when I say that, I am a Kantian, what do I mean. Therefore, every problem that Kantian rules are, is it that the way I think, is similar to the way, Kant has put forth his theories. Two terminals are totally different. Because, when you are talking about the first one, it is basically depending upon the Kant's exact wordings, he mentions. And, when you are saying that, I am (()) (19:05) that means there is something Kantian principles, with your principles. So, there is a difference.

And, I think, maybe, he is talking about the Quantitative Utilitarianism. Because, he giving emphasis on quality, rather than, I think. How is he emphasising quality. Quantity. I am talking about quantity. How is he emphasising quantity. Quantity like, majority of the people. Like, huge amount of money is needed for, eradicate the suffering. I think, his basic emphasis is on quantity, rather than quality.

But again, what the problem between Quantitative and Qualitative Utilitarian's was faced, was perhaps resolved in favour of, that human happiness, cannot have numbers attached to it. Right. No. Now, he is talking about, that there is difference. So again, he creates a difference between, qualitative and quantitative. For Utilitarian's both is necessary. And, for qualitative like, reading a book, is qualitative. Alleviation of suffering.

He is trying to create that, there is a hierarchy. Hierarchy in the sense, there is higher happiness and lower happiness. And, in a higher happiness, he is talking about that, reading, or meditation, like that. And, the lower that, watching movie, and other things. Which is basically from the senses. The sixth sense organ, that is the mind. So, I think, he is basically emphasis on the lower category of the. Who? Singer's. Yes.

Because, basically he is not talking about the, higher quality of happiness. Right. Okay. In fact, towards the end of idiocy, makes a point that well, alleviation of suffering, or basic animal existence, is definitely a part of the utility. So, Singer would not be saying, that well. That the

pleasure I get, say, if you want to spare a certain amount of your resources. I would have bought a book and read it. And, had that higher-order pleasure, from that. Instead of that, let me put it into famine relief.

And therefore, I deprive myself of that pleasure of higher-order pleasure, as to say, compare to the basic requirements of survival, that happen for famine relief. But here, I think the distinction made is very clear. That, when we will talk about, what he requires, calls as marginal utility. And, he particularly targets the, consumeristic environment, prevailing in his times, and continuing till now. In fact, spreading quite a bit.

That well, if one is agrees to spend more on, say clothes, or a luxury, that are not necessary. Instead of spending that resources on famine relief, then one is doing something, which is wrong. And, that is a very clear calculus, that he is mentioning. Because, the use of a Utilitarian calculus is when, it is in the same domain of, say, comfort of between two individuals. Say, your book, versus my book. So, why should you spare your resources, for me to buy a book, or the other way round.

But here, it is a very clear indication that, the luxury in a consumeristic society of a developed country versus, basic survival in an underdeveloped world. So, he does not even enter, that well, is that, is there a debate, in weighing these two. He finds that as, clearly resolved. Yes. Do not these two different matters, all into two different lists of Utilitarian consideration. On the one hand, we have a list of things, that bring about, that positively create happiness. And, on the other hand, we have a list of things, that remove sufferings.

So, bind a book, or bind anything, any consumeristic object for oneself, falls under the first list. Thus, acting to reduce suffering, due to famine, falls under the other list. Another list. How do you compare items? Yes. There is no requirement for a compare, because the division is clear. Where, if it were in the same domain, say, your comfort versus my luxury, or one agent's comfort versus another agent's comfort, is there, where we required to perhaps have a quantitative, which is quite outmoded.

By accept in the market-based economic way of understanding the world order, where we would try to. Because, when we associate numbers with satisfaction, it becomes very easy to compare, the satisfaction index achieved. So, but in this case, I think, we do not even have to enter that venture. Because, there are two diametrically opposite poles. One is basic survival. And, the other is an optimal lifestyle, or an enhanced lifestyle. We can apply also the first, benefit analysis in this case. How about benefits and (Vocalised voice 24:04 to 24:05)

But well, he has nowhere implied a numerical equivalent of that, how much would you rate, say, suffering as -7, and consumerist lifestyle as +3. (Vocalised voice 24:15 to 24:29) yes, that will bring about, the alleviation of suffering. Okay. Is he like, giving the emphasis on minority. Because, generally we are talking about the Utilitarian thing. And, we are generally, we are not ignoring the minority.

So here, I think, it is the opposite. No, here in fact, Utilitarian has always been critiqued, as ignoring the minority. Here, I think, he is giving the emphasis on minority. That means, minority, here I mean, family. Well. No. Not minority. It is perhaps more on, who is the well-resourced, from the ill resourced. So, the people, who are comfortably affluent, and people who are at the brink of survival. Yes, you add something to that.

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Duty & Charity:

- Questioning the traditional moral categorization
- Singer points out that the traditional distinction between duty and charity as untenable.
- the charitable person is praised but the one who is not, is not condemned - conspicuous consumption alongside penury does not raise eyebrows - the Indian experience with inequality.
- 'Supererogatory' acts debunked - it is not okay, but positively wrong not to perform the hitherto regarded 'supererogatory' acts

I do not think, alleviation of suffering, is a low order thing. So, in the second list, where we

consider, things that have to do with, to remove suffering. The more primal, and fundamental the suffering is, the higher it will be on that list. So, corresponding to higher order pleasures, in this first list, you would have higher order alleviation. Well. Lower and higher order, would not that way be as much as an, hierarchy as a necessity. So, that we need food, shelter, and these things, as essentials.

So, when they say lower order, is basic minimum. But, it would hold definitely much more value over, what he calls, higher-order. Because, after your lower order requirements are fulfilled, then the question of higher-order, happiness comes around. So, after your well-fed healthy, and have a comfortable place to stay, then comes your search for a, higher-order of happiness. Yeah, he is talking about that, net balance between. Yes. Net balance between. Okay.

For him, this would not be an, issue at all, perhaps. My understanding of Singer is that, he makes it very clear, that it is only that, in fact he stops his argument by saying that, anybody who disagrees with me, need not read further. That is a very unambiguous claim. That, if you try to quantify suffering due to famine, death, and disease, versus an enhanced lifestyle, then I am not talking to you. So, he takes that, is almost axiomatic.

But, let us come back here. Now, he talks about this, notion of duty and charity. This is what one, I would see, a deeper, almost a Metaethical claim that, Singer does. That, we will talk about, later also. He is trying to revise, the current moral standards. So, what does he do. He first questions it that, we have a traditional moral categorisation. And, what is this categorisation. He targets the distinction between, duty and charity. We have certain things, understood as duty, and certain as charity.

But, he finds this distinction, as untenable. The charitable person is praised. But, the one, who is not, is not condemned. Conspicuous consumption alongside penury, does not raise eyebrows. In fact, here I would like you to reflect, on the Indian experience with inequality. That, when we make huge donations, or when any person makes a donation, he is appreciated, or is praised. But, when somebody does not, who is capable of making a donation, does not make a donation, that does not raise eyebrows.

So, that is what is, perturbing Singer. And, particularly if you look at it, in the Indian experience, post liberalisation, we have had a phenomenal level of affluence, coming into the country, which exists alongside, with perhaps poverty levels of sub Saharan Africa, with affluent levels of the Forbes-500 in the world. So, if Singer looks at this situation, in the Indian milieu today, he would be angry at people, that something is wrong with your moral standards.

Because, in land of poverty, in such a penury alongside with such affluence, says that, there is something wrong with our moral categorisation. That well, conspicuous consumption, alongside with penury, does not raise eyebrows. So, it does not. So, it is still considered, that well, if a very wealthy man makes 10% of his assets into charity, as a very renowned, or a greater thing to happen. But whereas, what Singer would say is that, because he does not make 50% or 70%, how much he can spare comfortably, that should raise eyebrows.

So, it should actually be condemned, that he is making such a small contribution. Sir, do you think that, he is indicating only the Indian experience with the inequality. No. No. That is my reading of it. What did you think that, why it is like necessary? It brings about. Because, what Singer at that time. Now remember, this is 1971. And, the world is not so well connected, as it is today.

But, even then, Singer has a problem that, people in developed countries are spending, a huge amount of resources for the development of a supersonic jet, versus not funding a famine affected country. But, in the Indian milieu today, this contrast is even more clear. Because, right in the same city, same town, if you would find a plush affluent colony, surrounded by a group of shanties. So, this is, even if Singer may although, he does not excuse, but he may say that well, we have a distance, that proximity is making a psychological influence.

In the Indian experience, proximity is not an excuse at all. Because, right outside plush living colony, you will find a bunch of shanties. So, in fact, you may say that the ambit of proximity, has shrunk even further, and physically. So, for the Western world, it is still available, through electronic means of communication. But, in the Indian milieu, it is right out there. You have to

just step out and see. So, seeing that, he is saying that well, anybody who is not donating significantly, needs to be seen as an immoral person, not just as a moral person, who does not choose to do charity.

So, that is the kind of. So, this whole notion of supererogatory acts, that well. Supererogatory acts are the acts, that very good if you do it, but nothing wrong if you do not do it. Now, what do you think of these kinds of acts, that well. Say, if somebody donates significantly, then that is a very good thing, that the person is doing. But, if somebody does not, it is not condemnable. Now, Singer's claim is to bring back, that well, somebody who is not, is to be seen as doing something wrong.

So, this is what, he is doing. What context, you are talking about the duty here. Pardon. In what contexts, you are talking about the concept of duty here. Okay. In the current moral scenario. So, when we say, what is the moral categorisation, what is conventional. Give you a contextual example, which will ease questioning the context. 30 years back, in a classroom, students were expected to stand up, when the teacher entered. Say, in an Indian classroom.

That was a moral tenet, at that time. The moral tenet today is that; it is not required. That time means, you are talking about the India, or all over the world. While I talk about the Indian classroom. Right. So, every society has its moral dictates, which is at a time. Now, think of some moral dictates, which were earlier there, and not here. And, prayers. Or, prayers also. Or, think of various courtesies and acts. So, addressing the teachers as, sirs and madams. Right. Or, even say, asking (Vocalised voice 32:36 to 32:37)

Yes. Asking for a glass of water, to a stranger in an unknown household, or unknown place. So now, you would be expected, that well, you better go to the nearest shop, and buy your water. So, that is in fact, if I may just have interrupt a small. There is. Yes. Anecdote, a voluntary association in Haridwar. Once told me about this situation, questioning civilisation, that whom do you call a civilised person.

Now, imagine, you as a city dweller, who has gone up to the mountains, lost in the mountain.

And, you reach one place in village. And, you ask them for little food to eat. You have lost your way. What will in probability, what they would do. They would do is, not only feed you, perhaps provide you a bed to sleep. And, the next day, they will try to put you on a bus back home. Now imagine, the same person, has come for your city, and he is got lost, and he is rung your bell.

If your security guard does not turn him away, you would, telling that well, how dare you bother me, about this thing. This is questioning. This is, yes. This is questioning that, whom would you call a civilised person. Now, the one, who was up there in the hills helping you, or one who is right here. So, coming back, that is what in moral standards, changed over time. And, Singer's powerful claim is that, what is being regarded today as charity, is really ought to be duty.

So, if there is somebody, who is fallen down on the road. And, if somebody goes to an onlooker, or a passer-by, goes to help that person, then it is seen, that the person is benevolent, is charitable. But, Singer's claim is that well, that person is doing, just what his duty is. In fact, the person, who is not, the passer-by who is not assisting the one, who is fallen on the road, is actually doing something condemnable. So, he is violating a duty. So, this notion of supererogatory acts, that have come up, that acts which if you do is good, but if you do not do is okay.

Let us think of some examples of it. Because, we are in a moral climate, only the climate keeps on changing. So, now perceive something, which are regarded as supererogatory, apart from of course, significant charities, or financial donation. Is that, someone is asking you that, give me some money. I am having a cancer patient. Like, child with cancer. In that case, may be like, they are coming to the hostel. Someone is giving 100 rupees. And, some one is saying that, it is like, maybe you are telling lie. (Vocalised voice 35:20 to 35:25)

Right. Okay. There, you could bring in the question of, the reliability of the information. I would think of another example. Say, blood donation. India has a very high number of young people, eligible to donate blood. And yet, India has a shortage of blood supply. So, this is a clear-cut case, where somebody donates a blood, is made to feel special. And, he is given, may be a certificate from red cross, or whoever is organised the blood donation. What Singer's claim is,

those persons need not be given certificates. They have done, what their duty is.

Those, who are fit enough to donate blood, and are not donating blood, they should be looked down upon on the moral scale. So, donating blood is not a charity. It is a duty. So, especially, when there is requirement. So likewise, it is not a supererogatory act, to donate blood. If you would like to bring up, any other example, that strikes you, as which is being rely upon. Even in medical help, to some injured animal in the street. Yes. Something, that most of us, over walk.

Yes. A blind person, who is (Vocalised voice 36:27 to 36:36) if they need help. If they need help. If they choose, if they wish to seek assistance for say, going past the road, or anyway. Okay. What Singer is doing in true philosophy spirit is holding, a mirror to the world out there. That well, look at this, these are your current standards. And, you would like to revise them.

So, like art, and literature, and philosophy, is a part of humanities. They are trying to reflect or hold a mirror to the world, to the society out there, and show them their own standards. And perhaps, influence a change, what will happen. Singer clearly has a direction. He wants, debunking these notion of supererogatory acts. But again, he tries to analyse that, why did this notion of supererogatory acts come up.

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- A call to redraw the distinction between duty & charity - the current demarcation is not correct and needs to be revised. The transfer of surplus resources to acute scarcity is morally necessary.
- Implications of redrawing the distinction:
 - this distinction keeps the domain of duty limited but rigid, expanding it would supposedly make all the tenets weaker - the entrants from charity into duty would weaken the existing tenets in the duty domain.
 - Moral tenets are shaped by the local societal needs - from the localized context, extraneous participation does not enhance localized needs, and may instead be a drain on local stability.

So, when he is claiming, that well, a call to redraw the distinction between duty and charity. The

current demarcation is not correct, and needs to be revised. Well. He is trying to first understand, why this happens, which is perhaps in the next slide. But now, he talks about the implications of redrawing this distinction. So, yes. This is in a way, also the justification, why this distinction has been made.

So, this distinction, keeps the domain of duty limited, but rigid. Expanding it, would supposedly make all the tenets weaker. The entrance in the moral tenets, from charity into duty, would weaken the existing tenets, in the duty domain. So, what is he saying. He is basically saying, that well, if you increase, now we have a certain domain of duty. So, we have a domain of duty that, when we in the current moral climate, when we have disagreement with someone, we do not use physical force. We try to go to a, third party resolution.

Now, if we enhance this domain of duty into getting, say, donating as much as you can, that every person has to donate a bottle of blood, every three months. Then, this domain of charity become so large, that people would stop even doing the fundamental duty of, conforming to the expectation of the notion of duty, that one shall not use physical force, when in disagreement with the other. So, that is one reason. That, he says, that well, enhancing the notion of duty will weaken, what is already there.

What is already is there? That, we suppose, we do not want to use physical force. What is not there is, we should do it as much as we can. So, we move this second tenet, that we must donate as much as we can, into the notion of duty, that weakens, what is already there in the notion of duty. Because, that duty is almost like a mental binding, that this ought to be done. So, whether or not, this moral thinking is a moral binary. That, it is either an or. So, it is like, that well, follow un-rule in the book, I as well as, not follow any rule in the book.

So, the second thing. Second, almost like an extrapolation, that Singer tries to find out, that well, moral tenets are shaped by the local societal needs, from the localised context. Extraneous participation, does not enhance localised needs, and may instead, be a drain on local stability. Okay. Simply put, distinction between, we are talking about charity and duty. Why is this distinction there? He perhaps, thinks of two explanations for it.

The second one is saying, that well, all our moral sense of duty has evolved. There is a very dominant theory, that our moral domain has evolved out of, our local societal needs. So, if in a society, for example, water is a scarce resource. So, water is deified, so that, its wastages seen almost as, not just a wastage of resources, but is seen as immoral. So, using that kind of an analogy, Singer tries to put in that, well, moral tenets are built by local societies.

And, local societies do not require you to design these tenets, for their own survival. They do not expect that, it would help the society, neighbouring yours. So therefore, it has been acts, which render assistance to neighbouring societies, have been rendered as charity, rather than duty. Whereas, act which are essential for the survival of one's own society, are in the relegated to the domain of duty. So, these are basically, the implications and the explanations.

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- These may be explanation of the built difference between duty & charity, but does this provide a justification?
- Singer answers in the negative:
 - The moral point of view requires us to look beyond our society – **trans-perspectival**
 - and, it is quite feasible with the means available now.
- Sidgwick & Urmsion argue 'that we need to have a basic moral code which is not too far beyond the capacities of the ordinary man, for otherwise there will be a general breakdown of compliance with the moral code.'
- 'Where should we draw (sic.) the line between conduct that is required and conduct that is good although not required, so as to get the best possible result?'
- **How do prevalent moral standards affect the decisions people take?**
 - **If it does, then the locus of the change is from the collective, not only within!**
- A call to revise moral standards!
- A moral binary? Will such a massive increase in moral expectation unsettle & weaken the existent norms?

So, as he rightly makes this terminological correction, that these may be the explanations of the built, difference between duty and charity, but does this provide a justification. We are talking about the charity. So, we can say like, if someone is donating, may be not for the welfare of the society, but for which (Vocalised voice 41:22 to 41:41)

Right. What is the motivation of? In fact, no. Singer has, nowhere gone into the motivation. He has just worked on that, this ought to be the motivation, or the policy for a donation. So, he is

nowhere exploring in this article that, can there be contributions or donations which are, of may be a more vested interest, or maybe maligned intentions, or nullified intention. So, we are talking about that, it is up to the individuals. Like, if someone is doing, it is also good. If someone is not doing, it is also coming under good.

No. He is not saying that. Challenging. He is actually, yes, he is challenging that. That, he is saying, that well, if we all ought to do, as much as we can. So, it is like a good philosopher, he is engaging. He is inventing his own critique, and answering these doubts. So, when he says, that well, some people try to make a claim, that well, why not donate my average of the donation. So, his reply to this, he is floating his own critique, and then attacking his critique.

So, it is almost, follows the platonic dialectic tradition, that where it happened, in the form of a play. Here, it happens in prose. That well, what was the opponent say. That, the opponent would say, that well, duty and charity are different things. But, he is saying, that well, this needs to be revised. It is just an explanation, how this division occurred. But, this does not give a justification. So, he answers this, that this duty and charity distinction, has to be reconfigured.

And, this reconfiguration is because, and you can see perhaps, smell out the strong Kantian perspective here. When he talks about, that the moral point of view requires us, to look beyond our society. Now, this is my word, I have used for Singer, is trans-perspectival. He nowhere uses it. But, that is the gist of his moral ethos, that well, you have to transcend your own perspective. And, that is, foundationally shared with Kantian Ethics, with Deontological Ethics, or any impersonal Ethics, which regards you, just as an individual amongst others, in a collective.

So often, you are using the set of trans-perspectival. I am talking about like, something metaphysical, rather than the (Vocalised voice 43:54 to 43:55) no. It is definitely not metaphysical, in any sense used over here. It just means, to look beyond our society like. Not beyond our society, into another world. But, it is an epistemological claim, that to look at different societies. So, not from the outlook, that you have been used to.

You were using the different society. I mean, that you are talking about like, other possible

world. No. Here, it is comparing to just the various societies in this very world. So in fact, Singer here has very clearly steered away, from any esoteric or metaphysical claims, especially when he talks. So, when he says, when I like paraphrasing my trans-perspectival, it is his impersonal claim, that we are just a part of one society. And, there are many societies here.

So, when Singer answers this, distinction between duty and charity, the explanation that is traditionally come up, the first point he puts forth is that, the moral point of view requires us to, look beyond our society trans-perspectival. So, the very, what is having one's perspective. So, having one's perspective, is having one's takes a. You see, as a student, or as a person, you have a perspective, that well. Say, about any ritual. Say, that one should not eat, non-vegetarian food.

Now, the another person has a perspective, that one should eat non-vegetarian food. So, there is a difference in opinion. You are trying to understand, from the other person's perspective. Why does the other person think the way, on things? Apart from the fact, when there is a descent, or disagreement is common to human existence. That, wherever we are more than one person, we disagree, especially when we are multi-culturally embedded.

So, why is that difference, this trans-perspectival, or transcending one's perspective. So, I have my opinion on, so many things. But, when somebody has a different opinion, why does that somebody have a different opinion. That is, when I am trying to transcend my perspective, and trying to understand from the other person's perspective, that well, why does that other person have different views than, what I have. Do you think that, we can apply here the trans-perspective, well, in this case? I think, we can apply also, the relative prospective world, in this case.

It is, when we are talking about the trans-perspective, it looks different meaning like, it is coming something metaphysical prejudice, very higher level of. No. In fact, I think you can even argue, that philosophers have argued, that can we really transcend our perspective. We can have a relative idea. But, I can never know, how it feels to be you. And, you can never know, it feels to me. That is what, one way of arguing, that transcending one's perspective, is only finite. But, yes. Are you going to add something?

When you are indicating this concept, I think, you are just talking about one particular group, who has like, higher intuitive knowledge. I think so. So, I think, it is like partial point of looking to a society. Please elaborate. Why do you think. When you are talking about this concept, I think, you are just focussing, only one society, or one group, who is like, based on intuitive knowledge, or higher level of knowledge. May be. (Vocalised voice 47:37 to 47:40) wise person or expert.

But, in that moment, you are trying to create also, a difference between one group, between other subgroups, and other big groups. So, you are also making a difference between groups. Among the groups, you are trying to make a difference. But, where you are talking about the relative, automatically, we are connecting with other groups. So, there is no difference. Because, when we are talking about perspective, definitely it is relative also coming. It is like, it follows also. Because, within a society, we need also some coherence relation.

Something going to be the major. (Vocalised voice 48:18 to 48:20) so, we need some coherence relation between individuals. And, relative means, when I am saying that, I like non-veg, rather than vegetarian. And, someone saying that, I am like vegetarian than non-veg. So, we can get each other prospective, through relativical. Okay, let us makes this, a little clearer. That, you can be a relativist holding, and yet being trans-perspectival.

So, it is not necessary, that trans-perspectival means, being an absolutist. I am not talking about the higher absolutist. That is the difference. No. It is not about higher absolutist. It is just about the common truth. Let me give an example. Say, some societies find, polyandry as a practice. Some societies find, polygamy as a practice. And, some societies have, monogamy as a practice. Let us say, there are three societies.

Now, to the relativist, there is no absolute claim. That, relativist cannot utter that well, polyandry is wrong, or polygamy is wrong, or monogamy is right. The relativist cannot make any absolute claim, saying, that well, your society yours. When I say trans-perspectival, it is a methodology, it is not a classification. So, trans-perspectival is, say, I belong to a monogamy society. I try to look

into the history, and the make-up of a polygamous society, and try to see, why did the society approve polygamy.

Was there a shortage of one gender. And therefore, to continue the race, they sorted to polygamy. Or, looking for justification, that well, why did my society find monogamy, right. So, I am nowhere still making a judgement, that well, one, that polygamy is wrong, or monogamy is right. So, I can still be a relativist, that each one has its own tenets. But, why did the tenets evolve. So, I have, due to my lineage, my upbringing, my mode of interpretation, is one.

I am trying to shift in to another mode of interpretation, of another culture, to find out, why did they have, that practice. So, it is not perhaps a hierarchical classification, that well, I can see, why that practice in the other society is wrong. So, it is nowhere, that the targeted Western audience for which, this article is written, is anywhere superior, to the famine suffering Bangladeshi's.

It is just a claim, that one ought to be trans-perspectival. As the targeted audience of this article are, affluent Western citizens, who are living in a society of comfort, bordering on luxury. So, from their perspective, he is asking them, calling them to transcend their perspective about life, into what others perspective on life, could be. It is a simple thing, why do you this urge, to help a suffering being. Because, the trans-perspectival answer is that, because you see, and perhaps you superimpose that kind of suffering, onto yourself.

It will perhaps become clearer, once we run through the details of it. So, what Singer's claim is, that well, why should we be moral. We should be moral, because we are individuals, as much as anybody else is. So, there that fundamental basic line, or the lowest common factor, which is shared with Rawl's and Kant, and all impersonal Ethics that, I am contrasted with a very personal Ethics. That, I feel, I am special. So, I should use my resources, to make my life, more exciting. That is contrasted, a very personal Ethics.

That well, I am the centre of my world. Impersonal Ethics, strips you of this specialness, of being yourself. And, you therefore trans and perspectives, and see that, not because it could happen to

you. So, he is not appealing to the Western audience that, tomorrow a famine could be struck, in this affluent part of the world. And therefore, the Bangladeshi's would help us. He is not even arguing for a quid pro quo measure, that way.

He is saying, that well, you have to transcend your perspectives, and see that well, suffering is happening. You can alleviate that suffering, with a minimal effect on your lifestyle. So, he is an individual. (Vocalised voice 52:50 to 52:52) yes. Yes. In fact, the traditional conceptualisation of an isolated decision-making individual, unaffected by others, as happens in the Western tradition, is clearly evidenced in Singer's claim. Sir, again it is like, my problem is that, why you are saying that, it is a trans-perspectival. Like trans-perspectival.

I think. Because, when one is an individual like, (Vocalised voice 53:19 to 53:21) like, you are doing your point of view. Like, you are exchanging your views to others. No. You are not exchanging, you are trying to understand the view of others, or understand the plight of others. So, his attention impersonal, but also individualistic. Yes. His claim is essentially, yes. Not self-centred. Not self-centred. It is the individual centre. Because, if you contrast Oriental Ethics, or an Anthropomorphic Ethics, where human beings are a part of greater cosmic order.

In fact, that is very often critiqued as the, classic differentiation between Eastern and Western Ethics. That well, Western Ethics is individual centric. Whereas, the Eastern Ethics is, you see yourself as a. (Vocalised voice 54:02 to 54:03) cosmic order is a singular. And, you are just playing, a part in it. So, that is definitely not, what Singer is talking about. Singer is talking about, very limited singular individual decision. In fact, it may help to mention that, Rawl's makes two assumptions about this theory.

The second one being that, individuals take the decisions, independent of others. So, what others make a choice, does not affect, what one does. Now, an ideal isolated individualistic society, the others decision-making or condition, should not affect the one. So, the others happiness, should not make you, either happy or sad. And, the others sadness, should not make you, happy or sad. So, that is what, the direction of a classic Western society is. Whereas, Eastern societies are much more communitarian. So, they are linked up.

So, when we have a milieu of sorrow, it is supposed to cause sorrow in us. It is, all decisions are for the group, not for the individual. But, okay. Now, going ahead, it talks about, yes. That, why this furthering this debate on duty and charity, that Sidgwick and Urmson have argued, that we need a basic moral code, which is not too far beyond the capacities of the ordinary man, for otherwise, there will be a general breakdown of compliance, with the moral code.

So, where should we draw, the line between conduct that is required, and conduct that is good in although not required, so as to get the best possible result. Now, this is again, I would read into this Singer's philosophical acumen getting into drawing, the distinction between the way things are, and the way things ought to be. The classical distinction, that he is talked about from Hume's time, Fact versus Values. So, the factual claim, is that well, these moral standards have this distinction between duty and charity, has evolved from empirical practices.

But, Singer's claim, is that well, they ought to be revised. And, that ought revision, or the justification, has to come from us. It does not come from, cannot be understood from, the sociocultural background in which, these practices have emerged. So, drawing a line between conduct, that is good and though not required, and conduct that is essential, so as to get the best possible result.

In fact, on a deeper level, he leaves us with that question, that we if we redraw the lines, that we have this conduct, which is good, or which is essential, and that which is supererogatory. Essentially, again going back to that question, that supererogatory acts are, only should be brought down, to the domain of necessary moral acts. So, question raised, which I see is, how do prevalent moral standards, affect the decision people take.

Now, here again, I would see a crucial claim, that Singer's makes, is that, the locus of change is within or without. Now here, Singer very strongly points out, that the locus of change is from without also. So, the moral milieu, that we are raised and born and function in, affects us. So, today because, the moral milieu around us claims, that well, blood donation is a supererogatory act. It is an act for which, you should be praised.

So, we tend to have that same feeling. And, that is why, we do not have people lining up, to donate blood. So, all change is definitely not within. So, Singer's claim is to make a revision, in the moral climate, that will make a call to revise moral standards. That well, donating blood, if anybody does donate blood. I can think of another example today, perhaps. If, I and my understanding of the Indian scenario is accurate, or fairly intuitive, say, casting one's vote.

Now, in colleges, it is a heck thing today, to show-off that, you have cast your vote. You, show-off the mark for voting. So, what is supposedly should be a duty, has become almost an achievement. It is taken as default, that people do not vote. And, somebody who takes the pain to go and vote, needs to get that recognition. For doing something that, voting has become a supererogatory act. So, yes, he is. Singer does bring in to light, that well, what should be in the domain of duty, has become in the domain of charity.

So, at the whole on a large-scale, Singer is making a call, to revise moral standards. That, apart from the fact, that at the empirical level, making a phenomenal donation to the famine struck people of Bangladesh, is also making a call to revise moral standards. So, he counters this argument, that critics make, that well, a massive increase in moral expectations, unsettles and weakens the existing norms.

So, if you enhance the rule book, then people who are following, that small number of rules in the rule book, will stop following all the rules, if you enhance the rule books. So, pragmatism or wisdom has always, of the people governing state of affairs, has always held that well, keep the rules thin and small, so that, we can expect people to follow them. But, if you enhance the rule book, it raises the expectations too high. And, whatever little rules that were being followed, will also no more be followed.

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- The standard critique of the utilitarian paradigm - too much of expectations, but it is only so in the times of need, not always
- An appeal to religious justification via Thomas Aquinas
- Marginal utility
- Preventing catastrophes
- Role of academic philosophers

So, he also talks about this, standard critic of Utilitarian paradigms, that there are too much of expectations. But, it is only show in the time of, need not always. Because, the standard criticism of Utilitarianism says, that well, you are constantly sacrificing the individual for the collective. So, for the greatest happiness, or the greatest alleviation of suffering, you are constantly making your life miserable.

Well. Making one's life miserable, is only when there are catastrophes, or calamities, across the world community, or whichever community, you hold as the frame of reference. So, he also talks about a few details, that are more interesting, would like to explore the applied ethical part of it, well, appeals to religious justification. Because, most of the religion have. He gives the example of Christianity.

But perhaps, most of the religions have always, held accumulated property as theft. And particularly, in sematic religions that, all property is theft. When there is suffering elsewhere, it is immoral to live a life of comfort, or a luxury. So, in various forms, it has been de-codified. It has been codified in various religions. So, Singer chooses the most accessible, of the Christian Philosophers Thomas Aquinas, and talks about marginal utility, which is a very dominant notion in economic thinking.

Especially, market-based economic thinking, that well. How much you can sacrifice to get, for

say, charitable causes. According to Singer now is, erstwhile known as charitable causes. Currently or rightly, should be known as your duties. That, how much you must sacrifice from your comfort, for your duties. It is something for us individuals, to work out.

Then, he talks about preventing catastrophes. That, definitely the whole world should not go on just famine relief, or from one calamity to another. But, actively donating or contributing, in preventing such calamities happening. Because, if you take novice view of the world around, it will seem strange. As a new entrant to the world, you will find that, we have the technology, to make medical care accessible, but we rather prefer to spend it on, military spending.

We have the power to, have a very high basic standard of living. But, we would still rather prefer, a booming economy, and a dwindling economy. So, we are not connecting these two. In fact, he also brings in to light. Because, coming from a Western philosopher, it is not a very usual claim. Because, this is contradicting market-based functioning, which most of the Western societies follow, that well. We need to create demand to supply. And, that chain brings upon a lot of profit, and driving the economy.

So, yes, this at another level, I would see that this brings forth the, perhaps in principle conflict between, market-based economics, and moral philosophy. Which, still he is talked about, when we talk about justice, and the role of governments. That, a moral philosophy or Ethics, seems to contradict economic logic. That, market-based economic logic, or the market logic, that is being presented, is very often a counter Ethics. So, are there moral limits of the markets, as current Philosopher Sandel puts it. That, where are the current limits of, or moral limits of the market.

And, finally yes, that is a clarion call for the role of academic philosophers, that not to be contained in classrooms, but try to make an effort to reach out, and bring down philosophers from the self-contained ivory towers, into making a difference in the world out there. At least, attempting so. In fact, Singer has himself lived a life of quite active, social and political involvement. So, this is what basically, Singer is putting out. A very, very passionate claim, from a philosopher, to the world out there. So, that is, it. We can stop at that. **“Professor - Student conversation ends”**