

Philosophy and Critical Thinking
Prof. Gyan Prakash
Department of Humanities & Social Sciences
IIT ISM, Dhanbad
Week- 06
Lecture 27: Immanuel Kant

Welcome in lecture 27. Today, again, we are going to talk about Immanuel Kant's philosophy. As we have been discussing ethics, different theories from normative ethics, we have talked to many different theories. In last class, we have talked especially in Immanuel Kant philosophy, Duty for Duty's sake. They also called deontology, which we will be discussing today what it is. And we also talk a little more about what Kantian idea of duty or how he has talked about the right action and the wrong action. So, first deontology, deontology derived from Greek word for duty and science or study of laws. So, this is about the duty. Now, deontological moral systems mainly focused on independent moral rules or duties. So, if you see, we have discussed the consequentialism, we have discussed the virtue ethics. Now, deontological moral systems basically talk about the duty. So, that is why it is said a duty for the duty's sake. Now, we will understand what does it mean when we are saying a duty for duty's sake. Now, if you see the consequentialism, who talks about the consequences of the action. Now, deontology is arguing for the means itself. Now, if you see this argument, which we have discussed in the last class, let us understand in detail. So, suppose there is an action X, let us say here and you perform this action to produce any pleasure or this action is going to produce any amount of pleasure. So, you have desired to produce a pleasure out of this action. So, you perform this action to get this one. Consequentialism will give importance to end. So, the consequentialism will argue if this end is good, then action is good. And if this end is not good, then action is not good. So, for the consequentialism, consequences is everything. So, they are focusing only on consequences. It talks about the egoism, the altruism or utilitarianism, all of them focusing over in this end and the consequences of an action. Now, there are the situation where what we are doing, we are aware that this action is going to produce some evil or some harm to others. And this harm is going to produce for say pleasure for others or maxim pleasure for maximum number. For example, there is an example of suppose there are five patients, they need a vital organ or their organ transplant. So, if you by this theory, consequences, it may argue that it allows a doctor to kill a healthy patient in order to save other patients. Now, reason is this that these consequences give importance to end. Now, Deontology is arguing that why not giving an importance to means itself. Why not this one? Why not means? Why we only performing an action in order to produce a pleasure or produce to or maximize our self-interest, let us say. Why not this action itself, the means itself is an end. What Kant is arguing, let us go for the means. In Deontology, what we talk about the means itself is an end, duty for duty's sake. Now, we are performing this action because for duty's sake. So, we are performing this action

or this duty just for duty's sake. However, the consequentialist argues that good is agent neutral. Suppose for example, this agent, he is going to perform an action, he desired a good. He said that this good is agent neutral. Sometimes he is using the own way performing an action and perform because he is aware or he desired as good out of this action. And therefore, they argue that consequentialism is a right theory. In last class, we have discussed in detail that how Kant had argued about a difference between desire and willing. So, in one place, you are desiring for a good, another place in terms of Deontology, you are willingly doing something or your will is everything. Before starting this Deontology or Kantian idea of duty for duty's sake, they also would like to mention a few things here. Kant argues that the whole interest of reason centered around the three questions. If you have gone through our last lectures, we have been like discussing about many things and presenting an argument for the genuine knowledge. Now Kant arguing that the whole interest of reason is the three things, what can I know? So, knowledge, what is the genuine knowledge and how this genuine knowledge can be acquired. So what is the source of this genuine knowledge? Some of them is saying X, some of them is saying Y and so on. Now second is what ought I to do, the ethical issues. What sort of action is right, which we have been discussing this class. Last few classes, we have discussed how the many theories had talked about what sort of action is right and what sort of action is not right and so on. And third one that what may I hope for. Now, Kant argued that there are three ideas, idea of God, idea of freedom, of personal immortality. It is difficult to know about their existence through science. Now, we have discussed in what is that how the science is in a different form now for philosophy, where we have like empirically, we are proving something. There is an X, there is not X. So methodology is not different. Where we are talking about, we can prove, we can present in a, give an empirical proof for the existence of X and Y and Z. And that way, it is difficult to talk about the idea of God, difficult to talk about whether we have freedom to perform or not, difficult to talk about the personal immaturity. However, even suppose it is a proven right, there is an idea of God or we have free will or this personal immortality. Again, there is no use in that area. So, the main value of these three things is in moral laws, in ethics. So even you are going to accept the idea of God or free will or personal immortality, the value of this existence or acceptance is where in this ethics, ethical theory. So that we can decide, we can talk about the theory of the right action and all that. We can talk about whether we are responsible for our action and all that. So the Immanuel Kant argued that reason we have commands moral laws and these moral laws are necessary. Again, he talked about the necessary practical law and according to this practical law to act as that I will be deserving of happiness. So therefore, our reason compels us to regard ourselves as belonging to a moral world order in which happiness and morality are connected.

Now let us understand, we have already discussed the Kant's idea of duty for duty's sake and if you see his philosophy, his argument, you realize that Kant believes that each person of us possess a rational and autonomy and the two things are very important. Without

rationality, it will be difficult to talk about a good will. Autonomy again is a very important part. Now if you see this entire the Immanuel Kant formula, it depends on the goodwill. Goodwill is a very important part in Kantian ethics. As in last class we have discussed in the detail. For example, he says that in rule one that always act in such a way that you could weigh the maxim of your action become a universal law. Now, what is maxim? Maxim is a rational principle of the conduct. Now for example, you are in a particular situation T. It can be anything. For example, let us take a same example. You need money. Today is a deadline. You need to pay your bills. You have two choices. Make some false promises or telling the truth. Truth is that you cannot repay immediately. You are borrowing this money to friend and you have two choices that you go for these false promises that I will return this money immediately or within a week or tell the truth that okay I am not in position to return this money within a month or two months. Now this agent is thinking right. Now he decided that making a false promise is a good idea. Now before doing that he has to think if you subscribe this deontology or Kantian idea or duty for duty's sake that is it possible to propose or can I will the maxim of this action become universal law? What is maxim? It is anyone this particular situation if you are in this T situation so you always go for the false promises. Now so maxim is an irrational principle of this conduct that you are the situation and then you are going for false promises or is it possible to will that this rule become a universal law? Now this will is what it depends on the goodwill. If you do not have this goodwill, then you may not be able to perform this action. Goodwill is a very very important in Kantian ethics. So, without this goodwill you may not be able to choose which action is right action for the Kantian ethics or in Kantian framework goodwill is in a very important thing. So, if your will is not good now this person the agent is thinking that if anyone or everyone is going to do that it going to borrow money and always going to make a false promise then this world will be in very different order or a time will come where no one going to help anyone and therefore one should not go for these false promises. Will, this goodwill if goodwill is not there it would be difficult to talk about the right action. So, goodwill is a very important example which you have discussed in the last class the examination one or any situation where you in ethical dilemma what to do and what not to do. You have two choices X and Y, you are the agent. Now this person believes what to do or maybe you have more than two it is not necessary there is two maybe four choices you have. Now which action is good X Y R or C which action is good for you. Before performing or deciding that this action is good or Y action is good you think of the maxim. Maxim is in the situation agent always go for Y. I have given the same example in my last class I mean in our family or in the culture where we always had a rule right that if you are like suppose you are walking on a street and you got some money you should not use for your own welfare. So, either you have to donate others or you have to use this money for the welfare. Now so if you see this one basically suppose there is in a rule someone has met this situation has followed again and then specifically setting a rule for everyone. So everyone in the world who is going to do that going to face the situation he used to always

make sure that whether you are going to return this money to the owner or if there is a difficult to find or there is no way to find nowhere to reach the person. For example, on a street you got hundred bucks or hundred rupees note. Now you looked around even you try to find out if someone has lost this money but there are no clue now what to do. Now so there is someone said that no you always go for Y. You use this money not for yourself or not for your own welfare do it for others. Maybe give someone maybe donate somewhere because even you got it does not belong to you. I mean I am giving an example where we are trained in that way. So, whenever we are taking, we are all afraid of doing that okay no we not should use that this is not right. Now for example the first time someone is going to behave this way I mean he got this money what to do X Y R and Z. Use for go for buy something for yourself not used for others while let us say that use for others welfare or return to the owner R and C, then other two options. Now if this person is like thinks that okay, I will go for Y. Before performing this Y his maxim we have to think of the maxim. Is it possible to and will this the max of the action become a universal law and for this thought what he needs good will. Good will is a very important. So, if he does not have this one good will then it will be a difficult to say talk about this one. However, Kant believe that each person possesses this rational and autonomy. Therefore, he has this good will and he can decide what kind of action is right and what kind of action is not right. Important thing is here Kant is giving importance to good will. With good will if you are going to choose an action this action will be the right action. The idea of goodwill is supposed to be the idea of one who consider rational reason for guiding his behavior. Now so rationality is a very important. Now you are thinking very rationally. So now and this rationality is rational reasons are is basically is guiding behavior. Take any example which we have discussed in all the examples rational reason is what is guiding. Thinking of the situation X and Y rationally and believes of started thinking of the maxim of an action. And good will that maxim of action can become a universal law then he is going to perform. So, idea is this rational reason is guiding his behavior. Kant argues that the value of goodwill cannot decide by the valuable end, goodwill is good in any condition. So, for example you perform an action X, now you cannot argue that it is not going to produce any valuable it does not mean that it does not have a good will. So, the good will a value of goodwill it cannot decide by the valuable end. You cannot de that if goodwill is not going to produce a valuable end, then there is no use of there is no value of goodwill. Immanuel Kant argues that goodwill is good without any qualifications so, therefore goodwill is good in any condition right. So, the idea is even you are performing an action with goodwill like for example the formula number one saying that always act with such a way that good will that maxim of your action become a universal law. Now performing this action is goodwill it is not direct towards his end and no one can judge the value of goodwill in terms of the valuable ends. What kind of result is going to produce? So, therefore what for Kant goodwill is good in any condition. Again, Kant argue that when you are performing any action you have to be only motivated by duty not motivation by other like for example

happiness self-interest or some other thing or emotion. So your motivating factor is only duty. You are performing this duty or doing this duty for duty's sake. You are, for example, performing an action believing that this action is going to produce a pleasure. This action is going to produce good. This action is going to maximize your self-interest. Now if the goodwill is motivated by this pleasure, then this is not good. Goodwill is always motivated by a duty itself. So, you are performing an action because this is your just a duty to do that and that is your final end. You are not desiring or anything out of this action. In the sense that you are not looking for I mean you are not targeting that okay there is an X and this is very good it is beneficial for me. So if I am going to perform this action and then I will get this X. I can give you an example which I believe in the Kantian deontology. I am like performing many actions in my life and this idea you also can understand from the Indian system called Bhagavad Gita. Bhagavad Gita also talked about the duty where they have argued that you should perform a duty should not think of the result or the idea of Niskam karma. We shall be discussing and next we convert where they have argued that duty for duty's sake is very important. Now, for example I am doing something I am helping other not because I believe that this action is going to produce a pleasure in my life or going to maximize my self-interest. It is only because I believe this is my duty to do that. So, my motivation is just to perform a duty. There is a huge difference between two things. If you apply in your personal life in day to day life where you are performing an action and you are performing an action just for a duty sake. So, my job is to perform this action because this is my duty. So my motivation is what this duty. I am motivated by this duty not by any other sorts happiness, emotions, pleasure. Kant argues that we must believe in for a moral reason that our action at least is really free. If you are going to talk about determinism then it will be difficult to talk about the goodwill because there, freedom is necessary a presupposition of responsibility. If there is no free will then we cannot talk about the responsibility. Therefore, free will is important for this action. Any kind of responsibility. So, if suppose we are saying that I am responsible for this action it is only possible if I am free or my will is free. If my all actions are determined by X and Y for example in Indian system let us say law of karma. By law of karma every action each action is like for example is determined. If we are going to argue like that for any action, I will not be responsible because it is all determined by someone that in this particular movement this person will perform this action and therefore, I am not responsible for this action. So, free will and freedom is necessary presupposition of responsibility. Therefore, Kant argues that we have free will. Kant argues that nothing is good in itself except goodwill. The will whose motive is too good for its own sake and Kant argues the moral goodness of will means doing things absolutely and entirely because of their good. For no other reason than their inherent goodness. For example, you are performing a good action as I have given an example of like you are selling something like vegetable or any costly item. You are not giving a less than a kg suppose someone asks one kg vegetable a tomato or you are not giving less than one because you believe that this is the right thing to do, this is your

duty to do that. If you are going to do if you are not doing this because you are afraid of law and you believe that if you are going to do that law may punish your society may punish you. Any action if you are because of that you are doing then Kant is thought this is not a good moral goodness or it is not a proper reason. I mean he says that you supposed to do things because of this goodwill itself because you believe that this is not a right thing to do. So, Kant is giving an argument where he believes that the goodwill is an inherently good. And while believing in this if you are performing an action then the set of actions is good.

In conclusion this Immanuel Kant gives a significant importance to the goodwill and goodwill is a very important even you take a first law second law or third law goodwill is everywhere is important. So this is what from the Immanuel Kant idea duty for duty sake. And similarly similar concept we also have in Indian philosophy as I have said in Bhagavad Gita and we will be discussing that again. So, thank you so much for your kind attention. This talk was based on these two books and then Stanford Encyclopedia. Thank you so much. Thank you for your kindness.