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Introduction to Philosophy

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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. He thinks this because he believes that other things we might think of as good, like intelligence or wealth, can be used for bad purposes, while a good will is always good because it is an end in itself, and not a means to some other end.

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? For Kant, doing actions "from the motive of duty" means that we do what is right simply because it is our moral obligation, and not because we have any other motive or desire for personal gain. This is different from acting out of self-interest, natural inclination, or just in conformity with duty because those motivations are not based solely on the moral duty to do what is right. Instead, the motive of duty involves a commitment to follow universal moral principles, regardless of personal desires or consequences.

3. What does it mean for an action to have moral worth based on its principle, not based on the end it achieves? This means that an action is morally praiseworthy only if it is done out of respect for the moral law and duty, rather than for personal gain or to achieve a desirable outcome. Therefore, the moral worth of an action is not determined by its consequences, but rather by the principle that guides it.

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. I think by this Kant means that if we can't see our actions being morally acceptable when others do it, then we should not ourselves act in this way. For if our

actions are based on a maxim that we could not will to become a universal law, then it is not a morally acceptable action.

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. I think Kant means by this that we should always treat others with respect and dignity, and never use them solely as a means to our own ends. That we should recognize that other people have inherent value and should not be treated as mere objects or tools for our own purposes.

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

1. Write out and explain Mill's "Greatest Happiness Principle". Mill's "Greatest Happiness Principle" is a moral principle that states actions are right if they promote the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people. It asserts that happiness is the ultimate goal of human life, defined as pleasure and the absence of pain. The principle requires the consideration of consequences and is not concerned with the intentions of the person taking an action.

2. What does Mill mean when he writes, "Better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"? In this quote, Mill is suggesting that it is better to be a wise person who is dissatisfied with their life than a foolish person who is satisfied. He believes that intellectual and moral pleasures are more valuable than physical pleasures. Therefore, even if a wise person may experience some discomfort or dissatisfaction in their life, they are still leading a more valuable life than a person who is content with a life lacking intellect.

3. How does Mill discuss quality and kinds of happiness in contrast to calculating the quantity of happiness? He argues that there are qualitative differences between types of happiness, and that it is not enough to simply calculate the quantity of happiness. He believed that some forms of pleasure are more desirable and valuable than others, and that intellectual and moral pleasures are superior to physical pleasures. Mill believed that the quality of happiness is more important than the quantity of happiness, and that a life full of higher pleasures is more valuable than a life full of lower pleasures.

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? Mill believed that by studying past experiences and the insights of knowledgeable individuals, we can gain a

deeper understanding of what leads to human flourishing and create a society that maximizes happiness for all. Mill viewed the pursuit of happiness as the ultimate goal of human existence, and saw the wisdom of the past as a key resource in achieving that goal.