

**Philosophy and Critical Thinking**  
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**Lecture 23: Hedonism**

Welcome in lecture 23. Today we are going to talk about hedonism. In last class we have discussed the normative ethics and the virtue ethics. Again, we are discussing normative ethics and today we will be discussing hedonism. Since this course is on a very basic level, so we will be discussing this hedonism on a very basic level. I will try my best to explain you or simplify their definition so that you will be able to understand the hedonism easily. Last class we discussed about the two sides. One is a virtue ethics. Virtue ethics talks about the character traits and other side is action. They believe that we should recommend the set of action not this character traits. So, in last class we discussed this side. Today let us talk about the action side. Now the question is how we are going to judge an action. It is fine that we are going to talk about action or we are going to recommend the set of action. But when we are saying that this set of action is correct or good in what sense we are saying is good. How we are going to judge an action, the action X is good. For example, we are discussing on this topic hedonism and suppose I perform one action in between. For example, I just clapped or made some sound. Now how to judge whether this action is good or not good. Now if you start thinking whether action is good or action is not good. If you are thinking that will lead to where the result of the action the consequences of the action. So when the consequences of the action is good you will find or you will argue that action is good. So, any action if the result good action is good. For example, you are doing your engineering or your bachelor degree. In elective you discussing your thinking about what to take and which course is will be good for me right for my career or for my degree. Now you have many options what you did you choose what philosophy and critical thinking. Thinking that I have a background or I have expertise in other area let us see and understand the different discipline or different subject philosophy. Now you like this philosophy a lot and you scored well because this philosophy you found that is a very important for everyone. Now you also studied well and then you got good marks good great and then the taking this philosophy and critical thinking as an elective was good. So if result is good action is good. For example, if you take our society where we are talking about the honesty not lying, we are saying this is they are always good reason is the result the consequences of this actions are good. Now if the result is good then action is good and a very common thing you have you always you perform this action. Do we have to teach that. So, this action is always part of the good thing. That is the reason that we this side the action side the belief are they going to just any action based on its consequences. This also called Teleological view which regards the utility of purposeiveness of the morality as its ground. Now since this is all about the consequences. It is also called

Consequentialism. Whether an act is morally right depends only on consequences. So, if performing for example, and a set of example, a set of action or an action. Now whether this action is right or not right how going to check will ask you what happened after that. Suppose I am like my have an intention to correct one kid or my student. So, what I did that I thought of like doing something doing something means giving some him like an extra task or maybe calling him and making him understand a particular topic. So that he will have a better understanding and this action was fruitful. So now what I am doing whenever there is a problem in a group in a class and one student has a difficult to and for him is difficult to understand one concept. I always used to ask him come in my chamber. We will have a discussion. So, let us discuss this topic. So, it is all about the result of the consequences. The consequences are good. The action is good. Now bring this every idea in the morality. We are going to talk about the moral action. We are going to recommend a set of action. When we are going to say that this set of action is good. We are going to take it as this set of action is as a good result is good action is good. Now we are always recommending honesty, courage, this set of action is following this virtue ethics. But when we are coming in this side, we are always recommended like do not tell lie, lying is not a good idea. Always you should respect your senior citizen or respect your senior member family member. So, what we are doing we are recommending set of action where the result is good. So, the action is good. So, this will keep in the mind and then we will discuss based on this idea some theory how the ethics talk about the different ethical theories based on the consequentialism. So, there is an idea called hedonism. Hedonism is about pleasure. They believe that hedonist believes that the pleasure is only value. Now morality conditions to pleasure or happiness. Now this hedonist started believing that or they are arguing that pleasure is intrinsically good and pain is intrinsically not valuable. Now they are talking about the pleasure and pain. So, the idea of pleasure and an idea of pain. You also I would like to mention here that many of the philosophers taking pleasure and happiness in the same meaning and they are arguing that they both are same. So, we are getting pleasure or happiness. They are taking as a same. Now they are saying that pleasure is intrinsically good. What does it mean? It only means that pleasure itself is good. Now there are two kinds of good. Intrinsically good and another one is instrumentally good. For example, money. Money is not intrinsically good. Through money you can get some pleasure. So, after if the money has a value in the sense that we can use this money for our pleasure. Suppose this money like in Indian rupees. It has value because we can use this thing to get some pleasure to produce some pleasure self-interest. Now if suppose the same money if take it in other country other places where this money has no value. It will not be valuable. What hedonist are saying the pleasure is itself is good. So, when you are doing any action producing pleasure is intrinsically good. So, when we arguing that something is intrinsically good it only means that it is itself is good. So, the good or a pleasure is when you are producing any you are performing any action or producing any amount of pleasure is a good action. Now what they are doing? They are arguing for an action based on the

pleasure. So they started believing that pleasure is the only value. Even in Indian philosophy if you ask me the any hedonist philosopher in Indian system, we have one philosopher called Charvaka in Indian system. Charvaka argues about the pleasure. His philosophy and he summarize in a slogan like Yavajjivetsukham jeevet ranam kritva ghritam pibet bhasmibhutasyadehasya punarnagamanam kutah. It only means that live your life do not waste your time. Ranam kritva ghritam pibet. It only means that if you do not have money borrow money and enjoy your life. I mean this is what I am like for you I am just saying that because once you are going to lose this time you are not going to get back. So, every minute every moment is important for you. Now there are it does not mean there is an ethical application there are we can argue in many ways this Charvakian philosophy but my intention is to mention and quote the Charvakian philosophy is that they have given even Indian system we have an idea of this hedonism, where philosopher has argued about the pleasure and then said the pleasure is only value. Now coming back to this hedonism. They arguing that now they are formulating theory saying that performing any action which is going to produce a pleasure or producing pleasure is an action is good. Now what is a pleasure? So, there is an idea of pleasure and pain. Now there is some time if there is we understand what is pleasure is and opposite what is the pain is. Now the complete absence of pleasure and pain is not pleasure. It may like some time you are not feeling pleasure but same time you do not have like the same feeling of pain. So, no pleasure no pain. The complete absence of pleasure or complete absence of pain is not they are not taking as a pleasure. So pleasure is one thing and happiness what they are taking as in a same way and pain is other thing which is an opposite to the pleasure. So, any action for example, you are going to produce a pleasure. This action is good, for example, charity act of charity. You are feeling good when you are like giving something to others or sharing something with others or helping others or doing something for yourself for example, eating mango is pleasure, action is good. Now suppose you are performing an action when you are feeling that this action is going to produce a pleasure for example, playing hockey. I always feel good playing cricket any sports, lawn tennis producing pleasure for you. So, you are what performing an action. So, for them pleasure is importance. Now they give lot of importance to pleasure. If you take an example, any action set of an action you have to check the result. If result is good the action is good and if result is going to produce a pleasure or producing a pleasure the action is good. Now they also include the mental and physical pleasure. For example, we are reading a philosophical argument getting pleasure. I like a vanilla ice cream, Vanilla flavor. So I am like having getting pleasure. It is good. So, for them the set of action is going to produce either a mental or physical pleasure is good. Like mental pain you heard some bad news about your you lost some family member someone in your area, your community, your friend circle. Feeling bad, mental pain. So, the hedonist when they are talking about the pleasure, they are always talking about on both sides mental and physical. Now when we are discussing about the pleasure, we also have to understand the difference between a pleasure and the source of pleasure, so and then happiness. If you

bring in this Indian system sometime for us is a happiness is something different from the pleasure if you are like taking in that sense. Now we already have discussed what is intrinsically and what is instrumentally good. So, when we are talking about any object and using this object to produce in a pleasure that is called instrumentally good and something which is in itself is good is called intrinsically good.

Now in hedonism there are two kinds of hedonist. The first one is psychological or motivational hedonism. The psychological and motivational hedonism believe that our construction is like this. That we always want or seek to maximize our pleasure. So, what we are doing we always motivated what whatever we are doing set performing set of action. We always thinking to maximize our pleasure. And this is our psychology. I mean psychologically or motivationally. I mean this is what it motivates us to perform such action who is going to maximize our pleasure. Looking for best subject so that we get a better placement. Or who is going to help me in my career. Now what we are doing we are always motivated what we are thinking that okay let this action is going to since this action is going to maximize my pleasure. Therefore this action is good. This action is going to produce a pleasure in future in my life. So psychological or motivational hedonism claims that only pleasure and pain motivate us. So, when I believe that there is a pain, I will avoid that set of action. I am not going to perform that set of action. Now there is another reason ethical hedonism and claims that only pleasure has worth or value and only pain and displeasure have a disvalue or the opposite of worth. So ethical hedonism they believe that we should perform such action who is going to maximize your pleasure. Or let us say we are obliged to do that set of action who is going to maximize our pleasure. This is one of the philosopher has argued. The nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign master pain and pleasure. It is for them alone to point out what we ought to do as well as to determine what we shall do. The idea of pleasure on pain is basically is governing or it is a main thing which is going to motivating us to perform an action. So any set of action if it is going to produce a pain we are not going to either recommend or going to perform. And therefore, even you find when we are in society or in community or religion, we always arguing that the set of actions are good because this action is always going to produce a good good thing in your life. And therefore performing this set of action is always good. So, hedonist always will give an importance to a pleasure and pain because so you should avoid the set of action. If it is going to produce a pain then obviously is not right action. Because how the hedonist argued that pain is intrinsically bad. So, this is how the hedonist has argued about the pleasure and pain. Now the question arises even if we are going to talk about the pleasure that okay this action set of action is going to produce any amount of pleasure is good. But the question arises who I mean pleasure for whom. I am fine that I am like going to perform an action was going to produce a pleasure. But you also have to decide this pleasure who is going to enjoy this. Now there is another one branch is called egoism. Ego is I, me. And this egoism believes that any action is going to produce any amount of pleasure for you. It is not right action. For example, you are in one

particular situation where what to do and what not to do. So, for example, what we have I mentioned in the last class where we have a situation where you are in an examination hall and this exam is a final exam and a very important for your graduation. Now if you are not going to pass this exam you may not be able to get degree this year and getting this year degree is a very important. So final term final year and final exam. Now when you got this question paper you have no idea. No idea means that you read the question but it is difficult to understand or even you are not able to call recall the answer. Or let us say you have not read right time of revision. So, this question is something which have not read or if you have read you cannot recall the answer. So, in conclusion you cannot write the answer and you realize that it is difficult to pass now. Because you do not have anything to write. What to do. Now you have two choices. First choice is copy. Look here and there. Look for some clue some idea. So that you can recall you can add things and you can write. Other next option is. Do not do anything. Do not write anything, submit as it is. Because you have no idea. The hedonist specifically egoist or egoism will argue that you should go for the copy. It is going to produce a pleasure. Maybe, because other if you are going to perform other action. You are going to lose many things. So, egoism believes that, it is going to maximize self-interest. So egoism talks about the pleasure for me. So, when I am performing an action. I will make sure that this set of action is going to produce. Or going to maximize my pleasure. So the egoism or the egoist will argue that you have to perform. Or I morally ought to perform some action which can maximize my self-interest. Now psychologically as a hedonism psychological there is two psychological and ethical egoism. Psychological egoism claim that each person has an ultimate aim to maximize own welfare. So, our aim is what to maximize our welfare. So, what we are doing performing set of action in order to maximize our pleasure. We are performing morning to evening set of many sets of action. If you see you check if you in day-to-day life many actions. We are performing in terms of as an egoist thinking of our own pleasure. So, we always thinking that okay this action is good. You can produce a maximum pleasure or through this action, I can maximize my own welfare. So, I should go for this. You take anything for example, in terms of like choosing courses. And suppose you have pull of electives and which course is good for you. Sometime or many times what we do we think of our own pleasure. Pleasure in the sense who is going to maximize things. Who is going to help this course in my career. And or through this course I will have a better understanding about my life my world. So, this action is choosing this course is good for me. Egoist behavior. We are thinking in those terms thinking of maximizing our welfare. Now however one may object this theory arguing that that welfare results not only from my action. For example, I like lawn tennis or football or hockey or cricket any sports you see. If I am going to play a cricket. So, and I believe that I like playing cricket. I love playing cricket and this action produce a lot of pleasure for me. But this action is I cannot play alone. I need a team right where we can play together. So, when I am going to play this cricket this sport. This is just not because I am like performing an action, and this. So all of us is going to perform an

action. Going to play this one sport and then I am going to get the pleasure. So, what they arguing that sometime what happens like even you are talking about thinking of your own welfare. But it not results only from my action. Now there is one other example, of a soldier. Who jump on a granite thinking or in order to save others life. So, they say that this is not egoist behavior. He is not thinking himself, he died. Maybe he injured. That in that says this is not egoist behavior. He sacrificed his life for others life. Now egoism will argue that if the person performing an action that if I am going to do that I will be out as a hero. For example, I am saving some other's life. For example, I am like on a walk. Near some pond and I saw that someone is drowning, asking for help. That should help or not. I am going to help this person with the intention that if I will be able to save this person. I will be out or maybe next day morning my name will be in the front front page. So, I will be hero in the top. Everybody start talking about me. I have this intention. It is called egoist behavior. I am helping others. So that people will come to know about me or I will be in headline. My name will be in next day newspaper my photographs and everything. It is called egoist behavior. You are thinking for own welfare your own pleasure. So, if you are going with this thought. That even I am going to save others life because tomorrow morning I will have a front line with their my photo will be in the newspaper, or at least everybody will start talking about me. But the saying is called egoist behavior, this is egoism. Now, however, there are another problem with this psychological egoism is that that psychological egoism moves beyond the possibility of empirical verification. We have no idea about the others intention. Or person may lie about their intention or maybe may give us some other reason to do that. I am doing for my own pleasure or welfare. But I am claiming that I have not done in this way. I am helping others. Intention is at least everybody will know will talk about me, he is a very nice person and so on. But if you ask me that I may I may say that okay. No, I am just helping others because I feel that they are not in good situation or maybe he needs my help. So, what there is an argument that the psychological egoism or moves beyond possibility of empirical very verification. Now the ethical egoism claims that our obligation is to maximize the pleasure. So, any action if you are choosing between X and Y and if you see that X can going to maximize our pleasure for me, this action is good. Now, let me remind you we already we have discussed these ethical theories and all is always helps you when you are in dilemma when you are in situation where in a problem what to do and what not to do. As we already we have discussed it morally. Now suppose you are in a situation where like there are two or three option or four option. Options where we are going to be confused what to do perform X Y Z and P. So, you need to choose only one action. You cannot perform all and if you are going to choose X you are going to violate your other moral principles. What to do. Should I go for X Y or Z or P. This ethical egoism will argue that it should always go who is going to maximize a pleasure because this is our obligation. So, this egoism will always talk about the pleasure for yourself for own pleasure for own welfare. Now here I would like to mention the two kinds of action first is an action in self-interest and action of selflessness,

for some action is performing for myself. But some other action which is performing for others but we are getting pleasure for example, action charity. We are helping other, but I am performing this action because I am the person who is going to get many going to maximize our pleasure. So, this is what it talks about the egoism.

Now there is another branch or the other group who argues that see that even you are going to think only your pleasure. You may not be able to live your life. Suppose for example, the whole day you are thinking of your own pleasure. It will be very difficult. And therefore, they believe that let us talk about the others pleasure and this altruistic behavior is the motivator to benefit other than oneself. So, you are performing an action. But what you are doing you are this you are making sure that is going to produce a pleasure for other. It is called the altruistic behavior. So egoism and altruism. So, egoism is going to produce pleasure for me. If I am going to perform for one pleasure and altruistic behavior is always going to or motivated to benefit other than oneself. I hope this is very clear. So so the first is in a hedonism, who says who argue the pleasure is only value and then one group is saying that okay, if you ask me pleasure is I mean you have to talk about the pleasure for whom. So, one group is saying the okay egoism is a sort of action is good. If this action is going to produce pleasure for yourself it is called egoism. Altruism says no pleasure is only pleasure for others. Now for example, you are driving a car where there are many children parking or school. Let us say you are trying very carefully or very slowly so that you can avoid others injuries. Altruistic behavior. You are the same action, let us say the charity. You are doing that just intention is to help other. Altruistic behavior. It is in a motivation is I am going to produce benefit for others. I am helping other take the same example. I am walking and the person is drowning asking for help. And see if I realize that this person is may lose his life. I am going to help you. Altruistic behavior. Who is motivated to benefit pleasure for others. Now you need to understand that there is a difference between our moral motives and altruistic motives. For example, I bought one book from library or from my friend and said a promised that tomorrow morning I will be returning this book by tomorrow right 10 o'clock or 11 o'clock. So, I have this full night and then next morning at 10 o'clock. I will give you this book. Now I am going to keep this promise and what it did, I returned. This is moral motive. This is not altruistic. But when I am like, for example, giving a gift or a book and gift thinking that he likes a book a lot. And we love this book. This is called altruistic behaviour thinking of others place. So this is a moral motive and the altruistic motive. There are two things. And two is a different. So altruistic behavior is motivated only to benefit other than oneself. So this was all about the egoism and hedonism, very short introduction of hedonism, where we have discussed the egoism and then altruism. So, egoism is all about own pleasure and altruism is about other pleasure. So, you will find that there is a hedonism and there are one is team who talks about their own pleasure and another is team who talks about the other's pleasure.

In next class, we will be discussing some other normative theory. So, thank you so much for your kind attention. And this talk was based on this book and then Stanford Encyclopedia. Yeah. Thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you.