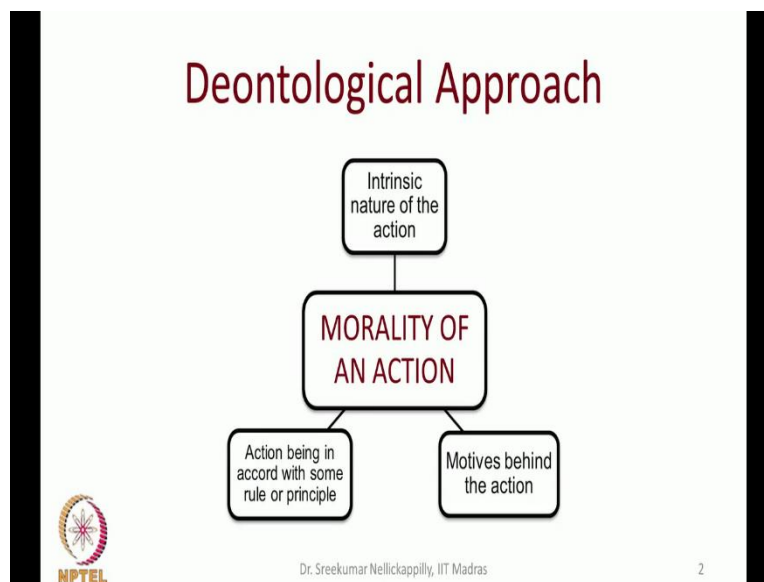


Issues in Bioethics
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Module No. #02
Lecture No. #09
Deontological Approach

(Refer Slide Time: 00:00) Hi, Welcome back to this course, Issues in Bioethics. This is the Unit Four of Module Two, which will deal with the Deontological approach.

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In the previous lecture, we have discussed Consequentialism .Primarily Utilitarianism, which is a form of consequentialism.Which means that, Consequences are really important, they are very crucial in deciding, whether a particular action is right or wrong. And, Deontological approach actually provides a very different, an entirely different, directly opposite view point, which the humanly argues that.

Consequences are totally irrelevant. what decides an action right or wrong is not Consequences, but, whether that particular action is performed in accordance with duty. So, the morality of an action, when you talk about the morality of an action, the Consequences have no role to play. So,

there are three important things to keep in mind. The first one is the intrinsic nature of the action has to be taken into account, not Consequences.

Because, Consequences are not intrinsic to the action. They are dependent on several factors, which might not be having any direct bearing on the action. So, consequences have nothing to do with the intrinsic factors. The second one is motives behind the action is very important, which we have seen is not really relevant, according to Utilitarianism. And then, the third one is action being in accord with some rule or principle.

This is what, I meant by duty. What is that rule or principle is a most interesting aspect in Deontological framework? Because, according to the Deontology or according to Kantian Deontology because, it was Immanuel Kant's philosophy or ethical theory, we are going to elaborately discuss under this title. And according to Kant, what makes an action right is whether it is rule bound, whether it is based on a principle.

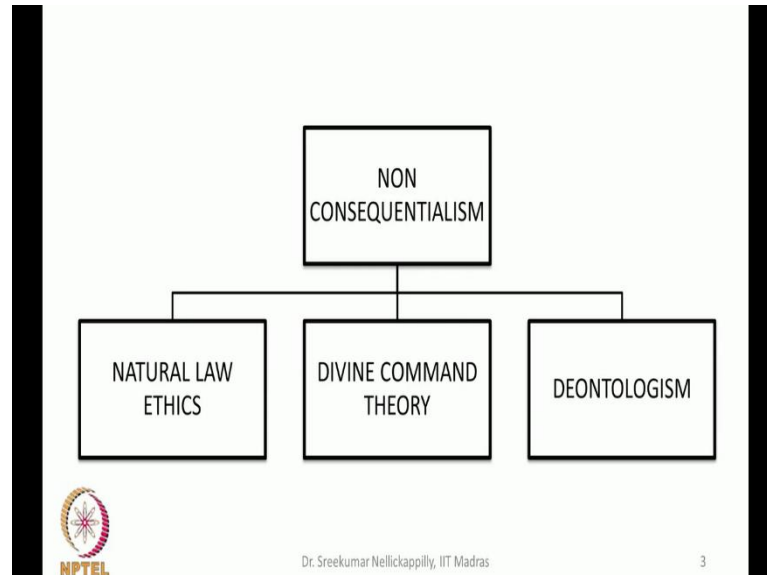
What is that rule? What is that universal rule, on the basis of which, the action is performed? And, it is this universal rule, which is the duty. To perform an action, on the basis of a universal rule is the duty of any rational agent, according to Kant. See Kant is a philosopher of Enlightenment or rather arguably, the most important philosopher of the Enlightenment era. Kant has written a very famous essay 'What is Enlightenment'?

Which begins with the statement that, Enlightenment is a Freedom from self-imposed to till ages. So, it is concerned with Freedom. And, Freedom from what? Freedom from self-imposed to till ages, all restrictions, all those factors that restrict your thinking, have to be overcome. How do you attain that freedom? That freedom can be attained only by following certain rules, following certain principles.

What are those principles and rules? And, can as one single answer to this question. It is a universal rule. It is a universal law. The universal principle of reason. Following the dictates of reason, which everyone is capable of doing. Every rational creature, every human being are capable of doing that. So, there is no way, which is left before humanity. Because, human beings

are rational. We have to be rational and we have to behave like rational creatures, because we are rational creatures. And, the only way, we can do that is by following the dictates of reason. And, that is by being moral, by following our duty, our moral duty.

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Deontology is one of those, most important forms of non-consequentialist ethical theories. The other forms Natural Law Ethics, which we have already seen. And, Divine Command Theory, these two things, we have already seen. They are also, the concern is not Consequences of an action. Natural Law is just simply says that, what is natural is right.

And, Divine Command, whatever God has commanded is right. So, your duty is the commands of God. So, where Consequences are not relevant at all. Whatever God has said; you have to follow. But, there is an important difference here in Deontology, though it is also a consequentialist ethical theory, we will see that.

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Deontology

- The deontology word is derived from the Greek word, *deon*, meaning duty.
- Affirms that moral quality of actions should be judged in a non-consequentialist manner.
- **Kantian theory**: takes for granted the existence of ordinary moral consciousness.
- What character our moral concepts and percepts must have to make morality possible?



Looks for the a priori, unchanging elements in morality.

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The Greek word Deon actually means duty. And the term, Deontology is derived from that word. So, it emphasizes duty. But, the concept of duty is very different here. Because, the term duty can be understood in different ways. For instance, in the concept of Dharma, which was quite prevalent in the Indian tradition during ancient days. Dharma can also be understood, as a kind of duty. But, it was a role-based duty.

It was based on the function; a particular person has to deliver in the society. But, here for Kant, the concept of duty is entirely different. It is to follow the universal law of reason, regardless of the function. Whatever role and function, you are associated with in the society, you have to follow certain things. And, that is what duty is. So it affirms the moral quality of action, should be judged in the non-consequentialist manner.

And Kantian Theory takes for granted the existence of ordinary moral consciousness. So, this is a very interesting starting point for Kant. This is an observation made by Alasdair Macintyre, who says that you can have a comparison with Kant's theory of knowledge, which he elaborated in his first critic, the critic of pure reason. And, his ethical theory, which is discussed in the second critic, the critic of practical reason.

There are similarities as far as the methodology is concerned. In critic of pure reason, Kant was examining the very conditions of the possibility of knowledge. Knowledge, which is relevant in our scientific endeavors. That is why it is a critique of pure reason. Here, it is a critic of practical

reason. Knowledge or the reason, which is relevant in being ethical. So, he takes for granted, the existence of ordinary moral consciousness, that he never questions. Like in critic of pure reason, he takes for granted the possibility of scientific knowledge, he never questions.

That the only question, he raises there is, how that knowledge is possible. How synthetic a priori propositions, which are prepositions of natural science are possible. That was the primary question, primary concern in critic of pure reason. Here, never questions the possibility of moral consciousness.

His question is rather, what character our moral concepts and percepts must have to make morality possible. So, that was the real question. He looks for and the a priori unchanging elements in morality. The same thing, he looks for a priori categories in understanding, to explain the possibility of scientific knowledge in critic of pure reason. Here looks for the a priori unchanging elements in morality. So, that you can explain it.

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Nature of a Moral Percept

- What makes a **good will** good? – **Consequences?**
Inclination? Divine Command?
- What conditions are important here?
- What motives and intentions make the good will good?

Kant's Answer

- Good will's only motive is to do its duty for the sake of doing it.
- Good will intends to do it because it is its duty.
- Duty done neither with selfish interests nor out of inclination reflect a good will.



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So, when you talk about the nature of moral percept here, important concept, which Kant underlines is the concept of good will. The good will is something, which wills good, which is only thing, which is good. So, his question is, what makes a good will good. What is the criteria? Whether, Consequences are the criteria?

An action performed on the basis of good will leading to good Consequences. So, that it is good. So, the will based on, which a particular action is performed, if that leads to good consequences, we can call it a good will. Is that the answer? Kant says no. Again, there are some people, who are by inclination very good.

There are many people, whom we know, who might be very good by nature. They do not reflect about ethical quality of their actions. They are by nature very good. So, they do good things out of inclination. They are really not conscious about, whether a particular action is dutiful or not. They simply do that because, that is their nature, that is their inclination.

Kant says that, such actions based on inclinations are not, they do not qualify to be called as good actions. Then Divine Command, some people base their actions on the basis of Divine Commands. Again, this is not ethically good action according to Kant.

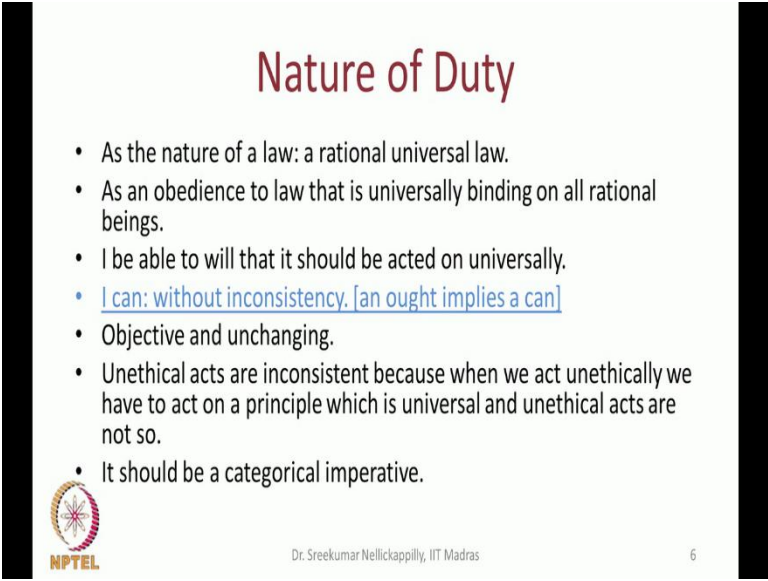
Then, what conditions are important here? What motives and intentions make the good will good? These are the questions, which he was trying to answer. And he says that, it is good will's only motive is to do its duty, for the sake of doing duty. Duty for the sake of duty. Duty for duty sake nothing else.

There is no condition, that makes a particular good will good. There are no external conditions. What makes a particular good will good, is the good will itself. good will intends to do it, because it is its duty. Duties done neither with selfish interests nor out of inclination reflect a good will. So, this is what, I have already mentioned. Just because, you do it, because you are like that, it does not reflect the good will.

And, when you reflect upon the nature of duty because, you have been saying a lot about duty. The very central concept in Deontology is the notion of duty. What is this duty? So, here I have already pointed out this. The emphasis Kant gives to the concept of law. A person's duty can be compared to a law, a rational universal law, something which cannot be violated, something which is unconditional.


That is why, it is universal. And, something which you cannot violate because, its violation leads to a kind of inconsistency. That is why, it is universal and rational. So, a rational principle is something, which you cannot violate without committing inconsistency, without being inconsistent. So, that is why, it is a rational universal law.

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Nature of Duty

- As the nature of a law: a rational universal law.
- As an obedience to law that is universally binding on all rational beings.
- I be able to will that it should be acted on universally.
- I can: without inconsistency. [an ought implies a can]
- Objective and unchanging.
- Unethical acts are inconsistent because when we act unethically we have to act on a principle which is universal and unethical acts are not so.
- It should be a categorical imperative.

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And, as in obedience to law, that is universally binding on all rational beings. So, duty is something like an obedience to law, which is universally binding. Because, I am a rational being. I am a rational creature. Man, is a rational creature and a rational universal law is universally binding to all rational creatures.

I be able to will that, it should be acted on universally. Again, I can without inconsistency do that. So, that is why this statement and ought implies a can is. So, central to Kantian Ethics. It

was Kant, who first pronounced it and ought implies a can. Because, if there is no Oughtness there is no Ethics. Ethics basically talks about one ought to do certain things. Only then by doing certain things it becomes good.

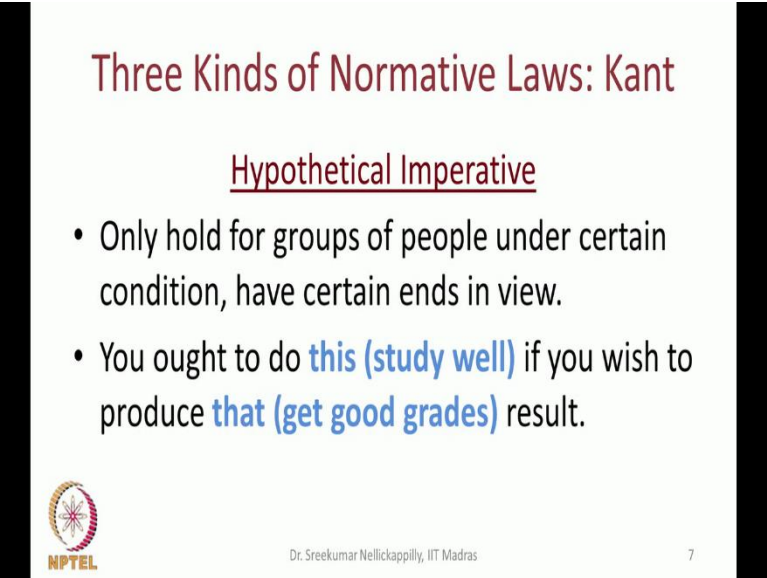
What the very concept of good consist in the idea of Oughtness. Or rather, ought points to, what is good. In order, for ought to point to, what is good, ought should be presupposed by a can. I should be able to do that. Say for example, if all of us know that, copying in exams is wrong and one ought not to copy in an exam.

From an ethical point of view, we can say that, one ought not to copy in an exam. One ought to be fair. One ought to do certain things. Why Because, one can. One can write an exam, without copying. That possibility is there. You have the Freedom to choose. You can either copy or not copy.

So, there is a choice and you have chosen what. To copy the exam, then it is inconsistent with the universal law. This is what, Kant was trying to point out. By committing a mistake, by committing what is wrong, you are committing a logical error. It is inconsistent to the with the universal law.

And, the universal law is objective and unchanging. Unethical acts are inconsistent. Because, when we act unethically, we have to act on a principle, which is universal and unethical acts are not so. So, what is that universal principle. That is a question. There is something called principle of universalize ability. that any act, which you perform, Kant says it should be a categorical imperative. An imperative, which is categorical. Imperative means you cannot, you have to do that and it is categorical.


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Three Kinds of Normative Laws: Kant

Hypothetical Imperative

- Only hold for groups of people under certain condition, have certain ends in view.
- You ought to do **this (study well)** if you wish to produce **that (get good grades)** result.

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So, there are three kind of normative laws according to Kant. I just briefly discuss this and then we go to the principle of universalizability. Kant says that, there are these hypothetical imperative, which are conditional statements, which are conditionally imperatives.

They are good only for certain groups of people, under certain conditions, have certain ends in view. So, say for example, you ought to do this, you ought to study well so that you will get good grades. If you wish to get good grades, you have to study well. So, it is hypothetical. If you want to gain this, if you really desire to gain this, then you will have do that. So, here this and that are related in a certain way. They are hypothetically related. They are not unconditionally related. Only if you desire this, that becomes relevant, otherwise not necessary.

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Assertorial Imperative

- Everyone seeks certain ends and hence the hypothetical rules for attaining them are universally applicable.
- Are **conditional**, as they only hold because of the condition that people seek them.
- All men naturally seek happiness and hence the rules which are to be observed in order to attain happiness are assertorial.



Again, there are these assertorial imperatives, where everyone seeks certain ends like happiness for example. And hence, the hypothetical rules for attaining them are universally applicable. See for example, they are conditional as they only hold because of the condition that people seek them. If you want to be happy, you have to do certain things. All men naturally seek happiness and hence the rules, which are to be observed in order to attain happiness are assertorial.

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Categorical Imperative

- Holds **unconditionally** and **universally**.
- Eg: **moral law**
- Moral laws do not depend on the ends at which men aim.
- There is nothing good without qualification except a good will.
- All other forms of goodness are conditional and the rules for attaining them are hypothetical.



So, different from both kinds of these assertorial and hypothetical imperatives. The categorical imperative, which is relevant to the domain of Ethics is quite unique. It is unconditional and universal. It is unconditional because it cannot be dependent on any factor, which is outside it. A good will is good will in itself. A duty has to be performed for the sake of performing the duty. If it is done for the sake of something else, something which is external to that, then it becomes conditional.

So, it is not conditional and it is unconditional and universal. The best example is a moral law. Moral laws do not depend on the ends at which men aim and there is nothing good without qualification except a good will. What makes a good will. There is no Consequences that come into the picture. The good will in itself is good. So, all other forms of goodness are conditional.

And the rules for attaining them are hypothetical. Say for example, money is good. No doubt. Or fame is good. But money, fame and all these things are good for the sake of something else. They are not intrinsically good. They are only instrumentally good. But there is only one thing, which is intrinsically good, which is unconditional in therefore and that is the will, the good will. So, here command to which, what is good is categorical

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Categorical Imperative

- Moral law has the nature of a command.
 - The term imperative : emphasizes the aspect of obligatoriness in the moral law.
 - Here it resembles the command of a legally constituted authority.
 - As a rational being man utters the commands of morality to himself: he obeys only himself.
- It is obedience to categorical imperative.



When you talk about the categorical imperative again, it is a moral law, we are mentioned moral law is the only example in which, we could cite for a categorical imperative. And the moral law has the nature of the command. We will see, what sort of command it is. It is actually what Kant says is the command of reason. And the command of reason does not have its source anywhere outside. It does not come from outside of us.

It should come from inside because we are all embodiments of reason. Reason is they are within us. So, it is something which, we command to ourselves, or rather reason commands to ourselves. So, moral law has the nature of a command The term imperative emphasizes the aspect of obligatoriness in the moral law. So, this is unconditionally obligatory.

It is categorical. And, here it is with the command of a legally constituted authority but it is significantly different from that. Because, a legally constituted authority something which is external to us. Even, we cannot say that the authority of this moral law comes from God. Because, then again if you consider God has something, which is external to you, then you will have to say that the authority is external, which is not correct, which is not the way in which Kant was pointing it out.

So, it is purely internal. As a rational being, man utters the commands to morality to himself. He obeys only himself. Means that, he obeys only the commands of reason, which springs from his own mind, his own rational faculties. And it is obedience to categorical imperative.

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Kant's First Principle: First Illustration

- There is nothing in this world or even outside of it that can be called good without qualification except a **good will**.
- Other things (talents, wisdom etc.) are good only on the condition that they are used by a good will.
- They are not good when they exist alone.
- Things which are **intrinsically good** contain good will as one component in their makeup.
- Happiness is good only when it is the consequence of virtue.



I am not going to the details of the Kantian position here. Because, since there is a class on Bioethics. I will be pointing it on only very essential aspects of Kantian Theory. Because, Kantian philosophy and Kantian Ethics raises a lot of questions, a lot of a number of aspects to be elaborated. But, I am not going to the details here.

I will just explain the certain very important points, which I feel are quite relevant in the context of the kind of ethical deliberations, which we will be making in the future lectures. There is nothing in this world or even outside of it that can be called good without qualification, except a good will. So, it is the only thing, which is unconditionally good. And, other things like I have already mentioned these talents, wisdom, money, etc., are good only on the condition that, they are used by a good will.

If you have a lot of money but you are not using it for the sake of good purposes, then it is not going to be good. If you are an extremely talented artist but you are pervert, then what is the use. If there is no good will to use it properly, it is going to be useless. They are not good, when they exist alone. They become good only when they are associated with the good will. And the good will utilizes them. Things which are intrinsically good contain good will as one component in their makeup. Happiness is good only when, it is a consequence of virtue.

This is one interesting aspect of Kantian philosophy. Because, Kantian philosophy as we have seen, does not bother about consequences. But then, can we really be silent about consequences. Can we really be totally indifferent to good consequences? For example, Pleasure. Pleasure is very important, no doubt. Happiness is very important in life.

But, what Kant says is that, happiness should be a consequence of good will and it is not the aim or a goal or an end for performing a good action. It should be rather a coincidence. And it is not just a coincidence, it will definitely happen. Happiness is associated with good will. The person, who performs good actions with good will will definitely enjoy happiness. If not in this life because the self, according to Kant is immortal. And, there is another principle called God, who will associate, who will rather crown happiness with virtue.

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Kant's First Principle: Second Illustration

- Good will is in itself an intrinsically good whole.
- It is unconditionally good: good with whatever accompaniments it is found.
- It is good even when it exists alone.
- **If with its greatest effort the good will should still achieve nothing, and there should remain only the good will, then, like a jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself.**



So, he says that good will is in itself an intrinsically good whole. It is unconditionally good. Good with whatever accompaniments it is found. Whatever Consequences it may have. Even miserable consequences, an action might have extremely undesirable consequences. But if it was performed with the right intention, then it is good. It is good even when it exists alone. And this is a very famous Kantian statement “If with its greatest effort the good will should still achieve nothing, and there should remain only the good will then, like a jewel, it would still shine by its own light, as a thing which has its whole value in itself?”. So, it is something which shine like a jewel in its own light.

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What Makes the Good Will Good?

- It must be done on a rational principle.
- Moral standard is a law of reason.
- Willing is not mere wishing as it is a purpose to action.
- Man is rational and deals with a universe that is constituted on rational principles.
- No need of any external motivation like God's command or eudaimonia.


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And, what makes a good will good. Definitely nothing should come from outside for it to be good. It is a jewel, which shine in itself. The light from that comes from within. It must be done on a rational principle. Moral standard is a law of reason. I have already mentioned this because, since we are all rational beings, the standard should be rational, universal. Willing is not mere wishing as it is a purpose to action.

Man, is rational and based with a universe, that is constituted of rational principles. So, there is no need of an external motivations like God command or Eudaimonia. See these are often cited as reasons for doing your duty or performing certain kinds of action. That certain forms of action might lead to kind of happiness called Eudaimonia or even Gods will. You are talking about



Gods will. So, you can consider them as your ultimate motivation. But Kant would say that, there is no need of such external motivations like God's command or Eudaimonia to act good.

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Categorical Imperative

- Act only on that maxim which thou canst at the same time will to become universal law.
- Test for rightness of an action: whether we are prepared that everybody else should adopt the rule on which we did the action.
- It is the principle by which a moral law is tested.
- Thou canst will means canst will without logical inconsistency.

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So, there is uncompromising non-consequentialism. And categorical imperative asserts that, act only on the maxim that which thou canst at the same time will to become universal law. So, you should base all your actions on a universal principle, on a principle which can be universalized. So, every action should be based on a principle, which you should be able to universalize. So, that you should be able to allow that, accept that, others can also do the same thing.

So, this is also a kind of a test for rightness of an action. This can be. This principle of universalizability can be treated as a test for rightness of an action. Whether, we are prepared that everybody else should adopt the rule on which we did the same action. So, that see for example, when I steal somebody else's money.

Can I do that? Can I make it a universal law? Is it okay, if somebody else does the same thing to me? Somebody else comes and steals my money. Is it okay for me? Since it is not okay for me, I cannot make it a universal law. And, I should not do that, perform that action. Because, if I do that, then it is inconsistent. Then, I am going against the universal law, the universal principle.

It is a principle by which a moral law is tested. And though canst will means canst will without logical inconsistency. If, I cannot do that, then that means, I cannot do that without encountering inconsistency.

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Non-consequentialism and Happiness

Virtue and Happiness

- Kant: happiness cannot be the end of morality and consequences are irrelevant in assessing an action.
- Unvarying moral law: duty irrespective of consequences.
- Can we justify morality if in the end there is no happiness?
- Can we justify it if virtue is not rewarded by happiness?

Duty and Happiness

- Duty is crowned with happiness at the end.
- God unites happiness with virtue in the immortal soul.

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And, we will conclude with a note on this. Because, I have already briefly mentioned this. When we talk about consequences of an action, particularly from the Utilitarian perspective, they have been emphasizing a lot on happiness, pleasure. And Utilitarianism talks a lot about pleasure that, which makes a particular action good.

The Consequence of an action should be pleasure. There is a way in which they see that, there is a very close link between virtue and happiness. What makes an action virtuous is the happiness to which that action leads the quality and quantity of happiness. But, Kant says that happiness cannot be the end of morality and consequences are irrelevant in assessing a particular action.

He emphasizes on the unvarying moral law and talks about the duty, which is irrespective of consequences. We have already seen all these things. But the most important question is, can we justify morality in the end, there is no happiness. If there is, if a right action is performed and which does not lead to any consequences, which are pleasurable or which leads to the happiness of the person, who performed it.

Can you really justify morality? That is a question. Can we justify morality, if virtue is not rewarded by happiness? Virtue has to be rewarded by happiness but otherwise you know, it does not really make any sense to a common ordinary person. Kant will have to then show, there is a way in which, duty and happiness are linked.

Though, happiness as consequence of a particular action is totally irrelevant in deciding, whether that particular action is right or wrong. But at the same time, he has to show that, there is an important way in which, duty of a person is linked with happiness. Duty is crowned with happiness at the end.

It has to be there. So, it is in this context, Kant talks about the three important postulates of reality. God, Freedom and Immortality of the soul. Freedom, as I already mentioned, is what makes morality possible. Because, as he set, the beginning I have mentioned this. An ought implies a can. Without that can, without freedom, can means freedom. I can do means I am free to do that.

Without that can, without that freedom, oughtness or morality becomes irrelevant. Again, duty needs to be crowned with happiness. At the end, that should happen. But, it need not happen in this life. It is in this context; Kant introduces the concept of immortality of the soul. There is a soul, which is immortal, who is the performer of action, who in the agent of action, and who is the enjoyer of the rewards of action, who will enjoy the rewards, who will be crowned with happiness later.

If that does not happen in this life, it is going to happen later. So, there is a concept of immortality. And, in this sense Kantian morality also talks about some sort religious ideal, which is actually not really important to understand or appreciate Kantian Deontological position. Then there is a need of God, who will bring this, who will crown this. God unites happiness with virtue in the moral immortal soul. This is what God does.

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Ethics of Categorical Imperative

- The ethics of unconditional duty of the rational individual.
- Individual is not influenced by any external authority.
- The idea of duty: not associated with any social role.
- Duty: defined in terms of categorical imperative.
- The ethics of the rational individual: enlightenment ideal.



What makes, as far as we are concerned, when we deliberate upon issues in modern Bioethics. The Ethics of categorical imperative has got both conceptual and historical importance. Because, historically, as I already mentioned, Kantian Theory comes at a time, when that was the time of Enlightenment. And Enlightenment is also a time, where the individual was emerging.

The emergence of individualism was one of the most important things, that has happened during this period. So, Kantian philosophy has actually reasserted this emergence of individualism in that period by conceiving an individual, who is free of external considerations, who can follow independent of other influences, the imperative, the categorical imperative, the duty.

So, the Ethics of unconditional duty of the rational individual. So, the notion of unconditional duty presupposes an individual, who is rational. And, individual entity who is rational, who is independent, who its autonomous. So, the concept of autonomy which modern Bioethics talks a lot is actually derived from this Kantian ideal. The categorical imperative, the Ethics of categorical imperative is so important in that context for modern Bioethics.

Individual is not influenced by any external authority. Or the very possibility of conceiving an autonomous individual is rooted in the Ethics of categorical imperative. And, the notion of duty, the idea of duty not associated with any social role. So, just because I occupy a particular office

in society or belonging to a particular section of the society or a class of a society or a caste of a society, these factors are unimportant. What is important is my existence as an individual, my status as an individual, as an autonomous individual.

And, duty is defined in terms of categorical imperative. The Ethics of the rational individual is the most important Enlightenment ideal, which becomes very important, very relevant, when we deliberate upon modern Bioethics later. We will see that in coming lectures and for the time being, we will wind up our discussion on categorical imperative and mostly on the major ethical theories, which we thought, we would be covering in this course.

In our next lecture, we will discuss the principlist approach, which talks about the important principles, that can be treated as the very pillars of modern Bioethics. Those, who conceive these principles as important, do not claim that, they are universally valid. But, they say that, they are reasonably universal. They are almost in all ethical deliberations this come into the picture. So, we will discuss those important approaches with those principles in the next lecture. And, try to wind up our discussion on the theoretical approaches with one more lecture. Now, we will wind up this lecture. Thank You.