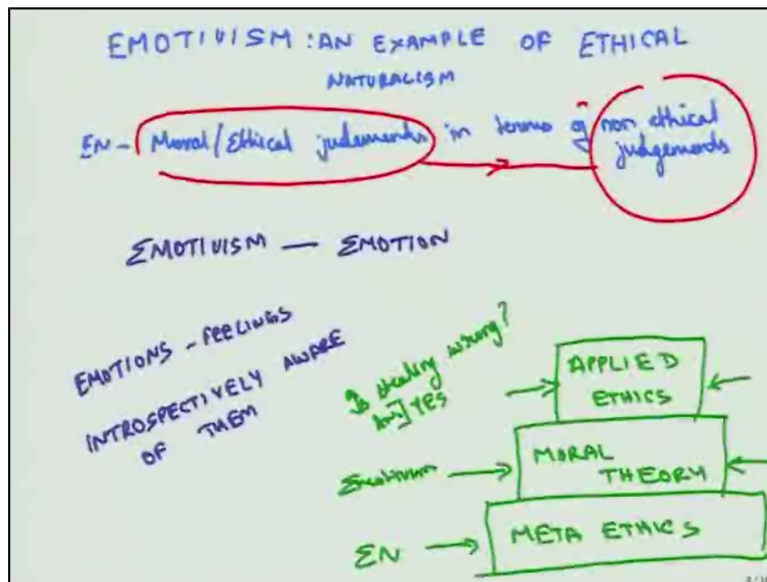


**Ethics**  
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**Module No. #01**  
**Lecture No. #16**  
**Ethical Naturalism - Emotivism**

Well, let us talk about, an example of Ethical Naturalism. Now, if you look at the screen, we have something called, Emotivism.

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Now, we have been talking about, Ethical Naturalism. And, Ethical Naturalism, as you remember, who is understanding moral or ethical judgements, in terms of non-ethical judgements. So, this happens to be the, crucial defining of Ethical Naturalism. So, there is a domain of ethical judgements, which can be understood in terms of, non-ethical judgements. Now, this was the basis of Ethical Naturalism. Now, what could be examples of Ethical Naturalism.

We have slightly talked about Utilitarianism, as an example of Ethical Naturalism. Today, we are going to explore, another example of Ethical Naturalism, which is called Emotivism. Now, Emotivism, as you would figure out, comes from the root, emotion, or something to do with emotion. Now, we need to understand, what are emotions, and what is Emotivism as a Moral

Theory, which lays on a foundation of Ethical Naturalism.

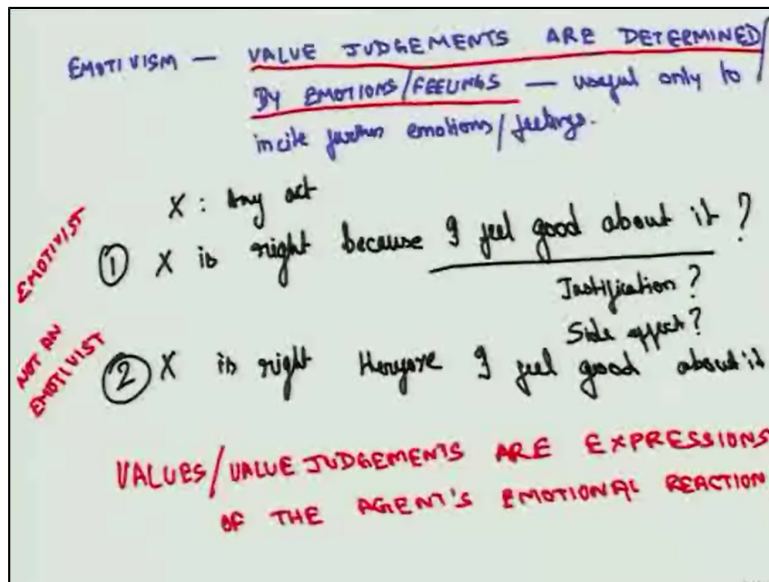
Let me briefly remind you of the categorisation, that we have. Well, the most fundamental layer is, Metaethics. And, on top of it would be, Moral Theory. And, on top of it is, Applied Ethics. So analogically, this can be seen as a, three layered format or framework, in our moral thinking. The bottom layer is Metaethics, which is the foundational. And, on top of that is built the, Moral Theory. And, depending on the Moral Theory, we have answers to applied questions.

Now, Ethical Naturalism is a form of Metaethics. The example of a Moral Theory is, Emotivism. It can be anything, that you would like. Or, any theory, that stands on Ethical Naturalism. And, applied Ethics is, is stealing wrong. How do you answer this question? So, if I answer yes, then this is an applied ethical question. Okay. Now, having known this, let us go ahead and explore, what is Emotivism. Well, what are emotions? Emotions are something, that we feel.

Now, if emotions are feelings, we know that, we are introspectively aware of them. Now, if emotions can be barely understood as feelings, and how are we aware of them. We are introspectively aware of them. So, you would yourself know, whether you are happy or unhappy, about a particular thing. Now, let us imagine, how do we sort a moral question, or an ethical question. Suppose, the question, that we asked in the Applied Ethics level, that well, is stealing wrong.

Now, various Moral Theories have various answers to it. Now, in the ambit of Ethical Naturalism, there is a Moral Theory called Emotivism. Let us see, what does Emotivism say about it. Well. Emotivism, very simply put, is saying that, value judgements are dependent on the emotions, that they bring forth. So, this is basically, what is Emotivism.

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So, you can understand, Emotivism is, value judgements are determined by, emotions or the feelings, and as will further explore, they are useful only to incite further emotions or feelings. Now, let us pay attention, on the first part of the claim. The first part of the claim is that, value judgements are determined by, emotions and feelings. Now, is that the case. Now, let us think over it, for a certain time. That, well, if you are posed with a value question, how do you answer it.

Well, how many of you reason? How many of you, look at the benefit, that it brings along? How many of you would like to be Kantian, and can see, whether it is universalizable? How many of you would follow the utilitarian way, and evaluate or assess, how much net happiness does it bring along? Or, if somebody answers that, stealing is wrong, because I do not feel good about it. Or, I feel bad about it, it brings about a negative reaction in me.

I am disdained by the concept of stealing, whenever I hear something stealing. Let us go back, and re-examine the example, that we talked about. Suppose, X is killing Y. Now, that is a statement of fact. But, what makes X killing of Y, are wrong act, or a value judgement on this act, is well, the emotion, that this such an act, brings forth in the agent. So, if I am an observer. And, I see that, X is killing Y. And, I just have a negative reaction to it.

I do not like it. I feel bad about it. I have a bad emotional response to it. Then, for me, that is

wrong. If I am an Emotivists, I would reason it this way. You could perhaps look around, and to find that, many people would say, that well. If you ask Mother Teresa, or if you ask any social worker, that why do you enjoy doing social work, or why do you choose social work. Now, apart from pragmatic necessities, if at a deeper level, people are interested. Because, perhaps someone would answer that, well.

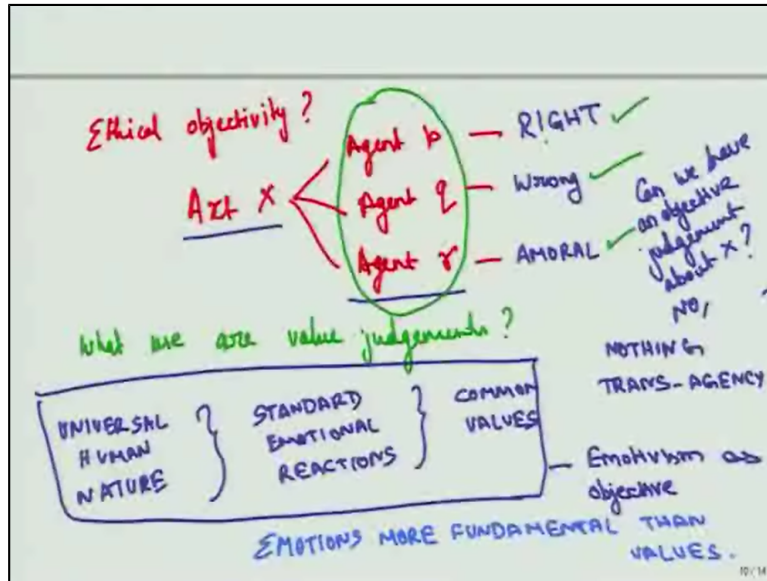
Because, it is my duty, to help the less privileged. Well, that is a part of Duty Ethics. But, if someone just says that, I do social work, because I like it. Now, is it an explanation or not. How would you account it? Now, take a look at the question. If the question is, if X is any act, X is right, because I feel good about it. Would you consider this, as a justification, for the act being good? Or, many of us would perhaps consider, that well, it is a side effect of the right act.

Well, I do something good, or X is right, not because, I feel good about it. But, X is right, therefore I feel good about it. Now, if I term this as, Statement-1, and Statement-2. Now, if you are in support of statement-1, well, then you are an Emotivist. Now, if you are in support of statement-2, or you understand right, from some other reason, and feeling good about it, is only a consequence of it, then you are not an Emotivist. So, this is an example of an Emotivist.

This is not an Emotivist. So, we see that well, any act is right, because I feel good about it. And likewise, any act is wrong, because I feel bad about it. Now, let us imagine, another example. Say, if we see a person, stealing. And, if you feel bad about it, that makes it wrong. And, if you feel good about it, that makes it right. So, what is the conclusion, that can be drawn from this, is well, values or value judgements are expression of the agent's emotional reaction.

So, this basically sums up, that well, what is meant by Emotivism. That, value judgements are, expressions of the agent's emotional reaction. Now, if you agree with this, well, then you are an Emotivist. Now, you might ask the question, that well, if value judgements, or Ethics, is subservient to human feelings, where is the objectivity.

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So, this is a question, what about ethical objectivity. The same act X, for agent P, agent Q, and agent R, can have different ethical values. So, for someone, it could be right. For someone, it could be wrong. And, for someone, it could be well, without any moral consequence. So, we can call it amoral. Now, having these three possibilities, that the same act can, depending on the agent, have different judgements. So, can we have an objective judgement about X.

Well, the answers, for most Emotivists would be, well, no, nothing trans-agent. That is, let me put that again clearly. So, value judgements, then become a consequence of the agent. So, if the agent is having a positive reaction to it, the action is right. If he is having a negative reaction to it, the action is wrong. And, if agent does not have a value reaction to it, can call it as amoral. Well. Then, what use are value judgements. That is a valid question, that we could ask.

Now, let us look at it, this way. If we find that well, there is a value dilemma. And, some of the people, choose to be Emotivists. And, say that well, whatever reaction we have to it, that determines the value judgement of that reaction to it. So, whatever emotional reaction, we have. So, a social worker says that, I feel good about social working, so I do social work. A selfish person would say, that I feel good about being selfish, therefore I am selfish.

A selfless person would say, that I feel good about being selfless, and bad about being selfish, so I am selfless. So, how can we judge the other. Yes, this definitely tends to fall in to the domain of

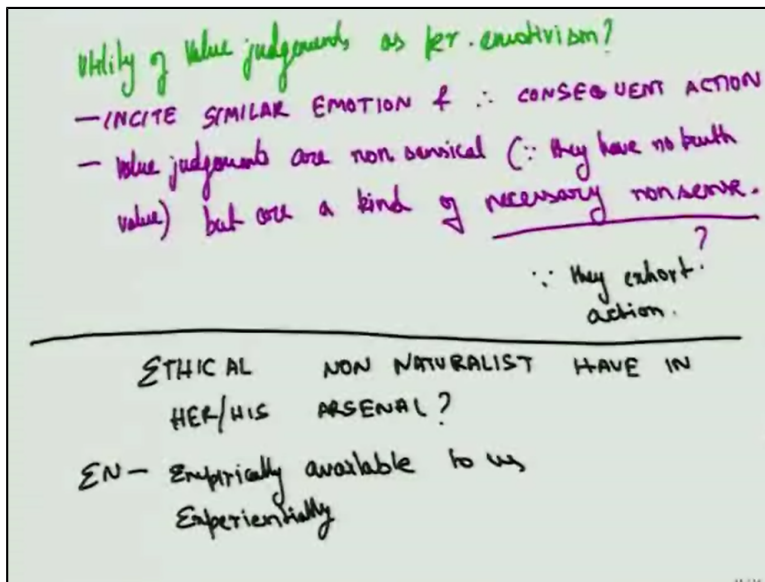
Ethical Relativism. That well, then there is no objective criteria. What some Philosophers have tried to go ahead, and build a system, to justify Emotivism, is that well, our basic moral apparatus, as human being remains the same, and thereof, we do have standard emotional response to a situation.

So, for instance, a compassion is a standard reaction. So, feeling bad, or having a negative emotional response, to somebody else's suffering, is perhaps something, that is a part of our framework of approaching the world. And therefore, we do not like others suffering. And therefore, we think that, suffering is bad, even for the others, where it is not for the self. So, this kind of a postulation of a universal human nature.

And therefore, a universal human reaction, is a possible justification of Emotivism. So, if you take a look, one of the justification run up is, universal human nature, which leads to standard emotional reactions, again which leads to common values. This could be a justification of Emotivism. So, this Emotivism as objective. Well. But, this is a weak justification, from more than one angle, is because, how do we postulate a universal human nature, or how do we thereof built the standard human emotional reaction.

Because, by very definition, our emotional reactions are determining, value. So, they are more fundamental than, values. So, an implicit claim here is, in Emotivism is that, emotions more fundamental than values. Now, if this is the case, that emotions are more fundamental than values, then Emotivism holds the case. Well. Then, let us tackle this question, again. What use are, value judgement?

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One is very much justified in asking, utility of value judgements, as per Emotivism. Well. Emotivists have tried to answer this question, by saying well, it is. If you would remember, the second part of the definition, that we talked about. Definition of Emotivism, that we talked about, to incite similar emotion, and therefore consequent action. So, Emotivists have said that, value judgements are nonsensical, because they have no truth value, but are a kind of necessary nonsense.

Now, how does this make sense. Well. Let us say, what is the utility of value judgements. Well, as per Emotivism, value judgements incite similar emotion, as the emotion felt by the agent, emotion of approval or disapproval. And therefore, that brings about a consequent action. Now, value judgements are nonsensical. That is, they have no truth value, but are a kind of a necessary nonsense. Why are necessary nonsense. Okay. Let us handle the question, one by one, now.

Let us look at it, this way, now. Let us say, if a soldier, before a final battle charge, addresses his fellow soldiers or his subordinates. Well. That is a very inspiring speech, generally. What is it inspiring? Where, they talk about freedom, they talk about justice, about fairness, about martyrdom. Now, this justification, or this speech, from the Emotivists perspective, is just an Emotivists judgement.

And, the leader feels that way. And, the purpose of this Emotivists speech is to, incite such a

feeling, in the subordinate soldiers, so that the entire team performs to the best of their ability. So, it is irrelevant that, for the leader, or that, whatever he says is true or false, in the world out there. But, what matters is that, it incites the other subordinates, to go ahead for a battle charge. So, that is the justification, that Emotivists give.

So, yes, the statement of the leader is nonsensical, because it does not have any truth value. It was mere exhortations. It is an appeal, which is not verifiable. But, it is necessary, because it brings about similar emotional reaction, to the listeners. Now, this example could be put forth, into poetry, into songs of valour, poems of valour, of movies, and any kind of an. When, one agent tries to influence the other agent, their value judgements are of a certain utility.

That, value judgements are emotional reactions, incites, that there should be, the followers or the subordinates, to go ahead for another action. Now, this is what, Emotivists have called the, thrust or the utility of value judgements. Now, so this, we see as an example of Emotivism. Value judgements being emotive, but necessary nonsense, because they exhort action. So, this happens to be the utility of Emotivism. Now, Emotivism was a kind of Ethical Non-Naturalism.

Now, I would like you to think, that well, we have talked about Ethical Naturalism. What could be the weapons or arsenal, in the hands of the Ethical Non-Naturalist. Now, if you are an Ethical Naturalist, you could be an Emotivist, you could be a Utilitarian, you could hold any theory, which has an empirical correlate. But, if you are Non-Naturalist, then what you have in your ambit. What does the Ethical Non-Naturalist, have in his arsenal?

Now, that is a question, that you must wonder about. That well, perhaps, whatever we meant by Ethical Naturalism, is almost synonymous, but not totally with, what is empirically available to us. Empirically, or you can understand it clearly as, experientially. Now, what is available from experience. Now, what is a dilemma or a moral question, that experience gives it to us. But, what is the solution. How do we arrive at that?

Now, if you do not have naturalistic or empiricist reaction pattern, how do we determine, what is right or wrong. If it is not reasons, if it is not feelings, then what is in the arsenal of Ethical Non-



Naturalist, to make value judgements. So, we will look at Ethical Non-Naturalism, as a Metaethical claim, now.