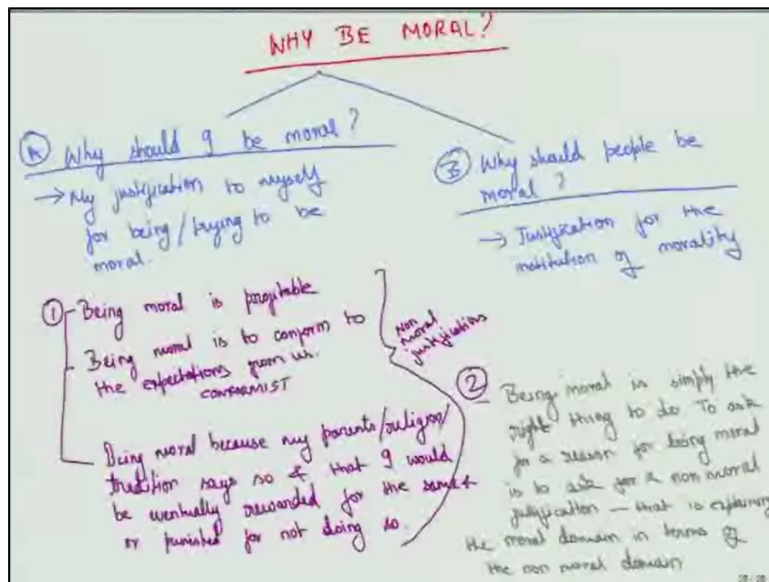


**Ethics**  
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**Module No. #01**  
**Lecture No. #20**  
**Why be Moral?**

Now, we deal with the concluding part, of our escapade with Metaethics, facing the question, as we see on the slide, why be moral?

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Now, the very question, that why should one be moral, is a deep question, and is in fact, perhaps the root of all Metaethical questions. Now, let us explore. In fact, today's lecture is more of a thought exercise for you, is the question of reflection and deeper analysis, as to why, should one be moral. Now, assuming that most of us, would seriously answer that, they would like to be moral, or ought to be moral, what is the justification of Morality.

Why should one be moral? That is the fundamental question of Metaethics. That is, sought to be answered, when we try to clarify, the Metaethical foundations of any ethical theory. Well. Applied Ethics talked about particular questions. It talks about questions like, should I let my ageing parents, lay with me, and share my resources with them. Moral Theory, which is a layer beneath Applied Ethics talks about, well, is Utilitarianism a better theory, over Deontological

Theories.

That well, if the happiness of the greater number, is being promoted by a certain decision, that should be taken. Now, beneath these two layers, is the Metaethical thing. That well, what is it to be moral. And, we explore various answers, that explaining Morality. And then, the final question that we are left with, is that, even if there is something called Morality, or if there is something called Morality, why should one be moral.

Now, let us look closely, at the question. If I say, why be moral, it can roughly be translated into two questions. It is, why should I be moral. And, the second question is, why should people be moral. Now, this is seeking my justification to myself, for being moral, or for trying to be moral. This, on the other hand, is well, seeks a justification for the institution of Morality. So basically, the same question can be divided into two parts.

Why should people be moral. And, why should I be moral. As an individual, I might have reasons, to be moral. But, why should Morality be practised. Why should one, or the institution of Morality, be promoted. Now, let us think, that well, what are the justifications, for my being moral. Or, what are the justifications, for promoting this institution of Morality.

Let us serial number, these two questions. So that, it gives us, let us call this as Question-A, and let us call this as Question-B. Now, the answer to A and B, need not be the same. If, my reasons for being moral, or I may have no reasons or justifications for being moral, but I may expect that, the institution of Morality, continue for me to profit from it. So, the deeper, perhaps more foundational question is, why should people be moral, or why should the institution of Morality be propagated.

So, mischievous of us, who would perhaps answer this Question-A, in the negative, that well, I should not be moral. But, as long as there are others, who are moral, or the institution of Morality is propagated, then there is an advantage in me, not to be moral. So, lot of questions being opened up. Let us tackle these questions, serially. And, these are answers, proposed to these questions.

And, you are invited to grapple with these questions, on your own. And, it is an assignment to answer this question, why be moral. Because, this is a question, that has even been answered by Plato, that has been answered by generations to come. And, that has been answered by generations, that have come, and will perhaps be tackled by generations that come. So, one has to reflect and dwell into, one's own theoretical foundations of psyche, to understand or to give an answer, to this question.

Because, this question answered by you, would reveal your theoretical framework, or foundation to yourself. Now, let us say, for a moment, we club this question together, and we say, well, why should I be moral. Now, let us think, some of the reasons. Well. First, being moral is profitable. Now, many of us would perhaps agree or disagree, that well, being moral may not be as profitable, as we would think it is.

So, being moral, does not always lead to profit. Being moral. So, in fact, this would not be a second answer to the question, rather it would be a first answer continue. That well, being moral is to confirm, to the expectations from us. So, as long as we are moral, the society, the collective, the family, has certain expectations from us. And, to conform to those expectations, there is a kind of oppression. And, these expectations are moral expectations. And, pressure from us, is to conform to it.

So, we confirm to it, to be a Conformist, as they say. Being moral. Because, my parents, religion, tradition, or any such entity, says so, and that, I would be eventually rewarded for the same. Now, being moral, because my parents, my religion, my traditions, says so, and that, I would be eventually rewarded for the same, and or punished, for not doing so. Now, notice here. Now, all these three answer suggested, are the variant of one, or perhaps the same ethos of the answer.

Which is that, being moral, is being profitable, is being smart, is being wise. Because well, to the Conformist, well it is conforming to tradition, it is conforming to the expectations, that the collective has, the family has. So, by confirming, my life becomes easier. So therefore, I should be moral. The second option could be, well, as we said, that well, being moral is conforming to

one's religion.

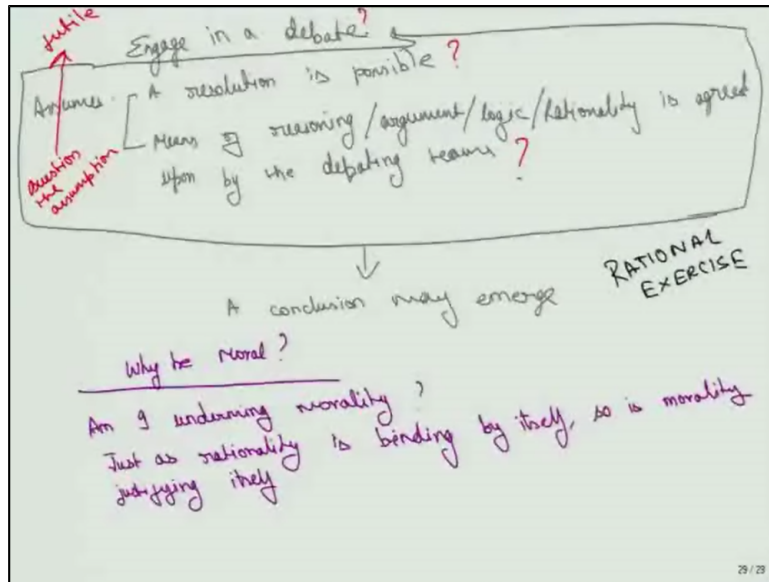
And, following the diktats of one's religion, or one's tradition, or one's parents, with the impression that well, being moral, or following moral diktats, would get you rewards eventually, may not immediately, may be eventually in this life, or proposed afterlife. And, not doing so, would get you punishment. So, this is another customary level of Morality, where we talk about the justification of Morality, coming from the rewards, it brings along, or the fear of the punishment, that it brings along.

Now, apart from this, can there be any other justification of Morality. Before proceeding further, I would urge the viewers to reflect, sharply on their own to explore, whether there can be any other justification of Morality. You are welcome to explore, or deeply delve into, any other justification of Morality. And, if you would like, please do email me your answers, that you propose. Well, there can be another justification of Morality.

If you take a look at these slides, these justifications essentially are, non-moral justifications. Now, let us answer in the same strain, that being moral, is simply the right thing to do. To, ask for a reason for being moral, is to ask for a non-moral justification. That is, explaining the moral domain, in terms of, the non-moral domain. So, this is what, I would propose as, the second answer to the question.

That well, the very fact, when we asked the question, why we moral, is perhaps looking for a non-moral justification for the same. The question itself hives in it, a prejudice, or a bias, towards a naturalistic understanding. That well, one ought to be moral, because simply, it is the right thing to do. It is like this, that when we engage in a debate. We are engaging with an assumption, that a rational resolution to the debate is possible. If I do not believe in the tenets of rationality, or a possibility of a resolution, then my engaging in a debate is meaningless.

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Let us, just quickly write it down. Suppose, I engage in a debate. This assumes, a resolution is possible, and means of reasoning, or argument, or logic, or rationality, is agreed upon by the debating teams. One engages in a debate, having these assumptions would mean, that well, we can hope, a resolution is possible. Right. Conclusion may emerge. And, the entire plethora is a rational exercise.

Now, if I get into a debate, either questioning, that well, a resolution is not possible, that the means of rationality, and the standard axioms, and principles of logic, are also variable, then there is no point in engaging my debate. So, if I question the assumptions, then the exercise becomes futile. So likewise, when I asked the question, why be moral, am I undermining Morality.

Well, the answer is, well, just as, rationality is binding by itself, so is Morality justifying itself. So, the second answer, that we are offered, that well, if we need not seek further justification for the right thing to do, because as the adage goes, that well, a man is got to do, is what a man is got to do. That is the kind for justification, also offered for Morality, that well, what has to be done, has to be done. That, doing the right thing, can have no other reason, except that it is the right thing to do.

Now, let us look at it, this way. If we are in a dilemma, and from whatever Metaethical

foundation we have, and whatever Moral Theory we practice, we arrive at something, what we consider right. Now, the justification for doing that right thing, according to the second kind of answer, that we just talked about, is that well, it has to be done, because it has to be done. Now, in a way, this is a Non-Consequentialist answer. In fact, this is in a way, a resolution where, doing the right thing is more important than, anything else.

Now, look at it, this way. Now, let us think of an example, where this would perhaps find, lot of utility. Now, let us say, that if we have to unjustly trample over the rights of an individual, to get the job done. If it is wrong, it is wrong, and it should not be done, no matter what. Now, this kind of a justification. Let us put further a concrete example. Let us say, there is an examination conducted, with a lot of an entrance examination. And, one student was given a misprinted, faulty question paper. Which, to the best of his ability, he checked.

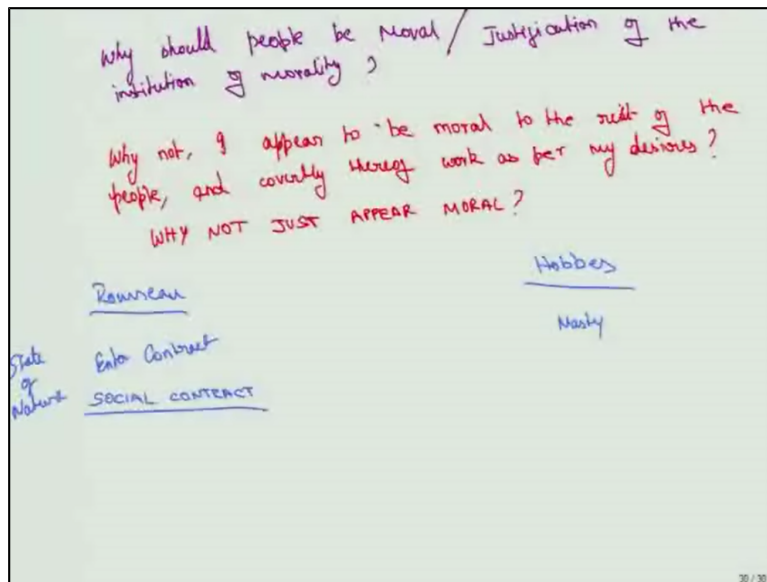
And, the question, or the digits, are somehow printed wrong. An error, that he could not have spotted by himself, unless he had access to another question paper. So clearly, this student has been wronged, that the examination has been unfair to him. But now, if the resolution is to conduct the whole examination once more, or to give him a separate examination, or to let this matter out in the notice of the public gaze, harms the examination.

So, if this matter is suppressed, the efficiency of the examination remains. Nobody is disadvantaged and lost. See, there can be many variants of this examples. The answer script of a student is lost. And, it is simply not accounted. And, he or she is regarded as not qualified. Now, this is an example, where the right thing clearly is to, accept the error on the part of the examination authority, and make a resolution of it possible. Whatever is possible.

Maybe, conduct the whole examination again. Maybe, hold a separate examination for the wronged person, or whatever the laws be. So here, the justification for the right thing to do, is not that, it would bring about the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Because, it clearly in this case, it would not bring about the greatest happiness of the greatest number. So, the justification for doing the right thing here is, because it is the right thing to do, because it is a fair thing to do.

And here, fairness and rightness cannot be understood, in terms of any other psychological or natural property. These are fundamental qualities or properties, without any further reduction or explanation possible, in terms of other natural properties. Now, let us go to the original question, that we talked about.

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That well, the Question-B that, why should people be moral, or the justification of the institution of Morality? Why not, as many Philosophers have regarded, as the fundamental question of ethics? That, why not I appear to be moral, to the collective or the rest of us, and covertly thereof work as per my desires? So, what essentially it is, why not just appear moral? Is not there a deeper justification, for the same? Now, a very common thing, that we can associate, with the stories we read, the news we come across, the movie we watch.

That well, in a standard plot of a movie, the bad guy wants to appear moral. Because, appearing moral, gives you a lot of advantages. Let us say, when he is framed as a politician, or the businessman, or the powerful tycoon, they want to be seen as moral, by the people at large. They invest huge amounts, or huge resources, in what they would call as public relations, thereof to make their enterprise or themselves, known as morally sound persons.

But, this is an appearance. And, they would perhaps work towards, the fulfilment of their own desires. This is a very simple plot, which is perhaps in everywhere. But, this is a very

foundational ethical question, that why should one be moral, and why should one not appear to be moral, whereas gaining from the Morality of others, the notion of free riders. That well, in a community of truth speakers, if I am a liar, I can get a lot of advantage.

But, in a community of liars, being a liar, gives me no particular advantage. So, somewhere the moral platform has to exist, for the free rider to benefit. Because, if the moral platform does not exist, then there is no free rider possible. So, this kind of a justification of Morality, that well, there has to be the common adage, that a majority of the people are law govern, and rule govern, then it is that minority of rule breakers, or lawbreakers, that get an advantage.

But, if all collapses, then well, the formal rule breakers, are as disadvantaged as anybody else. So, the fundamental question that arises, is that well, why should one really be moral, instead of appearing to be moral. So, that means, an internal intrinsic justification of Morality, that does not tackle, in our moral component. Okay. Let us take a little flashback, and let us think of. Many of you must have heard of this time, these earlier Philosophers called, Rousseau and Hobbes.

Now, before we talk about these Philosophers, let us put a fundamental question. A question, that thinks for oneself. Let us say, for a day, law enforcement, policeman are taken off the streets, what would people at large do. Let us say, at the time of natural calamities, at the time of riots, at the time of civil disobedience, at the time of internal strife, when law enforcement ceases to exist, what would people do. Now, the answer to this question will largely determine, what is our intuition, or what is our opinion, of the fundamental human nature.

Now, if I assume, that well, the fundamental human nature is good. That, when law enforcement is pulled off the streets, we find that well, initially there may be a lot of chaos. But, eventually people will start, perhaps helping each other. And, the majority of people would be moral, as to say. Now, this brings us to, these two Philosophers, Rousseau and Hobbes, that we talked about.

Now, Rousseau said that well, Hobbes was of the opinion. Okay. Let me briefly put, Hobbes has the opinion, that well, life in state of nature, state of nature meaning without society, was nasty, poor, brutish, and short. Right. So, state of nature, here it is nasty. But, Rousseau on the other



hand, well, proposes theory, that we called, an enter in to contract. Well. We need to go about, the details of these two Philosophers.

But, what we need to say, is that well, Rousseau says that well, society as an institution, comes as a pact between the individuals, to form a society, where there would be regulations, voluntarily imposed and accepted and followed regulations, enforced regulations, for the betterment of all. So, in the time of natural calamity, or a riot, if a group of people living together, come into a contract, that well, each one of us would not harm the other, and we would protect each other, from any other external aggression.

Because, the law enforcement at that time, would not be able to do so. And, this is the formation of the society. That well, there is nothing intrinsically, perhaps right or wrong. And but, for each one of us to pursue our desires, we need a minimum platform of security. And, that security would be provided by the social contract, as Rousseau has talked about. If any of you interested to know, can search this term, social contract, to get further details of Rousseau's Theory.

So now, Rousseau society is another justification of Morality, where he says that well, what one does, or the formation of morality or society is, to restrain each one of us equally, so that, all of us can have moderately fulfil most of our wishes, instead of relieving it as a total free reign. So, this is an another example of Morality, as a social construct. As analogically speaking, that well, when we all come to play a game, we follow by common rules, so that, all of us can enjoy the game.

Because, winning does not mean that, we are allowed to break the rules. Because, that would take the fun out of the game. And, that would perhaps make it brutal, and equally insecure for all, to bring a level of security. And, this would perhaps be the prevalent, many of us would follow this, as the foundation of Metaethics. That, the reason for being moral, is to get one's own security, to act further.

So, with this, I leave the question to you, that well, why should be one be moral, or why should Morality be propagated. This is a justification, that has been sort. Does Morality have to be

followed, because it is enforced, or is it binding on to us, just as the way rationality is. The way, we say that well, if there are three oranges with me, I can always take two oranges out from them. I cannot take four oranges out from them. Now, just as this, taking four oranges out of three oranges, is absurd to us.

Does, Morality have the same kind of binding? That well, knowing the right thing, and doing the right thing, is compelling onto us, similarly. So, there have been all Moral Theories, proposed in systems built, have been answered to this fundamental question. That well, why should one be moral, and why should the institution of Morality, be promulgated or propagated. Now, this is a question, I leave you with, to reflect and think for yourself, that what is your justification of Morality, that you come up with.