Chapter Three:

Ethical Decision Making and Moral Judgments

1.1. How Can We Make Ethical Decisions And Actions?

In real life conditions we may get difficulties to always do the right thing. What we often considered as right and correct might put us in difficult condition with others and affect our social relation adversely. Individuals could give their own justification to testify that they are Right or correct! We often claim that we make right decision and actions. We regret when we make wrong decision and action. The ethical nature of our action and decision, however, is very much dependent upon our notion of ``Good' and ``Bad, `` Right and`` wrong``. Before we see how human beings judge the morality of their actions, let raise some puzzling questions: What things are good or bad?

There are things which we consider good or desirable for their result-for what they lead to. There are also things which we consider good not because of what they lead to but because of what they are in themselves: this are considered as worth having or perusing not merely as way of getting other things but because of their own intrinsic nature. The first kind of good is called instrumental good because the goodness of these things lies in their being instruments towards the attainment of the other things which are considered good not simply as instruments. The second category of good is called intrinsic good because we value these things (whatever they may turn out to be) not for what they lead to but for what they are.

Have you ever think of the opposite. Yes, there are things which are instrumentally bad and intrinsically bad. Some things can fulfill both qualities. In our country things such as Female Genital Mutilation, early marriage, kidnapping, abduction, Ignorance, poverty, corruption, murder some of the things which are considered to be unethical or bad or evil practices which are to be eradicated.

One of the key tasks of ethical reasoning, generally, is to analyze and critically consider the values we hold and the claims we make in relation to the perceived obligations that we might have towards one another. Applied to the processes of death and dying and the care provided at

end of life, key values that arise include sanctity of life (the fact of being alive is itself deeply valued), quality of life (the fact of having positive experiences and avoiding negative experiences is considered deeply morally significant), autonomy (respecting someone's preferences in relation to where, how and when they die is, increasingly, considered to be deeply morally significant and challenging).

A second key task of ethics is to evaluate the adequacy of reasons that we give for our actions: it considers, for example, whether the reasons offered to support a particular course of action are based on sound evidence and/or logical argument. Applied to the processes of death and dying, reasons that are evaluated might be the arguments a health professional offers in support of resuscitating an incompetent terminally-ill patient or a parent's reasons for refusing medical treatment for a severely disabled neonate.

The tasks of weighing ethical values and evaluating different ethical arguments are unlike many other kinds of human tasks. Ethical values are usually not as easy to understand as other kinds of values, e.g., it is probably easier to explain the (mainly) practical value of energy than it is to explain the ethical value of courage. In turn, it is easier to test a person's blood pressure than it is to determine whether or not they are virtuous.

Moreover, ethical problems are often not as clear as other kinds of problems and resolving ethical problems as definitively is not always possible. The aim of ethics then, is not, despite popular opinion, to take the high moral ground and tell people what to do, but, rather, to offer tools for thinking about difficult problems. Good ethical thinking purposefully seeks out the grey in questions and concerns in order to acknowledge the diversity and complexity of roles, situations and circumstances that arise in human life and relationships.

As complex as ethical situations may be, however, there is still an obligation on everyone involved in ethically-challenging situations to resolve any problems that arise in the most sincere, reasonable and collaborative way possible. This means that they must be prepared to review and revise their position in the light of reflection, discussion and changing circumstances.

1.1.1. Ethical Principles and Values of Moral Judgments

The branch of philosophical study that focuses on 'ethics' is concerned with studying and/or building up a coherent set of 'rules' or principles by which people ought to live. The theoretical study of ethics is not normally something that many people would regard as being necessary in order for them to conduct their everyday activities. In place of systematically examined ethical frameworks, most people instead carry around a useful set of day-to-day 'rules of thumb' that influence and govern their behavior; commonly, these include rules such as 'it is wrong to steal', 'it is right to help people in need', and so on.

But sometimes the vicissitudes and complexities of life mean that these simple rules are sometimes put to the test. Consider the idea that it is wrong to kill. Does this mean that capital punishment is wrong? Is it wrong to kill animals? Is killing in self-defence wrong? Is the termination of pregnancy wrong? Is euthanasia wrong? If we try to apply our everyday notions of right and wrong to these questions, straightforward answers are not always forthcoming. We need to examine these questions in more detail; and we need theoretical frameworks that can help us to analyze complex problems and to find rational, coherent solutions to those problems. Whilst some people attempt to do this work individually, for themselves, philosophers attempt to find general answers that can be used by everyone in society.

1.1.2. Moral intuitions and Critical Reasoning

The study of ethics involves reasoning about our feelings. In other words, it involves making sense of and rationalizing our intuitions about what is 'right' or 'good'. Almost all people, to a greater or lesser extent, are capable of experiencing feelings of empathy towards others. Empathy provides us with a sense of what others are feeling and may thereby allow us to identify with other people. Empathy therefore gives us what Traer (2013) refers to as our moral sentiments; and ethical reasoning about these sentiments gives us our moral principles. The integration of these moral sentiments and principles, Traer (2013) argues, is our conscience. Our moral conscience, then, is based on emotions, but should also be supported by reason.

All societies are characterized by their own ethical ideas – expressed in terms of attitudes and beliefs – and their own customs (their notions of what is considered customary). Some of those ethics are formalized in the laws and regulations of a society, nation or state. Such customs and

laws can influence the consciences and the moral sentiments of those living in a society, as individuals acquire ideas and attitudes from their families and from their wider society. Philosophical ethics, however, asks us to take a step back from these influences and instead to reflect critically on our sentiments and attitudes.

1.1.2.1. Rationalization

Studying ethics, then, involves attempting to find valid reasons for the moral arguments that we make. Most people already have general ideas – or what philosophers call 'intuitions' or 'presumptions' – about what they think is 'right' or 'wrong'. But a philosophical approach to ethics requires people to think critically about the moral ideas that they hold, to support or refute those ideas with convincing arguments, and to be able to articulate and explain the reasons and assumptions on which those arguments are based. In moral philosophy, an argument is not simply about our beliefs or opinions; instead, it is about the reasons underlying those beliefs or opinions. This means that the real value of discussing and debating ethical questions is not to 'win the argument' or to 'score points' against the other person! It is more important to provide carefully considered arguments to support our ideas, and to allow for rational – and deeper – understanding of the reasons underlying our beliefs, ideas and attitudes. Crucially, this requires careful listening to, analysis of and learning from the arguments that others make.

One common fault with many arguments about what is 'right' or 'wrong' – and – involves what is known as a rationalisation. A rationalisation occurs when we use what at first glance seem to be rational or credible motives to cover up our true (and perhaps unconscious) motives. For example, if a landowner seeks to build a plastic recycling plant and states that this is driven by a desire to create local employment opportunities – whereas in fact their true motive is to make a profit – then this is a rationalisation. The landowner is not giving their true reasons for wanting to build the plant. If, however, they argue that they want to make a personal profit and create local jobs, then they may be giving two true reasons for their motives.

1.1.2.2. Types of reasoning

Three forms of critical reasoning that individuals can use to justify their arguments

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'1. Reasoning by analogy explains one thing by comparing it to something else that is similar,

although also different. In a good analogy, the similarity outweighs the dissimilarity and is clarifying. For instance, animals are like and unlike humans, as humans are also animals. Is the similarity sufficiently strong to support the argument that we should ascribe rights to nonhuman animals as we do to humans?'

'2. Deductive reasoning applies a principle to a situation. For instance, if every person has human rights, and you are a person, then you have human rights like every person.'

2. Inductive reasoning involves providing evidence to support a hypothesis. The greater the evidence for a hypothesis, the more we may rely on it.' The fact that there is mounting evidence that the burning of fossil fuels is having a detrimental effect on global climate, for example, is used to substantiate the argument that we have a moral duty to reduce carbon emissions.

2.1.1.1. Ethics and Religious Faith

There is another important argument that people use when making ethical arguments: religious faith. For many people, 'morality and religious faith go hand in hand'. Rather than relying on rational arguments, some 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. They believe that we can determine through rational reflection what is right and wrong. If a god commands only what is right then, logically, this makes divine commands unnecessary; we are able to know what is right or wrong without relying on any divine commandments, as we can use rational reflection.

However, faith-based arguments are relevant to moral philosophy for several reasons. For a start, 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. Additionally, given that so 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'. While we may insist that 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. Whether or not one personally chooses to accept faith-based arguments as valid within ethical discussions is a decision that requires careful consideration.

2.1.1.2. Testing moral arguments

Critical reasoning is about asking questions whenever anyone gives us a reason to support an argument. What kind of reasoning are they using? If they are using a principle to support their argument (deductive reasoning), then what kind of principle is it? Is the principle rational? If they are providing evidence to support their argument (inductive reasoning) then is the evidence reliable? Have any motives that might be behind their arguments been clarified (ie are they giving rationalisations, not reasons)? Does the conclusion drawn make sense, given the reasons they have given? All of these questions that we ask about peoples' arguments may seem a little onerous and off-putting. With such rigorous criteria, some people may feel that they don't want to make any argument at all, as they are bound to make mistakes in their reasoning! However, most people already use critical reasoning when they make arguments and question other people's arguments. We have an idea of what we think is right based on our experience (our ethical presumptions), and we explain those ideas to other people based on our feelings (intuitions) and reasons. It is important and useful to develop the ability to test your own arguments and those of others, both to address the dilemmas that occur in our personal lives, our communities and the organisations for which we work.

There are three main ways of testing a moral argument. These are outlined in below;

Three ways to test a moral argument:

(1) Factual accuracy. The 18th century philosopher David Hume (1711—1776) argued that we should not derive an 'ought' from an 'is'. This means that we cannot say that something is wrong or right simply based on how things are. This is reasonable, but it does not mean that ethical discussion should be divorced from fact; the accuracy of the factual content of a discussion is very important. Consider the example — of someone who maintains that giving aid to charities working in Africa is wrong because they believes that 90% of the money donated in fact goes to paying wealthy consultants and NGO workers, and only 10% goes to alleviate poverty. If this person were shown that this was factually incorrect, and that in fact 90% of all donations were used to alleviate poverty, then their moral argument would lose its force.

(2) Consistency. Arguments need to be consistent. One can only argue that it is morally wrong to kill one person and yet morally acceptable to kill another, if one can demonstrate that there is a morally relevant difference between the two individuals. For example, the moral argument that

debts owed by poorer nations to international lenders should be cancelled. Does this therefore mean that all poor people who owe money to banks should also have their debts cancelled? If you don't think that all individual debts should be cancelled but you do think that poorer countries' debts should be cancelled, then you have to show that there is a moral difference between the two. Otherwise your arguments are inconsistent.

(3) Good will. This one is the most difficult criterion to quantify. 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.

2.1.2. Thinking Ethically: A framework for Moral Decision Making

The first step in analyzing moral issues is obvious but not always easy: **Get the facts**. Some moral issues create controversies simply because we do not bother to check the facts. This first step, although obvious is also among the most important and the most frequently overlooked. But having the facts is not enough. Facts by themselves only tell us what is; they do not tell us what ought to be. In addition to getting the facts, resolving an ethical issue also requires an appeal to values.

Although ethics deals with right and wrong, it is not a discipline that always leads everyone to the same conclusions. Deciding an ethical issue can be equally difficult for conservatives and liberals. Of course, there are situations that are wrong by any standard. But there are other issues where right and wrong is less clear. To guide our reflection on such difficult questions, philosophers, religious teachers and other thinkers have shaped various approaches to ethical decision-making. The five different approaches to values to deal with moral issues are: Fairness and Justice, the common Good, the Utilitarian (remember this idea is discussed previously), the Rights, and the Virtues.

2.1.2.1. Fairness and Justice Approach

The fairness or justice approach to ethics has its roots in the teachings of the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle who said that "equals should be treated equally and unequal's unequally". The basic moral question in this approach is:

- ✓ How fair is an action?

- ✓ Does it treat everyone in the same way, or does it show favoritism and discrimination?

Favoritism gives benefits to some people without a justifiable reason for singling them out; discrimination imposes burdens on people who are no different from those on whom the burdens are not imposed. Both favoritism and discrimination are unjust and wrong. Aristotle believed that ethical knowledge is not precise knowledge, like logic and mathematics, but general knowledge like knowledge of nutrition and exercise. Also, as it is a practical discipline rather than a theoretical one; he thought that in order to become "good", one could not simply study what virtue is; one must actually be virtuous. Analogously, in order to become good at a sport like football, one does not simply study but also practices. Aristotle first establishes what was virtuous. He began by determining that everything was done with some goal in mind and that goal is 'good.' The ultimate goal he called the Highest Good: happiness. Aristotle contended that happiness could not be found only in pleasure or only in fame and honor. He finally finds happiness "by ascertaining the specific function of man". A human's function is to do what makes it human, to be good at what sets it apart from everything else: the ability to reason or logos. A person that does this is the happiest because he is fulfilling his purpose or nature as found in the rational soul.

Depending on how well he did this, Aristotle said humans belonged to one of four categories: the virtuous, the continent, the incontinent and the vicious. Generally, this approach focuses on how fairly or unfairly our actions distribute benefits and burdens among the members of a group. This approach asks what is fair for all stakeholders, or people who have an interest in the outcome." Fairness requires consistency in the way people are treated. The principle states: "Treat people the same unless there are morally relevant differences between them."

2.1.2.2. The Common Good Approach

The Greek philosophers have also contributed the notion that life in community is a good in itself and our actions should contribute to that life. This approach suggests that the interlocking relationships of society are the basis of ethical reasoning and that respect and compassion for all others especially the vulnerable are requirements of such reasoning. This approach also calls attention to the common conditions that are important to the welfare of everyone. This may be a

system of laws, effective police and fire departments, health care, a public educational system, or even public recreation areas.

This approach to ethics assumes a society comprising individuals whose own good is inextricably linked to the good of the community. Community members are bound by the pursuit of common values and goals. The common good is a notion that originated more than 2,000 years ago in the writings of Plato, Aristotle, and Cicero. More recently, contemporary ethicist John Rawls defined the common good as "certain general conditions that are equally to everyone's advantage." In this approach, we focus on ensuring that the social policies, social systems, institutions, and environments on which we depend are beneficial to all. Examples of goods common to all include affordable health care, effective public safety, peace among nations, a just legal system, and an unpolluted environment.

Appeals to the common good urge us to view ourselves as members of the same community, reflecting on broad questions concerning the kind of society we want to become and how we are to achieve that society. While respecting and valuing the freedom of individuals to pursue their own goals, the common good approach challenges us also to recognize and further those goals we share in common. It presents a vision of society as a community whose members are joined in a shared pursuit of values and goals they hold in common.

2.1.2.3. The Rights Approach:

The other important approach to ethics has its roots in the philosophy of the 18th century thinker Immanuel Kant and others like him who focused on the individual’s right to choose for her or himself. These other rights can be thought of as different aspects of the basic right to be treated as we choose. Among these rights are:

- **The Right to the Truth**: We have a right to be told the truth and to be informed about matters that significantly affect choices.
- **The Right of Privacy**: We have the right to do, believe, and say whatever we choose in our personal lives so long as we do not violate the rights of others.
- **The Right not to be injured**: We have the right not to be harmed or injured unless we freely and knowingly do something to deserve punishment or we freely and knowingly choose to risk such injuries.

- **The Right to what is agreed**: We have the right to what has been promised those with whom we have freely entered into a contract or agreement.

In deciding whether an action is moral or immoral using this approach, we must ask, **does the action respect the moral rights of everyone?** Actions are wrong to the extent they violate the rights of individuals; the more serious the violation, the more wrongful the action.

This implies other rights (e.g. privacy free consent, freedom of conscience, etc.) that must be protected if a person is to have the freedom to direct his or her own life.

Generally, in Ethical Problem Solving;

- Once facts have been ascertained, consider five questions when trying to resolve a moral issue:
  1) What benefits and what harms will each course of action produce, and which alternative will lead to the best overall consequences?
  2) What moral rights do the affected parties have, and which course of action best respects those rights?
  3) Which course of action treats everyone the same, except where there is a morally justifiable reason not to, and does not show favoritism or discrimination?
  4) Which course of action advances the common good?
  5) Which course of action develops moral virtues?

2.2. To Whom or What Does Morality Apply?

In discussing the application of morality, four aspects may be considered: religious morality, morality and nature, individual morality, and social morality.

2.2.1. Religious Morality

Religious morality refers to a human being in relationship to a supernatural being or beings. In the Jewish and Christian traditions, for example, the first three of the Ten Commandments pertain to this kind of morality. These commandments deal with a person's relationship with God, not with any other human beings.

The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord, Your God; do not worship false gods.
2. Do not take the name of God in vain.
3. Keep holy the Sabbath Day.
4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. Do not kill.
6. Do not commit adultery.
7. Do not steal.
8. Do not bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. Do not covet your neighbor's spouse.
10. Do not covet your neighbor's belongings.

(Exod. 20:1–17)

2.2.2. Morality and Nature

"Morality and nature" refers to a human being in relationship to nature. Natural morality has been prevalent in all primitive cultures, such as that of the Native American, and in cultures of the Far East. More recently, the Western tradition has also become aware of the significance of dealing with nature in a moral manner. 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. With this viewpoint there is no question about whether a Robinson Crusoe would be capable of moral or immoral actions on a desert island by himself. In the morality and nature aspect, he could be considered either moral or immoral, depending upon his actions toward the natural things around him.

2.2.3. Individual Morality

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.

2.2.4. 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.

2.3. Who is Morally/Ethically Responsible?

Morality pertains to human beings and only to human beings; all else is speculation. If one wants to attribute morality to supernatural beings, one has to do so solely on **faith**. If one wants to hold animals or plants morally responsible for destructive acts against each other or against humans, then one has to ignore most of the evidence that science has given us concerning the instinctual behavior of such beings and the evidence of our own everyday observations.

When we use the terms moral and ethical, we are using them in reference only to human beings. We do not hold a wolf morally responsible for killing a sheep, or an eagle morally responsible for killing a chicken. We may kill the wolf or fox for having done this act, but we do not kill it because we hold the animal *morally* responsible. We do it because we don‘t want any more of our sheep or chickens to be killed. At this point in the world‘s history, only human beings can be moral or immoral, and therefore only human beings should be held morally responsible for their actions and behavior.

2.3.1. Moral Judgments

Moral judgments refer to deciding what is right and what is wrong in human relations. Individuals are continually judging their own conduct and that of their fellows. They approve of some acts and call them —right‖ or —good. They condemn other acts and call them —wrong‖ or —evil or bad. Moral judgments always have to do with the actions of human beings and, in particular, with voluntary actions - those actions freely chosen. *Involuntary actions* - those over which people have no control Moral judgments are **evaluative** because they place value on things or relation or human actions; determine what is right or wrong, good or bad.

When conflicts of interest arise, the solution may require the greatest sensitivity, experience, discernment, intelligence and goodwill, and even then we may doubt whether we have acted rightly. However, in judging conduct or action we have to consider **motives, means,** and **consequences** and sometimes the **situation.**

1. Motives*:* Motives, as Jesus, Kant, and others have pointed out, are basic for a determination of morality. The motive refers to the *intention* or *why an action is done*. A good motive is a prerequisite to conduct that we approve without qualification. If a good motive is present when an act, through some unforeseen factor, leads to harmful effects, we tend to disapprove less severely and to say, —Anyway, he meant well.‖

2. Means*:* Just as there may be many motives for desiring something, there may be many means for achieving it. The term *means* can be defined as an agency, instrument, or method used to attain an end. Though we expect people to use the best available means to carry out their purposes, we condemn them if their choice of means impresses us as unjust, cruel, or immoral. On rare occasions we may approve of an act when means are used that under other conditions would be condemned. However, there is a danger in proposing that any means may be used, provided the end is good, or that —the end justifies the means.Once chosen, the means become part of the general effect of an act.

3. Consequences: Consequences are the effects or results of *a moral decision* based on a value. We expect the consequences of an act that we call —right‖ to be good. Ordinarily, when people ask, —what is right? they are thinking about the consequences of the action. This depends on what ethical principle is in operation. Kant agrees to the good motive, utilitarians to the result.

4. The Moral Situation*:* A moral situation involves moral agents - human beings who act, are empowered to make *choices*, and consciously make decisions. As moral agents, demands are made on us and place us under obligations: we have both duties and rights. We are faced with moral ***alternative***s, and we can better weigh those alternatives when we have an understanding of the ingredients of the moral situation.

3.5.2. What Makes an Action Moral?

The following are features that make an action moral:

A. A moral act involves an agent: If something is a natural event or an action performed by animals, then it is morally neutral - it does not appear on our moral radars. Humans can be moral agents, or any creatures that can freely and thoughtfully choose its actions will count as a moral agent.

B. A moral act involves intention: An intention here refers to our motives that are important to determine the rightness or wrongness of an action. If an action is done accidentally, it may be counted as a morally neutral action. However, some unintentional acts, such as those done through negligence, can be moral. Neglecting our duties, even accidentally, make us morally culpable.

C. A moral act affects others: A moral action needs not only an agent and to be deliberate but also needs to affect others (those we might call moral patients) in significant ways, that is, an action that has harmful (be it physical, psychological, emotional, or depriving others of happiness) or beneficial consequences for others.

Generally, a moral action is one which:

- ✓ Is performed by ***agents***, creatures that are capable of free choice/ free will
- ✓ Is the result of ***intention***; the action was done on purpose with a particular motive
- ✓ Has a significant consequence on others in respect of harm or benefits it brings about.

2.4. Why Should Human Beings Be Moral?

The question that is worth mentioning at this point is ―Why should human beings be moral?‖

A. Argument from Enlightened Self-Interest

One can certainly argue on a basis of enlightened self-interest that it is, at the very least, generally better to be good rather than bad and to create a world and society that is good rather than one that is bad. As a matter of fact, self-interest is the sole basis of one ethical theory, ethical egoism. However, it is not being suggested at this point that one ought to pursue one‘s own self-interest. Rather, an argument is being presented that if everyone tried to do and be good and tried to avoid and prevent bad, it would be in everyone‘s self-interest. For example, if within a group of people no one killed, stole, lied, or cheated, then each member of the group would benefit.

B. Argument from Tradition and Law

Related to the foregoing argument is the argument from tradition and law. This argument suggests that because traditions and laws, established over a long period of time, govern the behavior of human beings, and because these traditions and laws urge human beings to be moral

rather than immoral, there are good reasons for being so. Self-interest is one reason, but another is respect for the human thought and effort that has gone into establishing such laws and traditions and transferring them from one historic period and one culture to another.

C. Common Human Needs

If we examine human nature as empirically and rationally as we can, we discover that all human beings have many needs, desires, goals, and objectives in common. For example, people generally seem to need friendship, love, happiness, freedom, peace, creativity, and stability in their lives, not only for themselves but for others, too. It doesn‘t take much further examination to discover that in order to satisfy these needs, people must establish and follow moral principles that encourage them to cooperate with one another and that free them from fear that they will lose their lives, be mutilated, or be stolen from, lied to, cheated, severely restricted, or imprisoned. .

In general, in a society wherein morality is declined, crime, death, looting, instability, social deviance, suicide, human right violation/ gross human right violation/, corruption and other socio, economic and political crises will prevail. With human self-interest as strong as it is, what can motivate us to always follow the rules of morality? Asked more simply, “Why be moral?” Among the more common answers are these:

- Behaving morally is a matter of self-respect.
- People won’t like us if we behave immorally.
- Society punishes immoral behavior.
- God tells us to be moral.
- Parents need to be moral role models for their children.

These are all good answers, and each may be a powerful motivation for the right person. With religious believers, for example, having faith in God and divine judgment might prompt them to act properly. With parents, the responsibility of raising another human being might force them to adopt a higher set of moral standards than they would otherwise. However, many of these answers won’t apply to every person: nonbelievers, nonparents, people who don’t respect themselves, people who think that they can escape punishment.

There are two distinct components to the question “Why be moral?”

1) Why does society need moral rules?
2) Why should I be moral?

From Hobbes’s perspective, morality consists of a set of rules such that, if nearly everyone follows them, then nearly everyone will flourish. These rules restrict our freedom but promote greater freedom and wellbeing. More specifically, the five social benefits of establishing and following moral rules accomplish the following:

a) Keep society from falling apart.
b) Reduce human suffering.
c) Promote human flourishing.
d) Resolve conflicts of interest in just and orderly ways.
e) Assign praise and blame, reward and punishment, and guilt.

All these benefits have in common the fact that morality is a social activity: It has to do with society, not the individual in isolation. If only one person exists on an island, no morality exists; indeed, some behavior would be better for that person than others—such as eating coconuts rather than sand—but there would not be morality in the full meaning of that term. However, as soon as a second person appears on that island, morality also appears. Morality is thus a set of rules that enable us to reach our collective goals. Imagine what society would be like if we did whatever we pleased without obeying moral rules.