

**Philosophy and Critical Thinking**  
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**Lecture 26: Immanuel Kant**

Welcome in lecture 26. Today, we are going to talk about Immanuel Kant philosophy. As we were discussing ethics in last class, this class also is related to the last class and there is a discussion about the hedonism and about what kind of action is right and what kind of action is not right. Now the Immanuel Kant is another philosopher or very important philosopher in western philosophy who contributed in this area significantly. Immanuel Kant talked about the duty for the duty's sake and today we will be trying to understand that what exactly the Kantian idea of duty is. So, let us understand what is the Kantian idea of duty and how this Immanuel Kant talked about the right action and wrong action. How to check, how to decide that what sort of action is right and what sort of action is not right. So far, we have discussed hedonism or consequentialism let us say who talks about a result of an action. So, result is good then action is good. Result is not good and then action is not good. Now so hedonism they took this good in the sense of pleasure. In the sense of pleasure in the sense if this action is going to produce a pleasure, then action is good. Now there is a discussion about who's pleasure. So, egoism, altruism, futurism and so on then quantity and then quality. Today we are going to talk about the Immanuel Kant who has talked about what are the right actions and how to decide how to judge the action is right and action is not right and so on. Immanuel Kant has published many books which are the very important books in his area of moral philosophy, groundwork of metaphysics of morals, the critic of practical reason, the metaphysics of morals, anthropology from the pragmatic point of view, religion within the boundaries of mere reason. So just to give an idea that Kant has published his work in different titles. Let us understand how Kant see this entire discussion what we have discussed in this class. So, he talked about the hypothetical imperative. So, whatever we have been discussing in the class let us talk about hedonism, altruism and so on. So, in terms of those theories their command is a hypothetical command or imperative is command. So hypothetical imperative is hypothetical command. Now what Kant is arguing that this is a conditional form. For example, it will be easy to understand if you want to be X you should go for I or L. So, it is a conditional form if you want to be a good person, if you want to become rich perform X and L, X and X. So, these are the condition. Suppose someone or like I do not want to be X then this set of action is not for me. So, this recommendation is not for me. So, this is how so if you are giving any ethical command and saying that if you want to X then go for L, go for I, go for this set of action. So, this command is in a hypothetical command which is conditional. There are for example you are saying that if you want to become rich or if you want to become a good person you should perform this set of action. If you want to be

like X. But there is good person, there are rich who has not and they are not performing for example this kind of action. Or suppose I do not want to be X. So, this recommendation, this ethical or moral integration, this command is not for me and therefore this is not a universal command. You remember we have been discussing about that philosophers basically looking for a theory where we can decide that what set of action is right and what set of action is not right. But theory says that we can, it is universal theory and there are many philosophers right for example hedonist, egoist, altruist or theory of utility, hedonist and so on. Now the Kant what is saying arguing that look there is a problem in their theory. There is a difference between a good for possible purpose, a good for an actual purpose. So, if you talk about the hypothetical imperative, it can be a two. So, we are saying that this action going to produce a pleasure for you or greatest pleasure for greatest number. So, this is a possible purpose of this action and there is other which is good for an actual purpose. If you want to avoid injury, go for it. If you want to avoid sunburn for example, we had an example of sunburn in the last few classes we were discussing about the ethics. So, you should take few or you have to also take, perform some set of action to avoid any kind of injury or avoid sunburn. So, in hypothetical imperative if you see this is a conditional form it cannot be a universal. It is this command; this command is not for everyone. Again, Kant argued that willing an end involves more than desiring. So, there are two things. First is what is willing and second one is desiring. You have desire to get pleasure. You have desire to produce through this action pleasure. I mean you want, you desire pleasure out of this action, desiring. Here you are willing, you are doing, willing. So what Kant is arguing that this action involves more than the desire.

Now what Kant argued let us talk about categorical imperative. So, he is rejecting this idea that hypothetical imperative saying that hypothetical imperative it conditional, this is not for all. So therefore, let us talk about the categorical imperative CI which is an objective or rationally necessary and unconditional principle. Now for example what I am giving on a command, perform X, go for X. This is not conditional. This is for everyone and this is completely an objective. And what it is, how this objective or rationally necessary this argument has talked about by the Immanuel Kant. We will be discussing this idea how Kant has talked about what sort of action is right and how we should perform an action and what this is we should decide, how we decide that this action is right and this action is not right, so on. And this is how the Immanuel Kant has talked about the duty for the duty-sake. Now before doing that, before discussing this what is the duty for the duty-sake, I would like to discuss one thing which is an important for this class. In the last class whatever we have been like discussing about the hedonism, two things are very important. First is the end and means. I hope you know all of you about this end and means what it is. So, what you are doing, you are performing in any action like for example, there are an action X and you are performing an action in order to achieve its end, particular end. And you are doing this through this some performing some action, they are called the means. So, this end is a final outcome. So, performing an action and what you are doing, you are

designing this. This can be anything. As we have even last class we are discussing about the means of happiness. Like for example, money, for example, hockey and sports, means. Now we want what this end. In last class or let us say the consequentialism, what they are arguing that this end is important. You have what they are doing, they are discussing that if end is good, the action is good. If end is not good, action is not good. So, end is what a result of an action is going to decide about the action itself. Now I mean later on there are many philosophers argue that if this is going to produce a pleasure, pleasure is what, its end. Not pleasure, its end. So, if this action is going to produce any amount of pain, it means should not perform an action or this act performing this action is not a good idea or this action is not a good action. Now it depends on the theory and depends on the philosopher how they have talked about the own pleasure or the pleasure or maximum pleasure or maximum number. What Kant is arguing that why this end is always important. Why not means itself? And what Kant said that let us take this means as an end. So first you need to understand what is means and what is end. So, for example, if you want to understand, you can understand in terms of like Indian freedom struggle, where we have, there are many groups. One group is saying that I want this end, this independence at any cost. I do not care about the means. The other group is saying, no fine, it is an end is important, but means are also very important. So even I want in this, I will be fighting for independence, but means are very important. So always we will be going for the right means. So, this is how you can relate and you can understand a difference between means and end. Now, maybe this is not an, for example, take an example of this class. So, there is in a philosophical and critical thinking. We are taking this class. Goal is to achieve the A plus in this course. Suppose this, I have been like offering this course in my home institutions. And suppose there is a person who is attending this class, who offered this class and are active because he wants A plus as an end. So, whenever he is coming in the class, he is always thinking of how to achieve the A plus. What is the important concept? And is it possible to get any idea of the final examination or type of questions? How to answer those questions? What are the topics which we are discussing in the class are important? And we will be only focused on those things, or maybe only focused on how to pass this exam, how to score the exam, always thinking of the result. Focus varies in the result. The result is good, everything is good. Result is not good, everything is not good. Now what cannot be saying that why do not you take this means itself as an end? Now you are coming to this class to just understand the concept which we are discussing and that is your final end. So now means has become itself an end. Now you are attending the class just to understand the concept which we are discussing in the class. So now for you, each and every concept, each and every discussion which we are doing in the class is important for you and your final target, the final mean in this means itself. You are attending the class with lot of sincerity. Sincerely you are thinking, sincerely you are involving in all kind of discussion. And that is your final goal. Just to attend the class and understand the concept and if you dig this idea in the Indian system, this also I will be discussing about Srimad

Bhagwat Gita. We will start the next week onwards the Indian philosophy. They also have a similar kind of philosophy that falls in the deontology ethics. They are arguing that do your duty, forget the result. So, what is your duty? What is in your hand? Just your duty. Not think of this one result. Result thinking is that is not in your hand. So, what is in your hand in present time. So, Kant is arguing that okay this, what about this itself is an end. Now how it is possible? How this theory we can apply in our action? Let us see that. How Kant has argued about this different type of theory and argue that what kind of action and how you can check, how you can decide what sort of actions are right and what sort of actions are not right. So, there is one formula of universal law. I ought never act except in a way that I could also will that my maxim should become a universal law. Also act only in accordance with that maxim through which you can at the same time will that it become universal law. So, he is arguing that always act in such a way that you could will that the maxim of your action become a universal law. Now the question is what is this idea of maxim? If this maxim is clear then things will be clear that what does it mean when this Kant is talking about the formula of universal law. The formula of law of nature act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature. Now what exactly is maxim? So, maxim is a general principle of conduct that one believes one has a reason to follow in one's present circumstances. In the other words a maxim is a principle that one believes to be a rational principle of conduct. Now let us understand this concept and the idea of maxim with an example. Let us take a same example which we have been discussing. For example, you need money. Now you want to borrow this amount of money from your friend. Now you have two choices. First, make some false promises. You are going to make some false promises or tell the truth. This is an agent. He is in this particular situation. At this particular situation he needs money. Maybe his kid is not well or he wants to pay some loan. Now there is a situation like suppose he wants to pay his loan or pay his kid's school fee. So, let us stick to the second one. There is a person who wants to pay his kid's school fee and he does not have money and today is the deadline. Now he wants to borrow this money from whom? Friend. Friend or relative. Now he has two choices. Make some false promises or tell the truth. What is the truth? Truth is he is not in situation. He can repay this amount immediately. So, there is a two way that one way he can go and say that okay I will return this amount within two days or within a week or within a month and so on, or they tell the truth that look I will not be able to return this money next two months or three months. Now he has in this particular situation he has two choices. Where now he has to decide what set of action he should do and what actions should not do. His money is very important and he today is the deadline. There is the last day of this payment. Now he is thinking, thinking that I should go for the false promises for example. I am aware that if I am not going to do that, I am not going to make any false promises I may not be able to get money. He is thinking. What Kant will say that maxima is what in this particular situation right this is the particular situation and in this particular situation you believe that this is making a false promise is good. You checked the both side and realized that no

making for you that making a false promise is the right option. So, this is become a maxima of your actions. So any particular situation what you are doing you are offering a principle that if you are in particular situation you always should go for the making the false promises. So, this maxima is a principle that one believes to be a rational principle of conduct. So now in this situation there are two option one and two and this agent believed that I should go for a epi. I should go for a making the false promises. This option he believes is right. So, maxim are the principle of this action. So anyone and now what you are doing before performing this action you are proposing a maxim. A maxim is if in this particular situation should always follow this epic making a false promise. This is the maxim. Now before performing the action, you are thinking can I is it possible to propose the maxima of this action as universal law. Can you make it in the sense that can you will it I am willing. This is what he is saying that always act in such a way that could will. So before performing an action I am willing that this is the right action and I can propose the maxima of this action to you as an universal law to become universal law. And if you believe that yes I can I will then perform this action. And you believe no this is not a right action for everyone. One should not perform in this particular situation should not go for these false promises then do not perform the action. So before performing if any we have this an ethical dilemma what to do and what not to do. Think in that situation is it possible to do that. Now if taken on another example. Let us take an example of the exam nation. So, there is an agent made a person and this person is an examiner appearing for the examination. Final exam and if he is not going to pass this exam, he will not be going to get the degree or he will have to appear for the summer and that will have things will be delayed. Because even after the semester you have to stay back on campus for summer again go for the courses and so on. And there is no another option because this is the final year this is the final exam. And for him it is in a very important to pass all the examination. Now for example he is in this exam philosophy and critical thinking. He got the question paper and after looking at the question paper he realized that he cannot answer any question any of the questions. Now not answering any question means he is not going to pass this exam. So, whatever he read or let us say he did not forget to revise now he is in a situation where he cannot answer any question. I mean it is difficult to pass this exam. Now if he is not going to pass he is not going to write anything he is not going to pass this exam he will have to appear for summer, that will delay all the process because he also go for the job he is already placed and so on. Now in this situation he has two choices. First choice copy. You can hear there look for the some tips look for the something and maybe copy another student another exam not copy and submit this answer script as it is. What to do and what not to do. What is the right thing and what is the not right thing. Now if you this person believe that if that copy is the right option for example then maxim of this action is that in particular situation you should always go for this action copy. Now if you could will that maxim of this action and become universal law if you can propose this maximum of an action, you can say that anyone in this world present and future generation is going to face

the situation so go always for the copy. If you can propose if you can will that if you could will that then you go for this action and if you believe that performing this action in this particular situation is not right do not perform go for this action. So, when you are going for the not cheating, and the maximum of action will come whenever in the situation, so go for this action and this action you believe that you can propose right. Similarly, we can take many examples for example of suicide. Reason is to avoid future unhappiness or pain. So, you are in particular situation where you believe that tomorrow I am going to face this situation and you are going for this. Is it possible for you to propose this on a maxim of your action that as a universal law that anyone in this world in the present and the future generation is going to face the situation so go for it. Now so this is and then in that says going for suicide is so always weekly is not right action. So, all the philosophers and let us say since we are discussing the Kant philosophy the Kant says that doing that set of action is not right action. So, if you are in any situation so what you are doing you are always thinking of maxim of your action. The rational principle of your conduct if could will that this rational principle of conduct can become a universal law and can propose then I believe that I can do that they always perform this and if you cannot then that means that is not right action. So, Kant argue in the first principle saying that always act in such a way that maxim of your action but will become by your will a universal law of action. Formula of humanity as an end in itself. So, at that, you use humanity, whether in your own person or that of another, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means. You are not supposed to use I mean this is what the Kant says that anyone even for your own person or of another as an end as a means you should always use as an end. So, you are not supposed to use others as a means to get something else. So, you are for example you are maintaining anyone relations with the human or any other person fellow creatures to get something. If you bring this idea in the Kantian framework Kant will argue that this action is not right action. You are not supposed to or you should not use anyone or even for your own person your own person as a means. You should always suppose going for it as an end. So, you are going to suppose there is an X and he is maintaining a very good relation with Y for something else using as an a means. Kant argues that this is not right of X. Choose only this is a formula of autonomy. Choose only in a such a way that the maximum of your choice are also included as a universal law in the same world. Formula of the kingdom of ends act in accordance with the maxims of your members giving universal law for purely possible kingdom of law. So, the Kant arguing that you always act in such a way that you are both member of giving universal law or purely possible the kingdom of it. So now he is arguing that you always performing set of action that you are always like making a law universal law and the same time you are also following that law. So, your action is set in an example but the same time you are also following your own rules. So, you are making rules and you are following rules. For example, suppose there is a person who is going for a walk in a day and there is a main gate of IIT ISM, Dhanbad and he crosses this man gate at 6.30 or reaches this man gate at 6.30 in the morning everyday. So, one day I saw this

guy this person at where in the morning time but then I check my watch says that this is 6.40. This person is so coming everyday regular in the walking or maintaining the time that I realize that maybe my watch is not right. So, I have to crack my watch. What does it mean? It means that this person is making rules and then following rules. So this person is saying that you have to be on time but at the same time you are also following the rules that you are always on time. So, you are willing that the maximum of action is as a universal law and same time you also which you have made a rule you have also following the rules. And that is the reason that in Kant philosophy they are arguing that duty for duty's sake. So, you are doing your duty just for duty's sake. This is what is called Kantian deontology. So, these are the three principles which we have discussed today. In next class we will be discussing more about the Immanuel Kant idea of duty and so it will be easy to understand what are things is important for this Kant idea of duty. Now in conclusion as we have discussed in today class about the end-end means and for him for Kant the means itself is an end. So, he is performing an action, stop because for end but action itself is an end.

So, thank you so much for your kind attention. This talk was based on this history of philosophy, frank thilly's philosophy thankfully and then the Stanford Encyclopedia. In next class we will be discussing more about Kantian idea of duty. So, thank you so much for your kind attention. Thank you