

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
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Week- 05
Lecture 20: Ethics

Welcome in lecture 20. Today we are going to discuss a new area of philosophy. However, we have discussed in this course the idea of empiricism, the idea of idea and so, on. So, there is a discussion what we have discussed so, far about what comes first, the idea or experience. So, the idea is with us and then this world is in a poor copy of this idea or we have an idea because we have experienced an object. This is what we have been discussing and then we had discussed some philosopher from the one side and some philosopher from other side, for the empiricism, for the idealism or we also, have talked about the empiricism and how this knowledge we are getting through the experiences. Now one very important question arises that even we are getting idea by birth or we have this idea by birth or we are getting this idea through our experiences. A few more questions I would like to raise in this course and especially in today's class that how we are going to decide that what kind of action is right action and what kind of action is a not right action, wrong action. Now it is all about this study which talks about the right action and wrong action. It falls in ethics area. So, today we are going to talk about ethics. So, just today we will understand what is ethics all about and why we need ethics? So, first we will discuss that how we judge any action and if we have a sufficient thing or ideas to judge any action then why we need a discussion in ethics, why we need ethics as in a different discipline or ethics as a different discussion for example in a class on ethics. I will just give you some example. For example, tomorrow morning you have test, mid semester exam or end semester exam. Now as a friend I ask you that I have downloaded some movie and let us watch movie tonight. Now what you will be doing, you will be thinking that should go for the action. Action is for example watching movie or not. Simply you can use your idea saying that you are in this campus or in this course to get a good grade and that is very important for your placement, or graduation for example certificate. Now since tomorrow morning you have test therefore you are not interested in this particular action. So, therefore you are saying no I am not interested or maybe tomorrow not today because tomorrow I have test. It is very easy so, now there are many other I can give an example. For example, you have you like in evening after class you are going for a walk. I mean you are walking and then you saw there is a very old lady and she is trying to carry something but everything is like falling down. She is collecting again. Now whether this would help her or not. This is a little far from your place. I mean you can see her and there is not enough light. Now you are thinking that should I help her or not but there is something which you have got from your family. You should always respect the senior citizen or senior member. She is very old. So, I should go and I mean there is no dilemma. I should go and help her. Using

whatever we have got from your family, your society that is called like values. So, we have values. We should respect our teacher. We should respect our senior member like grandfather, grandmother, your siblings. Now since we have this kind of value so, obviously I am not going to we do not need any extra information or theories to decide whether I should do it or I should not do it. Now this value is going to help you to take a decision. This action is right, this action is not right. Now why need then ethics? Why we are still discussing that we need ethics? We need a proper discussion on ethics or theory in ethics. Today we are going to understand this part. Now take the same example. You decided that I will help this lady. She is very old, so you went, idea is your intention is to just to help her. After some time when you are very close to this person, you realized the she is carrying lot of firearms. Are you going to help or you are not going to help? Now this is right versus wrong. So, immediately you go no I am not going to help her. I am not supposed to help anyone in the banned things and therefore there is no reason to think or take it as in a dilemma. Even it is not a dilemma. I am saying okay this is right and this is wrong. Now the question arises that I get is that we had so, many values and some of the values we feel that for example is for me punctuality, going to the class on time, honesty. Now there are the principle which always I believe that it is true and we should follow it. Like lying is not a good idea. Now if we have these values, the set of values, then why we need ethics? Why we have let us say professional ethics? Why we have let us say medical ethics? Why these ethics words there? So, let us start this topic ethics.

If you want to define this ethics, ethics is corresponding to Greek word ethos and which means character, habit, custom, ways of behavior, etc. Ethics is also, called moral philosophy. Now ethics may be defined as the systematic study of human actions from the point of view of their rightfulness and wrongfulness. So, ethics is going to discuss that what set of actions or what set of character or habit and custom as in the first point says is right and it is not right. And this is if we want to understand the relation between the values and then ethics, then first you need to understand what is the term ethics and morality is. So, ethics and morality are closely related. Many of the philosophers and ethics believe that the ethics and morality is same. I will be giving an example how it is the same. Now let us understand what is morality is, descriptively to refer certain codes of conduct put forward by a society or a group such as a religion or accepted by an individual for her own behavior. This is what I have been like arguing that okay look this is what values is, what you have received from your family, your friend, your society, religion. And based on this set of values what we are doing, we are performing our action. Now this value is most like agreeable or let us say a desired action. For example, eating and drinking in classroom is not allowed especially in our Indian system. We do not allow in our classroom, we are not allowed to come in the classroom with like burger and a cup of coffee. Now there are few things, first is the values and then morality and then ethics. Now many of the philosopher believes that as I said ethics and morality is same, it is not different. However, values is something which is always guiding you. So, when I am saying that this is in a moral

dilemma, so, a dilemma is always works when I am confused between two actions. In particular situation suppose there are two action X and Y and you believe that both X and Y is equally good then what should I do now? Should I perform X or Y? So, this is what we call dilemma. There we need some guideline where we can decide that what to do and what not to do. Again, there is another argument it says that ethics is not depends on person to person. For example, medical ethics it is for everyone. So, everyone who is in medical profession has to follow their ethics code and conduct. For example, the idea might have aware of the idea of Euthanasia. Euthanasia is a term we use. We are not going to talk about whether we should allow this Euthanasia or not. So, there is a two way to use. Euthanasia means that a good death. A person who is ill and there is no cure. I mean there is no solution since that there is no medicine and he is in pain. And so, we can choose that with that just you withdraw the medical facility or inject some overdose of medicine so, he will die. Now this active and passive Euthanasia I am not going to talk about whether we should allow and not. What my point is suppose one person is in this pain unbearable. Unbearable in the sense that we cannot see I mean there is no any proper solution in this medical world of this situation. So, we are aware that we cannot treat him. We cannot solve this issue or the problem. We do not have the medicine. Now this person is suffering like anything. What to do? Now since we believe that we need to help someone. So, we are like we cannot see our family member in this problem. Now we are requesting the doctor to please let him die and there is a very easy to do that like may you just withdraw medical facility. So, withdrawing a medical facility is also, is going to solve the problem. So, he will die to this person or injection and everyone is for example a belief and family member in all of us believes that we should go for Euthanasia. Now the question is, is it possible for the doctor to do that? Because medical ethics has a different way to say that different way to address this problem. You are not allowed to do that, and therefore he is not going to do that. He is following ethics. Because this ethics is one fix. Ethics we have the certain medical coding conducts. You cannot violate that. So, when you are in a situation where you for example where you have two choices and whether I should do it or not do it and then you are going for X or Y. I will give you an example like for example you are in such a situation where there are two options for example X and then Y. Now X is what should I do now? For example, your sibling or your son in a family member. You know that this person has you know stolen something from neighborhood something and since you are personhood you are like always a follower of for example *satya* there what we say in that always we should not lie these. Lying is not a good idea. Now you wanted to tell your parents or want to tell a police for example that he has stolen something from neighborhood. He is arresting you. The father is punished him. But you also, have this feeling about your sibling or your son, your family member. What to do? Should I like inform police? Should I inform parents that this is what he has done or should I just talk to this person that why you did that. Now if even you are going this side or the other side you are going to violate all these. Now very important point is the second point says that first is intention and free will. Two things is

very important. If even suppose you do not have free will then you will not be responsible for your actions. As we have discussed in the first class or first week what is the free will is all about. Free will is let me remind you when you are free to choose any action. Your will is free. So, suppose there is an X and Y the two choices and you are free to choose either X and Y. Someone is like asking you to perform some action on that point saying that if you are not going to perform X, I will kill you. And in that particular situation if you are going to perform that action then you are not responsible for that action because you are not free. For example this is what in a robot. It is programmed in such a way that he is always whenever I am like coming into the classroom, he is like hitting me. Now then is it okay if I am going to argue that this thing is responsible? No. Because this object does not have any free will. Now a person who has free will who can choose and can go for a one option among many or more than one but still is going for X. Then we will say yeah, he had free will and then what he did he like chose X and therefore he is responsible for this action. So, for any kind of action or this dilemma for example the moral dilemma or ethical dilemma which we are using this word is only possible when you have free will. Your will is free to choose an action. Now if you are not in situation to choose an action then you are not maybe responsible for that. Again, the next point is the intention but also, is a very important point. And even in the Indian system or the idea of action or law of karma is also, important and according to law of karma your intention is very important. And this is we are talking about the action and the fruit of our action so, intention plays a very important role. For example, there is a small kid I am scolding or maybe hitting this person with a small like pen or pencil acting that I am like punishing you. Intention needs to correct to teach him lesson. One intention. In second action, I am doing the same action. Intention is just to harm. Same action to different intention. Fruit will be a different. So, if your intention is wrong, the fruit of action will be a wrong. Bad fruit. If your intention is right, then your food of action will be right fruit or good fruit. So, intention plays an important role. With what intention you are performing in action. However, there is another discussion about the intentionality. We are not going to discuss those maybe in next class or but here my intention was to inform you the two things. First is intention and free will is very important. Without free will we will not be responsible for our action. And we cannot like talk about, we cannot have this kind of discussion let us say moral dilemma. So, free will is a very important thing. I can give you an example where there is a person in a very extreme situation and he had a lot of problem. I mean he was fighting. Fighting this he was in moral dilemma and then thinking what to do and what not to do. And there is a friend I mean this is a real incident when I was doing my master. There was one person one of my student one of my senior student he was studying the same university and then he has completed his degree but he was not getting anything. Anything that says that on the job. So, there was nothing to support his expenditure for the food for the other expenditure and so, on. Their parents asked him to come back and join their family business but he was not in that mood or he was saying no I want job. I am not going to join the

family job or family business. Now since so, the family what they did they stopped supporting his education. I mean he was not obviously doing something he was just looking for a job. So, the family member said that fine if you are there and you are not doing anything and even do not want to come back, we are not going to support you. Support you the same the financial support. This person was determined to get a job, looking for a job. Somehow, we were also, helping but since he was also, a student. So, we do not have any must thing to help and he also, was tired of like asking help from friends. So, then situation came where in two days he had nothing to eat. So, without eating anything he was looking for the job. He was not getting anything. One day after two three days without having anything only water he saw that there was a small boy and he has in both hand he has nothing sweet. Now one thought came in his mind, whether I should take this sweet or not. So, let him just push the kid and eat his food. I mean this is what story he said. So, he was thinking what to do. He needs that because he is very hungry now starving but again there is a dilemma and then says that value says that it is wrong. You are not supposed to take this thing. You are not supposed to perform this set of actions. What to do what not to do? Now this ethical dilemma or let us say this dilemma is sometimes is useless what he said what he experienced because he does not have to even support his body. He does not have to eat anything. Even he is not able to think what the reason is right. However, he controlled himself and then he did not perform that action but he was sharing after that when he got that job good job and then he was once we met and then he was telling all the story. The idea is the many in our life in many situations I mean we are facing day to day life where we are in this particular dilemma. It is called moral dilemma what to do and what not to do. Now what is this concept of moral dilemma? What is common to the two well-known cases in this conflict. In each case an agent a person who is supposed to perform an accident so, agent regards herself as having moral reason to do each of two actions but doing both action is not possible. Now in this a moral dilemma two things are very important. First is agent is required to do each of two or more actions. Suppose there are more than one crisis so, the agent is required only one. Agent can do each of the action right and third agent cannot do both or all the actions. That is what we call moral dilemma. For example, there is a situation where you have two three choices for example there is an X there Y and Z, this is an agent. Now this person has two three choices and his state of values is saying that you can do this you can do this and you can do this. Maybe this is not right for what I give just an example of the person who was starving and because that is a right and versus wrong. So, if you are facing a situation where right versus wrong this is not right When you are facing right versus right, again what is important is suppose what kind of outfit I should I wear this is not right. What kind of shoes color of shoes should I eat chocolate or should I go for milkshake this is not moral dilemma. The situation where you are in like doing whether should go for X Y and Z and your value says that all the X, Y and Z is correct. So, if you are like in any situation any small example where you are supposed to choose like for example, example of the examination and then watching movie. So, if day

to day life we are facing this kind of situation we always going applying this value and going for X Y and Z depends on the value. But when you are in particular situation where you found you realized that X, Y and Z all three options are good. Good in the sense that according to your value even you can go for X go for Y go for Z but you cannot perform all three. For example, euthanasia, then your doctor who is a doctor feeling that this patient is in real problem and what he can do he can go for it. I mean, just now drawing one facility and he will die let him die. If you take this situation from the even a religious perspective Indian rule framework for example Buddhism for example law of karma. Law of karma says that if you have done a bad action you have to face the result of your bad karma. You have to face the impression of your bad karma. If you have done good you will be facing the impression of your good karma. Now even you are going to kill this person for example this is how in my one of my research papers I had argued even you are going to kill this person or let us say that this person is like desiring that you are asking for that for death. Even you are going to support that you are not going to help this person because the amount of karma for example suppose this much even was in a tank, or if you are going to stop this karma I mean when to if he is going to die, he may not be able to face the bad karma of his impression of the bad karma. If you are going to stop here again this person will be facing the same situation with the next life. Even in the religious term if you see they believe that you have to always you are not supposed to kill anyone and we may argue that no do not go for it. Here I am not like arguing whether we should go it we should allow it not at all. I am just talking about a particular case. So, suppose I have this kind of a religious background which I believe that I am not allowed to kill anyone because of various reasons. Like take example, karma theory and other things, and therefore I will help in the sense that I will give more facility. That is what I can do for this person. I will be always ready if there is a need but in pain the amount of pain he is facing is like in problem in that sense I cannot help and then we should not go for it. Doctor may argue that even I believe that okay this person is in his problem but the medical ethics says that I am not supposed to do that. I am not allowed let us say to do that to perform this action and therefore I cannot allow anyone to withdraw this facility or I will not be withdrawing this medical facility. So, even you are like asking me for this action I will not be performing. Like for example there is another case of like murder. We believe that killing another person is always bad. Now there is a person who approached me because my profession was an advocate. I was working. I am working as an advocate. So, this person approached me for this case to fight for him in court or let us say present his case in court. Now after doing this when I started doing presenting so, I was studying his case. I also, was getting lot of you know counter argument from the other side. Little I realized that this person is really bad person and this kind of person I am presenting a case a person who has killed someone. Now I realized after this many arguments counter argument that this person is not a right person and this kind of action we should not support. His intention was bad. He killed some innocent person without any proper reason. So, he does not have any reason to justify. Now what

should I do now? My professional ethics says that I have to support I have to present his case very effectively. But my value saying that do not do that because it is not a right person. Do not support it. Do not present his case effectively. Even I am going to do that no one is going to realize that whether I have done it or not done it. What to do? So, these are the dilemma and it is there and now the question is that why we need this ethics? Why we need this proper court and conducts? As we discussed that about the morality, what the values it depends on sometimes society and then religion. It may it is one type of values in the one society and another set of values in another society. Now, but if you want to judge any action universally, then we need a proper systematic theory so, that we can judge an action. So, ethics is a science of moral. As a science it is systematically explain the nature of morality. When you talk about what set of action is right, and what set of action is not. Like for example if everything is like relative for it. Let us say this action is good in this particular system or particular situation and the same action will not be a good in another situation. So, it means it is relative it is not like universal. But if you want to judge an action how to argue how to prescribe set of actions of a sort of custom or habit to the society. And therefore, we need an ethics ethical discussion where we can talk about the ethics, we can talk about that okay there is a theory and if you apply this theory, you may get the result. I mean you may get the decision that is in the right action or wrong action. In ethics one need to justify their position through a logical and theoretical based argument. Even you are going to argue that this X and Y, X is a right action you have to give a proper reason for that. Without argument you cannot like say that okay this action is right because I believe it, so ethics is we need a proper reason and an argument to decide whether this what kind of action is right and wrong.

Now the last difference between the ethics and morality sometimes as I gave an example of this ethnicity a person who is like in hospital or in ICU and he is live in support of lot of facility medical equipment site. And if you are going to withdraw this facility he will die. Now this person is suffering a lot I mean he is suffering nobody I mean family member I the family where I cannot see. I mean let us say that him himself he is saying that I am in a lot of pain and no medicine for that who can cure this illness disease. Then what to do if there is a no solution of this problem let me die because I have only two choices either die or go for long suffering. So, anyway I am waiting for just my death so, please allow me to die this is what we call. Now there is in a one way like morally we believe that okay fine he is suffering and as a family member you also, believe that no please allow him to die. But a person who is in profession professional is there as in a doctor he is not going to support your idea he will come on with what with this ethics. He is not saying what you are saying is wrong I agree with this idea to what you are saying he is a problem there is no solution and so, on. But still ethics says that no I am not supposed to perform this action. Fine I believe that this is an immoral but my ethics says that I have to my job is to present his case very effectively in the court. So, this is what we talk about ethics where there is a proper chord and conduct do and don'ts in your one particular type of profession. So,

morality may like say that this and that but that is why we need some proper ethics or theory ethical theories so, that we can apply these ethical theories and we can get the result. The result means the right. We can judge an action we can choose among X and Y which action is the right action. So, in this week we will be discussing ethics and then what are the ethical theories, and how we can apply that how this ethical theory is arguing that this theory is an universal principle ethical principle. So, you just apply if you have to subscribe this ethical principle you just then an action and decide what is in a good and what is not what is right and what is not right. Who is going to help you in the dilemma. So, this week we will be discussing ethics, and however if you connect with this our previous classes whether we are coming in this world with empty mind or we are learning things do's and don'ts and then finally we are judging our action or we are coming in this world with set of ideas and we already have an argument with us and we are judging an action is right action wrong action. So, in both cases we need some theories. I mean if you have an already you have an idea and we are judging an action right, and another way is like learning things. So, we will discuss this ethics in the sense that on both side the ethical principle in next class and we also, will be discussing the branches of ethics, because ethics is in a very big area and we will talk about the branches. Branches in the sense that what kind of topic we will discuss in which branch and so, on. So, we will be discussing in this class. Thank you so, much. This lecture was based on this plato Stanford Encyclopedia and then there is a book by Frank Thilly, Introduction to Ethics. So, thank you so, much for your kind attention. Thank you.