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.

   According to Kant a good will is an acts out of sense of duty and in accordance with moral principles. A good will is also when a person is motivated to do what is right simply because it is the right thing to do, not because of any kind of gain or social pressure" However right and amiable such action may be, says Kant, it does not merit moral esteem. Only if someone acts 'without any inclination, from the sake of duty alone, does his action for the first time have genuine moral worth"/ Happiness, intelligence, and wealth aren't inherently good because hey can be used for bad." Kant's starting-point is a distinction between what is good merely as a means to an end, and what is intrinsically good, or good in itself. Health, well-being, contentment, happiness - none of these guarantee that their possessor is someone who is morally praiseworthy; only a good will has pure value in itself (506)

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?

   By doing actions that are from the motive of the Duty, this means that a person is doing something good because it is the right thing and they do it without ulterior motive. How self-interest is different because Kant believed that if doing good deeds has self-interest it isn't morally good because there is self-motive behind it. Acting out of natural inclination means that we perform an action because we feel a natural desire to do so, such as helping a friend or family member in need. Kant believed that inclination isn't moral because it has personal emotions behind it. Conformity is when your good because it feels like an obligation, examples include following the law and social norms, but Kant also believed conformity isn't moral because it isn't someone doing something right because they choose to. This quote is used for the example for what duty is and how it isn't moral- "To help others where one can is a duty, and besides this there are many spirits of so sympathetic a temper that, without any further motive of vanity or self-interest, they find an inner pleasure in spreading happiness around them and can take delight in the contentment of others as their own work. Yet I maintain that in such a case an action of this kind, however right and however amiable it may be, has still no genuinely moral worth. It stands on the same footing as other inclinations" (509)

3. What does it mean for an action to have moral worth based on its principle, not based on the end it achieves? The moral value of an action is determined by the motive or the

intention behind it rather than focusing on the outcome that it has at the end. Moral principles have to have reason that can be universal and necessary. An action can only have moral worth if is done by duty because of the moral principles that it carries regardless of the outcome that it has at the end. “An action done from duty has its moral worth, not in the purpose to be attained by it, but in the maxim in accordance with which it is decided upon”(509) this quote is to show that duty can have moral worth . ” Duty is the necessity to act out of reverence for the law. For an object as the effect of my proposed action I can have an inclination, but never reverence, precisely because it is merely the effect, and not the activity, of a will” (509). This shows that duty is moral because by obeying the law it is showing respect and regard for the law. When someone follows the law, they are doing it out of respect because they feel it is right and they aren’t doing it for the outcome or their desires.

4. Explain in your own words Kant's two formulations of the Categorical Imperative, on 510 and 511-512: The Categorial Imperative is a universal moral law that is applied to us because of our reasoning and it is supposed to be a guide for our rational thinking. The Formula of Universal Law, means that we should only act in according to the maximum personal rule or principle. So, before we take an action we should ask ourselves if others would act or do the same thing in the same or similar situation. If we can’t see that what we are act can be a maximum universal law then we shouldn’t do the action. This to me emphasizes treat others the way you want to be treated. The Formula of Humanity means that we should treat human being including ourselves as ends in themselves and never merely as a means to an end. We should respect human beings with inherit worth and dignity.

a) I ought never to act except in such a way that I can also that my maxim should become a universal law – The Formula of Universal Law.
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 – The Formula of Humanity.

<u>Mill, "Happiness as the Foundation of Morality" pp. 512-517</u>

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

Mills theory on the “The Greatest Happiness principle is that actions are right if they promote happiness, pleasure, and less pain. When actions do not promote happiness, pleasure, and there is more suffering than the action is wrong. Mills theory on the goals we should have for our actions is, that we should use our human actions and morality to promote happiness and minimize pain or suffering. “The standard of goodness which Mill employs for assessing those results is Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle:

actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to pro- duce the reverse of happiness. Happiness is de-fined by Mill as pleasure and the absence of pain." (512)

2. What does Mill mean when he writes, "Better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied"? Mill is explaining the difference between quantity and quality, meaning that it is better to experience some dissatisfaction than to have low quality and being content. He believed that the level of knowledge that Socrates had brought him dissatisfaction, but it was also more valuable because it had more quality. For example, someone might be content with the quality pleasure of mindless pursuits, but it isn't meaning full. "To counter this, he distinguishes 'higher' from 'lower' pleasures: some kinds of pleasure (those involving our more elevated intellectual faculties) are more valuable than others" (512)

3. How does Mill discuss quality and kinds of happiness in contrast to calculating the quantity of happiness? Mill realized that happiness isn't a simple quantity that can be measured in the same way as physical objects. Mill believes there are different qualities of happiness and that the quantity of happiness is actually what matters the most. "It is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and more valuable than others. It would be absurd that while, in estimating all others things, quality is considered as well as quantity, the estimation of pleasures should be supposed to depend on quantity alone. "If I am asked what I mean by difference of quality in pleasures, or what makes one pleasure more valuable than another, merely as a pleasure, except its being greater in amount, there is but one possible answer" (514)

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?

I think that the role of previous human history and experience from wise people can be helpful in figuring out what will bring the most happiness in our actions because we learn from history and wisdom written in records or diaries etc. When we look back at what has happened in the past or what other people have written about their experiences, and they share the knowledge that they have it can help us gain more happiness by avoiding what we already know doesn't work and what has completely failed.