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Chapter Three: Ethical Decision Making and Moral Judgments

3.1 Chapter Introduction

function of morality

- **How to make a right or correct decision** and by what standard that one decision is right and another wrong **is always a puzzle**
 - ✓ functions of morality is to **give guidance in dealing with these puzzles**
- Another function of morality is to **provide principles and rules** that are acceptable to everyone and **encourage people to live together peacefully and cooperatively**

3.2. Chapter Objectives

3.3. How Can We Make Ethical Decisions and Actions?

- In life, we may get difficulties to always do the right thing. **What we often considered as right and correct might put us in difficult condition**
- Individuals could give their own justification to testify that they are Right or correct
- The **ethical nature of our action and decision**, however, is very much **dependent upon our notion of “Good” and “Bad”, “Right” and “wrong”**

What things are good or bad

➤ instrumental good

- ✓ things which we consider good or desirable for their result for what they lead to
- ✓ they are instruments towards the attainment of the other things which are considered good not simply as instruments

➤ intrinsic good

- ✓ things which we consider good not because of what they lead to but because of what they are in themselves
- ✓ worth having or perusing because of their own intrinsic nature

➤ instrumentally bad and intrinsically bad

- ✓ Some things can fulfill both qualities/ unethical or bad or evil practices
- ✓ Female Genital Mutilation, early marriage, poverty, corruption

Task of ethics

- analyze and critically consider the values we hold and the claims we make
- evaluate the adequacy of reasons that we give for our actions
 - whether the reasons offered to support a particular course of action are based on sound evidence and/or logical argument

➤ Reasoning by analogy

- ✓ explains one thing by comparing it to something else that is similar, although also different
- ✓ good analogy, the similarity outweighs the dissimilarity and is clarifying
- ✓ Example: animals are like and unlike humans
 - Is the similarity sufficiently strong to support the argument that we should ascribe rights to nonhuman animals as we do to humans?

➤ Deductive reasoning

- ✓ applies a principle to a situation
- ✓ Example: if every person has human rights, and you are a person, then you have human rights like every person

➤ Inductive reasoning

- ✓ providing evidence to support a hypothesis
- ✓ The greater the evidence for a hypothesis, the more we may rely on it
- ✓ Example: moral duty to reduce carbon emissions

3.3.2.3. Ethics and Religious Faith

- For many people, morality and religious faith go hand in hand
 - ❖ people view actions as being right or wrong in terms of whether they are commanded by a god

- Some moral philosophers do not view arguments based on religious faith as being rationally defensible
 - we are able to know what is right or wrong without relying on any divine commandments, as we can use rational reflection
- faith-based arguments are relevant to moral philosophy for several reasons
 - ✓ people do not always agree on what is right or wrong It is not therefore clear that we can determine what is right and wrong simply through rational reflection
 - ✓ Many people in the world do look to religion for moral guidance
 - we should not underestimate the ability of 'the moral teachings of a religious tradition [...] to persuade the public to embrace a higher moral standard
- moral principles and decisions should be justified by rational arguments, and thus consideration of religious arguments should not be excluded from the study of ethics

3.3.2.4. Testing moral arguments

- Critical reasoning is about asking questions whenever anyone gives us a reason to support an argument

- It is important and useful to develop the ability to test your own arguments and those of others

Three ways to test a moral argument

➤ Factual accuracy

- we should not derive an 'ought' from an 'is'
- we cannot say that something is wrong or right simply based on how things are
- the accuracy of the factual content of a discussion is very important otherwise their moral argument would lose its force

➤ Consistency

- Arguments need to be consistent
- you have to show that there is a moral difference between the two. Otherwise, your arguments are inconsistent
 - Example: moral argument that debts owed by poorer nations to international lenders should be cancelled.
 - What about poor people owe money to banks should also have their debts cancelled?

➤ Good will

- While arguments may be factually correct and consistent, they also need to 'exemplify good will'
- This involves resorting to our intuitions and emotions, which are notoriously difficult to integrate with rigorous theoretical debate

- Keep holy the Sabbath Day

3.4.2. Morality and Nature

- refers to a human being in relationship to nature
- Natural morality has been prevalent in all primitive cultures
- Some see nature as being valuable only for the good of humanity, but many others have come to see it as a good in itself, worthy of moral consideration
- In Robinson Crusoe desert-island example
 - ✓ he could be considered either moral or immoral, depending upon his actions toward the natural things around him

3.4.3. Individual Morality

- refers to individuals in relation to themselves and to an individual code of morality that may or may not be sanctioned by any society or religion
- It allows for a “higher morality,” which can be found within the individual rather than beyond this world in some supernatural realm
- A person may or may not perform some particular act, not because society, law, or religion says he may or may not, but because he himself thinks it is right or wrong from within his own conscience

3.4.4. Social Morality

- concerns a human being in relation to other human beings
- It is probably the most important aspect of morality, in that it cuts across all of the other aspects and is found in more ethical systems than any of the others
- In Robinson Crusoe desert-island example
 - ✓ He is incapable of any really moral or immoral action except toward himself and nature