

## **Kant, "Duty and Reason as the Ultimate Principle" - pp. 506-512**

### **1. Explain why Kant thinks the only thing truly good "in itself" is a good will.**

Kant's philosophy emphasizes the inherent value of the good will and its importance in evaluating human actions. He asserts that the concept of the good will is innate in human nature and requires only enlightenment rather than teaching. The good will embodies lofty ideals and is the only truly good thing in itself, according to Kant. Therefore, humans act with the best intentions as they strive for the good. As such, reason serves as a guide for human conduct.

### **2. What does Kant mean by doing our actions "from the motive of duty"? How is this different from acting out of self-interest, or out of natural inclination, or even just in "conformity" with duty?**

Kant's assertion that we act "from the motive of duty" means that our actions stem from a sense of obligation to moral laws. This sense of duty arises from an understanding of why we ought to obey such laws. Kant holds that humans act based on rational considerations, such as self-interest, a sense of responsibility, or natural inclinations. In accordance with Kant's views, people act based on the idea that respecting the law requires them to perform certain actions.

### **3. What does it mean for an action to have moral worth based on its principle, not based on the end it achieves?**

Kant's philosophy maintains that the moral worth of an action rests on its principle rather than its outcomes. In his view, humans should always employ their reason and act according to morally correct ideas and principles. This involves reflecting on and using their rational faculties to strive for good will in their behavior. Consequently, achieving a goal is merely a byproduct of the struggles and efforts of an individual. Therefore, even if the consequences of an action are unfavorable, acting in accordance with moral principles and one's reason remains essential.

### **4. Explain in your own words Kant's two formulations of the Categorical Imperative, on 510 and 511-512:**

#### **a) I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also will that my maxim should become a universal law**

Kant introduced a fundamental principle for humans, which states that individuals should not subject others to actions they themselves would not want to experience. This is encapsulated in the categorical imperative, meaning that if one does not wish to be beaten or lied to, one must not inflict such treatment on others. As a consequence, individuals are always accountable for their actions and reason should guide them towards morally correct behavior. Historically, people have

engaged in actions not out of their own volition but due to external influence. An educated person, however, questions such influences and does not accept them blindly.

**b) Act in such a way that you always treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, never simply as a means, but always at the same time as an end**

Kant's formulation emphasizes that humans ought not to exploit others. Before taking any action, an individual should question whether the action is in the best interests of all parties involved. Both the rationale for and the outcome of any action should always align with moral principles that benefit everyone concerned.

**Mill, "Happiness as the Foundation of Morality" pp. 512-517**

**1. Write out and explain Mill's "Greatest Happiness Principle".**

The principle of greatest happiness is based on the notion of promoting the happiness of as many individuals as possible, rather than the well-being of a select few at the expense of the majority. Its goal is to establish a way of living that permits all individuals to lead lives free from unhappiness. This ideal state should also include all sentient beings. According to Mill, achieving this state requires morality. Our actions are deemed morally correct and justifiable when they contribute to happiness and immoral when they do not. Therefore, the objective is to maximize the number of happy individuals through human actions.

**2. What does Mill mean when he writes, "Better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"?**

In stating that it is preferable to be a discontented Socrates than a contented fool, Mill is suggesting that it is better to live a life of intellectual inquiry and be dissatisfied with one's current state of knowledge than to be content with ignorance. According to Mill, the fool only sees one side of the argument and does not have a comprehensive understanding of the issue. While deceiving people to make them happy may appear benevolent, it ultimately undermines their intelligence and character. Therefore, Mill believes that it is important not to deceive oneself or others with falsehoods in order to promote happiness. It is better to embrace imperfection and truth than to live a life of ignorance and deception as a fool.

**3. How does Mill discuss quality and kinds of happiness in contrast to calculating the quantity of happiness?**

Mill's discussion of happiness distinguishes between quality and kinds of happiness, rather than simply calculating its quantity. The quantity of happiness is merely the amount of pleasure and joy experienced, while the quality of happiness takes into account the nature of the pleasures and distinguishes between higher and lower pleasures. According to Mill, the important factor is how happy someone is, and he believes that everyone should strive to bring about as much happiness

as possible through their actions. However, Mill also acknowledges that the quality of happiness can vary, and he suggests that educated people are capable of experiencing a higher quality of happiness compared to the illiterate. This is because he believes that intelligence and ability have a significant impact on the quality of happiness one can experience.

**4. What role does all of previous human history and the experience of wise and competent people play in figuring out what will bring the most happiness in our actions?**

The relevance of past human history and the wisdom of competent individuals in determining what actions bring us the most happiness is limited. The present moment is what matters most, as people seek joy and avoid suffering. Competent individuals should strive to act in a way that is both morally right and promotes happiness. As mentioned earlier, education and competency are linked to a higher quality of happiness. Educated individuals possess greater skills, leading to a qualitatively superior happiness.