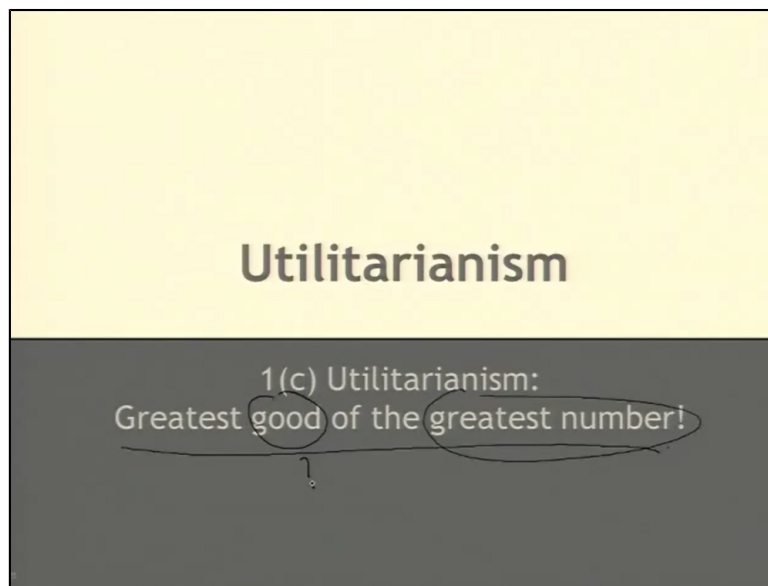


**Ethics**  
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**Module No. #01**  
**Lecture No. #06**  
**Utilitarianism**

Hello, every one. Today, we are going to talk about, Utilitarianism. We have till now talked about, Consequentialism, and Hedonism, as a Moral Theory. Today, we talk about Utilitarianism, as a Moral Theory.

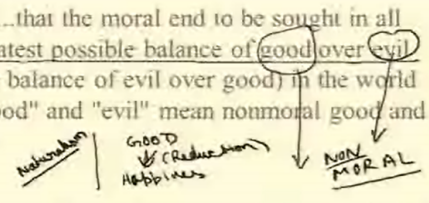
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Now, Utilitarianism as generally put, is called the greatest good of the greatest number. So, what matters here is, good, and of the greatest number. Now, what is the description of this thing called, good. That, brings variations, in the various shades of Utilitarianism.

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## Basics:

- *Principle of utility*: '...that the moral end to be sought in all that we do is the greatest possible balance of good over evil (or the least possible balance of evil over good) in the world as a whole. Here "good" and "evil" mean nonmoral good and evil.' (Frankena, 34)  

- Assumes that 'good' or 'evil' may be measured, they are used as non-moral terms here.
- Example of ethical naturalism, wherein moral concepts can be understood/analyzed in terms of natural concepts (concepts from the natural sciences)

Now, Utilitarianism is basically based on the, principle of utility. Now, let us read, what is the principle of utility, say. It says that, the moral end to be sought, in all that we do, is the greatest possible balance of good over evil. Or, the least possible balance of evil over good, in the world as a whole. Here, good and evil mean, non-moral good and evil. It makes a few assumptions. It assumes that, good or evil may be measured. And here, they are used as non-moral terms here.

Now, this goes on to subscribe to something called, Ethical Naturalism. We will talk about it, in a short time. Now, what is it for, a theory to be, a Utilitarian theory. What makes one, a Utilitarian. A Utilitarian is one, who is searching for utility, right. What is utility? Not usefulness per say, but it means, that act is high on utility, that brings about the desired goodness. What is the desired goodness? Well. Utilitarianism is mostly tied up with Hedonism, that well, pleasure or happiness turns out to be the, most desired consequence.

Now, let us take a few steps back, and try to remember, what all have we talked about. We have talked about, Consequentialism as a theory, that well, where we judge and act, depending on the consequence, it yields. Now, what is this consequence? Now, Utilitarianism puts forth that well, it brings forth the greatest good of the greatest number. Hedonism claim that, it should bring about the pleasure. So, an act is right, as long as it brings about, maximising pleasure. That was the Hedonistic stand.

The Utilitarian stands talks about utility, that which brings about the maximum utility, or that function, which helps in bringing about the desired consequences, or what is good. Now, let

us think slowly and carefully. The Utilitarian makes a claim, that well, we bring about something that is good, for the greatest good of the greatest number. So now, when we talked about the agents, how many agents are we talking about. We are talking about everyone.

It could be domain specific, or universally, that would include the whole world. Now, an action is right, if it brings about the greatest good of the greatest number. Now, what is this good and evil. Paying attention to the slide, now let us read the sentence, once more. When it says that, it is the greatest possible balance of good over evil. Now here, what is meant by good, is a nonmoral good. What does it mean. Well, it means that well. So, evil here, a nonmoral evil, as suggested here. Now, what is a nonmoral good.

Now, a nonmoral good would be something, that cannot be reduced, any further. Now, we have, what is the Utilitarian's notion. Utilitarian's notion of good, is reducible, to a naturalistic notion, a notion of say, happiness. Now, when you are happy, you generally know it, naturally. You are biologically, psychologically equipped, to be aware of your state, when you are happy. So, the happiness is to be understood, as a natural notion.

So, what comes out to be right or good, is what brings about happiness. So, notice that well, good is being reduced to happiness. This is a function of reduction, right. That, what is good, which almost looks like a smiley, good being reduced to happiness. Now, this good, when it is reduced to happiness, we are also making a deeper claim. The deeper claim is that of, Naturalism. That is, we say, that right and wrong are no more figments, or creations, or any abstract and distinct entities from, what is natural.

Now, there were times in the history of civilisation, when held a notion, that well, the good and the bad and evil, where something, which depended upon something extrinsic, something abstract, may be religion, may be something, which had nothing to do with happiness. So, it might sometimes, get along happiness, it might not. But, that was not, how it was defined. Now, the Utilitarian defines it with, a natural concept of good and evil.

So well, disease is an evil, and health is a good, which is a very naturalistic notion. So, any act, that promotes health, and keeps you away from disease, is a right act to do. Now, the same thing, at the level of a nation. Let us say that, a country decides to make one day, or a city decides to make one day in the city, a cycling day. So, where everybody bicycles to their

place of destiny. Except of course, the emergency services, and senior citizens, and all people, who are not capable of using bicycles.

Now, such a day, brings about the health, or its contributes to a better health of the population, at large. So, Utilitarian decision could be to enforce that, well, one day is a cycling day. Now, it attains a proper good, that is health. But, this could also be a violation of rights. Let us look at it, this way. Now, why? If, I am a citizen of that city, I would ask the question that, how and what gives you the right, to take away my freedom to use my vehicle, on any day of the city.

Now, the Utilitarian, well, they say that well, it is the greatest good of the greatest number. And, your individual freedom can be, or may be, subsumed or trampled, more harshly put, for this attainment of this greater goal. So, Utilitarianism, is not equivalent to Totalitarianism. But, it gives greatest happiness of the greatest number. Now, the natural question arises, how do you arrive at this greatest happiness of the greatest number.

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**Bentham & Mill**

- Bentham: Gross or Quantitative Utilitarianism - hedonic calculus of pleasures and pains using seven dimensions: intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity (proximity), fecundity (fruitfulness), purity and extent.  
*Handwritten notes: Bentham's Felicific Calculus, Variable pleasures can be calculated how?, Common factors*
- Mill: Refined or Qualitative Utilitarianism - Mill argues that there are different qualities of pleasure and that the cultural and the intellectual are superior to the sensual.  
*Handwritten notes: Hierarchy of Pleasures*

Well, now coming to the next slide. A little bit of history on, the Utilitarianism. Please, look at the slide. It says, there is a philosopher called Jeremy Bentham, who put forth this version of Utilitarianism, which is called Gross, or more importantly, Quantitative Utilitarianism, which has been given a connotation of a Gross Utilitarianism. Now, the Quantitative Utilitarianism says that, the hedonic calculus of pleasures and pains, using seven dimensions.

They are intensity, duration, certainty, propinquity or proximity, fecundity or fruitfulness, purity and extent. Now, what it is basically saying is that, well, happiness can be calculated. How? Well, because it has these, seven factors. So, it has seven common factors. Any instance of happiness has, seven common factors. And, we need to determine, that how, these to what extent, right. So, supposed to take an example, that we are evaluating Happiness-1.

Now, H-1 has seven factors, right. Now, each of these factors, as mentioned here, all the seven factors, are multiplied by, what assist in terms of these factors. And then, the summation is taken. Let us say, we do require Quantitative Utilitarianism, to find out that well, electricity in two villages is better, or irrigation to five villages is better. So, Bentham went ahead to actually form, an entire school of Utilitarianism called Quantitative Utilitarians, who actually try to Quantify happiness.

And because, this is necessary. Quantify happiness, not in any absolute sense, but in a relative sense. Relative sense, vis-a-vis. When we have two choices, what would bring the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Now, to me, my happiness is intuitively evident. But, now let us not dismiss, or find something strange about these, Quantitative Utilitarians. Look at it, this way now. If Quantitative Utilitarians are making a claim, of attaching numbers to happiness, it is not a silly thing.

It is in fact, a necessary thing to make policy decisions, say at the macro level. Say, you would like to decide whether, a Cable TV to 12 villages is more important, or is it righter that way, than providing mobile phone connectivity to one village. When choices are close by, when it is difficult to take an intuitive stand, and which very often it is difficult at the macro level, a Quantitative or a philosophic calculus is always helpful.

Now, using the seven factors, Bentham constructed a system, wherein we can find the cumulative, or the total sum of the pleasures, giving it a gross happiness value, right. So, an average. Gross here, would not mean that lowly, but it would mean that a summation, a summation of the happiness value. So, an act A gives sum total of happiness value as X, and an act B give the sum total of happiness value as Y. Now, if X is greater than Y, then A is a more desirable, is the right thing to do, over B.

Now, the Quantitative Utilitarians are not so intuitively unaware that, we tend to underestimate the power, or to attach numbers, to one of the happiness indexes. But then, they have tried hard, to work out whether, that is at all possible. And, they have worked out a gross model, a system of attaching numbers, to happiness. Now, there were some problems to this, or some features.

Now, the moment we mentioned seven common factors, or characteristics of pleasure or happiness, there was a problem. There was a problem, that this kind of a classification seems to disregard, the difference in various Qualities of happiness or pleasure. So, as the Quantitative Utilitarians are ridiculed by the claim, that well, if Quantitative Utilitarianism is true, then push-pin is as good as poetry.

Or, it does not make any difference between, the intellectual pleasures, and the what we would call, a more superficial pleasures. It would not make a difference between, watching a movie, and say, reading a classic. Now, let us look at gossiping, and watching a work of art. Now, to many of us, it would seem that well, there is a difference in category, in different kinds of happiness. So, Quantitative Utilitarianism is perhaps failing in capturing, that difference in Qualities

The Quantitative Utilitarians do answer that well, these seven factors give different weightage. And, maybe a happiness, or a pleasure, which is of purely the intellectual kind, can be assessed higher, in one of these factors mentioned here. But well, any factors, say intensity or duration, we can strip up the intensity, or again play around, with these seven variables, to find out the value of the pleasure, anyway.

Now, on further thinking, there was another philosopher called Mill, who proposed the Theory of Refined or Qualitative Utilitarianism. Now, notice that, Mill and Bentham, both preserve the Utilitarian spirit. But, it is Mill only makes augments a difference, to Quantitative Utilitarianism, by adding that, there are different Qualities of pleasure. And, that cultural and intellectual are superior pleasures. So, it makes a hierarchy of pleasures.

Now, this hierarchy of pleasures, was missing here. But, it is present here. Now, Mill opined that, this hierarchy of pleasure can, better represent a calculation, better represent the Felicific Calculus. Okay. Now, the Quantitative Utilitarians are, like Mill, or in the school of Mill,

claim that well, there are differences in kinds of pleasure. And there, that needs to be given, weightage or attached value. And that, these earlier mentioned seven factors of the Quantitative Utilitarians, do not capture that difference.

And, this Qualitative measure, captures the difference. And, but nevertheless, we must be aware, or we must remind ourselves, that well, both of them are essentially in the same stream of Utilitarianism, that where they are seeking the parameter, or the paradigms of right or good as that, which promotes the greatest good of the greatest number.

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The slide is titled "Recent utilitarianism" in a dark grey header. Below the title, there are three bullet points:

- Content of "good" — *NON MORAL describes it. Health & Happiness — Universalization*
- Preference satisfaction: *PREFERENCE SATISFACTION*
- Stand as an example of utilitarians who are non hedonists.

At the bottom of the slide, there is a diagram with two columns. The left column is labeled "Hedonists" and has a checkmark and an 'X' next to it. The right column is labeled "Utilitarians" and has two checkmarks next to it.

Now, the recent Utilitarians, talk about certain factors like, well, may be good, needs a little more elaborate description, may be health, sufficient food, a proper place to stay, is just not enough to prescribe good. What is the constituent of this notion of good, that the Utilitarians put forth? Now, let us take a look at the slide. Now, these are the recent versions of Utilitarianism, which comes out to question that, what is this entity called good?

How do you describe it? Right. Now, remember that, this good, that that they are talking about, was non moral good, for the classical philosophers. It was health and happiness, right. But well, new version of Utilitarianism would like to say that, it is not health and happiness. Because, that may be a universal minimum. But, that is an act of universalisation. Whereas, more optimistically, or more egalitarianly, a better description of good would be, something called Preference Satisfaction. Right.

Now, what is Preference Satisfaction? Preference Satisfaction is that well, each one of us, now if you look at, what I say is that, each one of us is having in order, or hierarchy of preferences of different things in life. Some may value food, more than rest. Some may value rest, more than leisure. Some may value leisure, more than work. So, there is a wide variety, or difference in the ways, we make a hierarchy amongst our preferences.

So, the recent Utilitarian trend has been to say, that well, if is no more just a blanket good, or happiness, that determines an action, as a right action. But perhaps, any action is right, which promotes the greatest good of the greatest number. And, the greatest good here is, greatest Preference Satisfaction. So, very commonsensically put, it is that well, any act that would enable more people to exercise their preferences, that to live out their preferences, makes it a right act.

Now, transposing this claim, to the world around us today, we can perhaps see a very strong evidence of Preference Satisfaction, Utilitarianism, as a common goal. The government, the establishment, the institutions, the companies, everybody wants to give the individual, as much freedom as possible. So that, the individual can choose, according to his or her own preferences.

Now, does not that make sense. We would say, for an example, you are in an educational institute, or a college. You are staying in a hostel. Now, this hostel would like to give you, each of you, single room. So that, each one of you can live the way, you would like to live. So, the good that perhaps communitarian living brings along, should be a matter of choice. If one deserves to be, to live communitarian live in a double room, or a triple room, or a dormitory, there could be preferences like that.

Maybe, some people would prefer to stay in a dormitory, or at least a two seater, then a single room. Now, these are where, individual's preferences come in to the play. So, the Utilitarian stops short of, describing the content of good. And, puts that description to the individual, that in a way, relatively to every individual. That, whatever the individual would like to have as an order of preferences, that becomes Preference Utilitarianism.

Now, Preference Satisfaction, as you look at the slide, as an example of Utilitarians, who are Non-Hedonist. Still now, we have been talking about, Hedonists and Utilitarians. Right. We



have been talking about people, who have been both, Hedonists and Utilitarians. Now, this is an example of somebody, who is need not be a Hedonist, may or may not be a Hedonist, but is the Utilitarian, nevertheless. That is, having one's own preferences, satisfied. These preferences, could be Hedonistic, or not. Now, we would talk about, various versions of Utilitarianism.

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Act Utilitarianism, and Rule Utilitarianism. Now, Act Utilitarianism claims that well, to determine the right action, the Act Utilitarian assesses all the consequences of any particular act, and that which brings the greatest good for the greatest number, is the right act. No rules or generalisation, from past experience. Rule Utilitarianism, again places back the centrality of rules, in morality. And, it further claims that, we ought to determine, promote, and follow rules, that will promote the general good for everyone.

Now, what to Act Utilitarianism, now. We read out the definitions of Act and Rule Utilitarianism. Now, what does Act Utilitarianism say? Well, both of them are versions of Utilitarianism. Both of them believe in the greatest good of the greatest number. Now, they differ in the way, we achieve the greatest good of the greatest number. The Act Utilitarian is an atomist belief, to assess each act, as to how much good would it be getting over.

So, in any case, if we have a choice between two or more acts, we choose the act depending on all the consequences, that the act brings along. Sounds, fairly simple. Sounds, perhaps a little convincing, or perhaps not. Because, how can we assess, all the possible consequences of an act. And, sitting at it, we would have to be a spend a lot of time, before each act that we

do. Well. The Rule Utilitarianism hopes to come over this, enormous temporality, in making decisions.

In saying that well, the Rule Utilitarians also believe that, in getting out the greatest good of the greatest number. But, how? Is, where they differ? Well. The Act Utilitarians choose an act, forecast its consequences, both direct and indirect. And, then decide that. The Rule Utilitarianism, believe in making rules, that would bring about the greatest good of the greatest number. Now, say something like, should I lie, or speak the truth.

Now, the Rule Utilitarianism would say, that well, let us have a rule, that would bring about the greatest good of the greatest number. Now, every time, neither can we contemplate, neither do we have the luxury of time, to contemplate over, what this particular act might lead to. And, secondly, nor or we, able to be sure of the actual consequences, over the intended consequences. Now, these are problems with Act Utilitarianism.

Rule Utilitarianism, hopes to jump this problem with the claim, that well, let us make rules. Let us make rules, that bring about the greatest good of the greatest number. Suppose, we have seen, that well, in this particular act, my lying brings in more benefit, to most of the people involved. Then, my lying becomes right. This is the Act Utilitarian version. The Rule Utilitarian version is claiming, that well, if I have a rule, that I lie, when it is convenient. Will that lead to, a happier state of affairs, on an unhappier state of affairs.

Now, if that leads to an unhappier state of affairs, in the long run, including all possibilities, then it is perhaps not right, or it is not leading to the greatest happiness of the greatest number. So, thereof, the Rule Utilitarians try to explain, that well, we would like to, as we have seen in the slide, that we ought to determine, promote, and follow rules, that will promote the general good of everyone. So, this exercise of determining, promoting, and following, also implicitly takes place.

Perhaps, this originates with culture. Its promotion, comes with society. And, it is followed by, the individual. Now, look at the various code of conducts, that we have. Say, something like, being considerate to the physically challenged. Now, it has evolved as a courtesy, and it becomes a part of a culture. It is promoted by society. Because, people look down upon you, if you are unkind to the physically challenged. And, it is followed by the individual.

So, perhaps, this is an example of Rule Utilitarianism, where our customs come to stay. Because, they lead to a greater happiness of the greater number, or general good for everyone. We would now talk about, Mill's Utilitarianism. As you would recollect, we have talked about the various versions of Utilitarianism. Bentham's Gross Utilitarianism, which was Quantitative in nature.

It tried to attach a number, to all pleasures, without making a distinction in categories. Mill, further refine this Utilitarianism. And thereof, it was called Refined Utilitarianism, or Qualitative Utilitarianism. And, it made a distinction between the various categories of pleasure. Now, we take a look, at an excerpt from a Mills book of Utilitarianism, with the same name. Let us look at the slide.

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**Mill's Utilitarianism**

- ' The utilitarian morality does recognise in human beings the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. It only refuses to admit that the sacrifice is itself a good. A sacrifice which does not increase or tend to increase the sum total of happiness, it considers wasted.'

• *Utilitarianism, 1863, Ch.2*

*NOTHING INTRINSICALLY GOOD ABOUT ANY ACT.*

It states that, the Utilitarian morality does recognise in human beings, the power of sacrificing their own greatest good, for the good of others. It only refuses to admit, that the sacrifice is itself a good. A sacrifice, which does not increase, or tend to increase, the sum total of happiness, it considers wasted. Now here, what is a Mill basically trying to put forth. He is trying to put forth, that well, there is nothing in a sacrifice, that is good in itself.

There is nothing intrinsically good in a sacrifice. And that, there is nothing intrinsically good about any act. Now, what does this mean. Well, when he says, that well, the Refined Utilitarian as per Mill, admits that, people do makes great sacrifices, sacrificing the greatest

good, for the good of the collective. But, there is nothing in that sacrifice, which makes it a good by itself.

The only thing, that makes that sacrifice a good, is the consequence that it achieves, or tends to achieve. Now, if it does not achieve that consequence, can it be further called, good. That is where, perhaps the Utilitarians, encounter some difficult questions. Now, coming to the next slide. We have talked about, Act Utilitarianism, and Rule Utilitarianism. Act Utilitarianism, determine the right action, by assessing all the consequences of any particular act. And, that which brings the greatest good for the greatest number, is the right act.

There are no rules, no generalisation, from experience. Rule Utilitarianism, on the other hand, tries to determine, promote, and follow rules, that will promote the general good for everyone. Now, it places the centrality of rules, in morality. Now, one might ask a question that, what is it in a rule. Or, how do the Utilitarians being consequentialist, ever stick to the rule, as a grid of morality. Is not it the case, that consequentialist always dependent on objectives.

And, they stayed away from, what was rules. Well. Utilitarians being consequentialist, also value objectives. But, there is a way of valuing objectives, or judging by the consequences, and still having rules about it. Let us take an example. Now, every time, that you mix a cup of sugar, or every time that you mix a spoon of sugar, to your tea, it gets sweeter. You know that. It seems to be trivially true. Are you ever uncertain that, mixing a spoon of sugar to your cup of tea, would make it less sweet than, what it was.

Perhaps, no. It would even be a naïve. Not even naïve, it would be insane, to ask or conceive such a thought. Now, let us just look at the simple example, what does it stand for. It stands for one, that well, we take that, adding of sugar, act, makes the tea sweeter, the consequence. We take this connection, between the act and the consequence, as rigid and non-negotiable.

Now, in the long run, if in the broad picture, if we come to see that well, if there is a connection between a certain kinds of acts, leading to more desirable ends or consequences. Some acts, which are better in bringing about the, greatest good of the greatest number. Shall we not make these acts, or shall we not make rules, that make these kind of acts, desirable. Let us take an example.

Now, say, the Act Utilitarian, say, we have a healthy person, admitted to a hospital. And, there are 7 or 8 patients, requiring different organs. Now, this relatively healthy patient, who has been admitted into the hospital, possibly for a minor ailment. If the doctor is an Act Utilitarian, in certain interpretations, he would actually, or she would actually like to, harvest the organs from this healthy patient, who has been admitted. And well, provide these necessary organs to all the other people, who are in need of organs for survival.

So, the death of one person, could lead to a flourishing or happiness and life, and flourishing of another eight people. Act Utilitarian, this seems to be sensible. Rule Utilitarian, would like to make this act wrong, by citing certain rules. That, this kind of a rule, if this thing is made a rule, it will not promote general happiness. Because, healthy people, people at large, would start getting worried, about going to the hospital, lose their lives.

So, it brings upon a general climate of insecurity, which is not conducive. In fact, which is contrary to a happy state of affairs. Now, let us look at the slide. Now, the Rule Utilitarians would say that well, therefore we have to determine certain rules, which we see in the long term, that brings about, the general good for everyone. So, it is a long-term thinking. Long-term and a wide perspective, as wide as can be. So, these two would make us, would liberate us, from individual, or atomic hacks, rather give us certain rules, now.

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**Recent utilitarianism**

- Content of 'good'  $\neq$  Happiness
- Preference satisfaction (circled in red) — Individualism  
Greater "PS" of the greatest number.
- Stand as an example of utilitarians who are non hedonists.
- Also known as Preference utilitarianism

Recent Utilitarians, have advanced further. And now, they have come out to make a change, in the content of good. Preference Satisfaction is the keyword, that is being used here. Now,

what is good, depends on the individual, right. Now, let us say, earlier, what was good, was equal to happiness, right. Now, this is where the Preference Utilitarian, this joins good from happiness. They prefer to use the term, Preference Satisfaction, or a Preference Utilitarianism, as the terms.

So, it commits to individualism wherein, we see that, having once preferences satisfied, is criteria for Utilitarianism. Therefore, instead of greatest good of the greatest number, it becomes greatest Preference Satisfaction of the greatest number. So, well the Preference Utilitarian, now take a look at this Preference Utilitarianism. Now, it is going away from the fundamental commitment of Hedonism, that Utilitarianism stuck with. That well, happiness is the desirable, is the good, and it is good for all.

So, it was an unambiguous claim, a naturalistic claim, that well, happiness is a universal good, and chasing happiness, is the right thing to do. Now, the Preference Utilitarian would rather say that, it is our ability to make choices, to have preferences, to have a hierarchy between choices, that is more important than, what is the content of happiness.

So, any system is good, or any policy is good only, or any act is good only, when it enables, the greatest number of people, to have the widest Preference Satisfaction possibility. So, unless until, the satisfaction of one's preferences, interferes with another individual's Preference Satisfaction ability, it ought to be maintain. So now, this coming to the slide. This is called as Preference Utilitarianism. Sidgwick and Moore, have been a proponent of such a theory.

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## Preference Utilitarianism

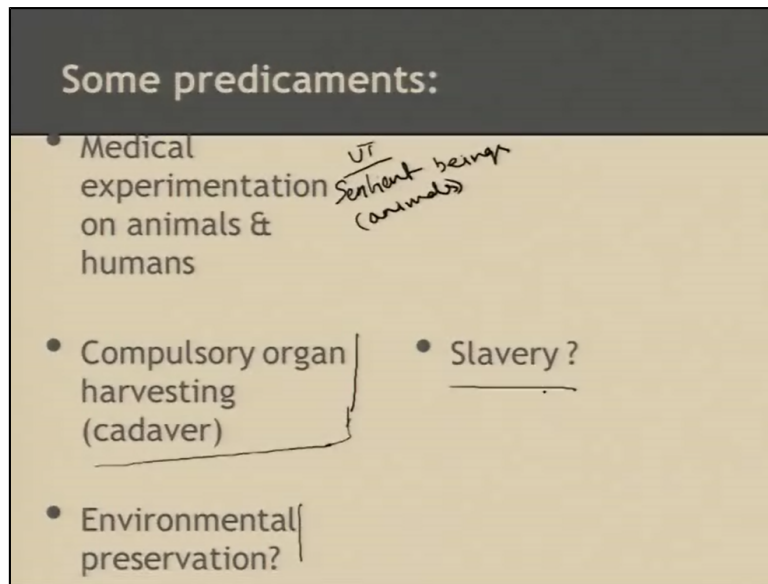
- Here, a utilitarian assessment of the situation takes into account the preferences of the individuals involved, except where those preferences come into direct conflict with the preference of others.
- So preference satisfaction becomes the primary aim and there is no thrust on happiness as the single aim.

Departure from Hedonism.

Now, taking a look at the slide. It claims that here, in Preference Utilitarianism, a Utilitarian assessment of the situation, takes into account, the preferences of the individuals involved. Except, where those preferences come into direct conflict, with the preference of others. So, Preference Satisfaction, becomes the primary aim. And, there is no thrust on happiness, as the single aim. This is where, there is a departure from Hedonism.

Now, we see, this is a Modern Utilitarians tendencies that, tend to be departing from Hedonism. And, this is where we see, today's urban lifestyles are conducive, to Preference Satisfaction of the wider variety. The notion of privacy, the notion of private space, is again an essential for maximising Preference Satisfaction.

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Now, let us talk about some predicaments, with the Utilitarianism. Let us talk about, the first predicament. Say, medical experimentation on humans and animals. Now, let us construe a situation, that where, we need to test a vaccine, or a medication, or a medical procedure. And, we need a guinea pig, for that. Now, guinea pig has entered into our colloquial terminology as, being a sacrificial creature.

So, the very colloquial sense, or connotation of the term guinea pig, can make you understand, why Utilitarianism is a little different, in creating rights. Now, the guinea pig has no rights of its own. The guinea pig is a means, for the welfare of the majority. One sacrifice by the guinea pig, is essential for the welfare of the majority. Now, most of the times, it has been that, animals have been used as a testing creatures, for newer medications, vaccines, procedures, beauty products, and a wide variety of things.

Now, the Utilitarian is quite simple, in its thinking. He says, or it urges that well, when it means the greatest happiness of the greatest number, why does it have to be the happiness, only human beings. What is this number. Now, certain Utilitarian philosophers like Peter Singer, have extended this greatest number, to all sentient beings. Now, what are sentient beings? Now, if we extend this Utilitarianism to sentient beings, that would include animals.

So now, if we consider that well, if animals are sentient beings. And, our taking animals as a guinea pigs, for our testing creatures in laboratories. And, huge number of deaths happening of these animals, of infecting them purposively with pathogens. And then, watching, how the



pathogen develops. Is not it spreading, more harm than good. Is not it spreading, more unhappiness than happiness. Well.

If, the whole universe is taken as, comprising of sentient beings, then just human beings have no stake, or no position, in inflicting suffering, to advance their own survival. Because, it will be a happiness of a few, versus the unhappiness of the many. So, medical experimentation raises a crucial question that, where do we find that, well. There is no Utilitarian justification, for sacrificing animals for, medical research.

In fact, sometimes, it is also that human beings are tried as, test cases for the last batch of vaccines to be introduced, of the prototypes. So now, a Utilitarian would be very careful. And in fact, that has led to the formation of Animal Rights, Activism, and Societies like, Societies of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals, People's Ethical Treatment towards Animals. Is that well, let us have the greatest happiness of the greatest number. And, this number would include, all sentient beings, right.

But, this would could keep a serious talk to medical research. In fact, now, there is an increasing tendency, to reach an equilibrium, between advancement in medical sciences, and the use of sacrificial animals. In schools, when laboratories recommend an operation, or opening up of a frog or a rabbit, to familiarise the students, with their inner parts. Now, this is gradually being seen as something, which is unacceptable.

Because, it does increase suffering. So, why not have plastic, or any synthetic made creatures, which can be used for these intersections, that the students do, these operations, that the students do. Now, coming back to the next thing, that we talk about is, compulsory organ harvesting. Now, let us ask a question, that well, if the law requires, right, now coming to compulsory organ harvesting.

If the law requires, that well, any cadaver, or any corpse, is liable to be harvested for organs, which might be functioning, and proper for, essentially for, transferring to other patients, who are in need of such organs. That, by default, or that by compulsion, no person can refuse the extraction, or the harvesting of the organs, of his or her, near and dear one's cadaver. In fact, let us also assume that, no individual can make a commitment, that well, that he or she would not allow, his or her organs to be harvested.

Now, the Utilitarian perspective is very clear. The Utilitarian perspective would say, that well, if I would like the individual's choice, about his or her body, is immaterial. And, as long as this choice, this is not exercising the negative, that is an individual voluntarily, being a Utilitarian oneself, in the individual offers his or her body to science, it actually benefits many others. So, this is a typical Utilitarian goal.

A problem occurs, when this sacrifice is made out to be, as compulsory, as mandatory, rather than as chosen. Now, is there something wrong, if this sacrifice is supposed to be, is made mandatory. If there is something intuitively difficult with this, it is perhaps because, what we are feeling is that, sense of right over one's own body is being violated. Let us think about it. Now, would you sign a document, which would allow a hospital or a doctor, to harvest your organs, after your death.

Now, this will determine your position, on Utilitarianism. Now, coming to it. Now, the other problem, that Utilitarians face. Imagine that, you have chosen, and you have committed your body, to medical harvest. But unfortunately, this agent, who has committed oneself to donating his or her organs, meets such an accident, where none of his or her organs, are in a position to be harvested.

Then, from the Utilitarian consequentialist perspective, this sacrifice is belittled. This sacrifice does not hold value. Because, it essentially has not brought about more goodness. So, there has been nothing intrinsically right about this act of sacrifice, which the agent in all good sense, perhaps made. But, circumstantially, it was not able to be implemented. Now, what about the other two crucial perspectives, that we talk about are, Environmental Preservation, and Slavery.

Now, these are also questions, that one needs to think. That well, why do we save the environment? Why are we concerned about the environment? Why are we concerned about any species, that is about to go extinct? It is perhaps because, the environment is crucial, not only to our happiness, at this time. Our meaning, the entire human race, or creatures existing in the world, right now, but also the greatest happiness of the greatest number, over time.

So, leaving a proper environment, for the generations to come, is again a justification, for saving the environment. Now, look at it, this way. The Utilitarian is actually, reducing his oneself, to make it useful to the coming generations. Now, let us look at another interesting predicament, that is slavery. Now, if a minor section of the population, is turned into slaves, who do all the menial or dangerous jobs, that are there in the society, so that 95%, or 99% of the society, lives a much happier state of affairs.

Would that be something; you would be uncomfortable with. Well, the Utilitarian would say that well, the sacrifice of this 1%, brings about greater happiness, for the other 99%. So, why not, go in for slavery. But, there was something, which we felt is intrinsically wrong, with slavery. It is despite of the fact that, it is perhaps a much more efficient system. And, it does bring about the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

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**Limitations:**

- 'Happiness' is so broad that it could mean preference satisfaction or even any other goal/objective set by persons.
- Utilitarianism depends on our ability to know what gives other people happiness, or what's for their general welfare. This is not always the case, and may change from time to time.
- It arrives at the 'ought' from the 'is'

*Handwritten notes:*  
uncertainty  
Happiness is desirable  
↓  
Happiness is desirable  
ought to pursue happiness

Now, let us explore the limitations of, what do we mean by, the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Now, happiness is a very vague term, as most of you would have perhaps realised, that well. Happiness would mean that, anything could be happiness. In fact, if you see in the slide, it writes, happiness is so broad, that it could mean Preference Satisfaction, or even any other goal or objectives, set by persons, in the question.

So, actually happiness, then could mean the same thing, as Preference Satisfaction. Now, if this is the case, then well, Preference Satisfaction is nothing, but restating the old thesis of Utilitarianism. Now, another limitation, that we find with Utilitarianism is that, it depends on

our ability to know, what gives other people happiness, or what is for their general welfare. This is not always the case. And, may change, from time to time.

Now, the Utilitarian cannot make accurate forecast, in what gives other people happiness. Because, over a course of time, our uncertainty, could render certain objectives as, or certain consequences as, contrary to the entire motivation, that they cost earlier. So, for example, if we come up with, say, a parent comes up with this policy, that well, she or he would raise a child, in a strict regimen, so as to bring about, a happy state of affairs.

But, the child grows up to be, to study well, and to be a successful individual. But, he does not do so. He reacts to the strictness, and leaves home, and runs away. Now, this does not bring about the happiness of the family. So, there is a difference always, which we talked about in Consequentialism too, between the intended consequences, and between the actual consequences. Now, let us arrive at the another limitation, that it talks about. What it arrives at the ought, from the is.

Now, that is a crucial philosophical leap, that is taken by Utilitarianism, which many philosophers find unjustified. Now, can be that happiness is desirable, which again comes to the question. Happiness is desired. Does that make us imply, that happiness is desirable, or that we ought to pursue happiness? Now, this is a mistake, that many philosophers have pointed out, that the Utilitarian makes. That, once we talk about, what is the case, which is factually evident from empirical evidence, does not serve as a prescription, or as a norm for what, how things should be.

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contd.

- The moral call - a person's got to do what a person's got to do!  
- acts that one feels that one should do irrespective of the consequences.
- What about failed great attempts?
- Central flavour of utilitarianism - that 'goodness does not inhere in an action, but is only given by setting that action in the context of the greatest happiness of the greatest number.'
- More of a goal centred approach than an agent centred approach.

Paying attention on the slide. Well, another limitation, that is pointed out. The moral call. A person is got to do, what a person is got to do. Well, is a more political correct version of, what is frequently said, that a man is got to do, what a man is got to do. Well, this moral call, that we refer to, that acts, that one feels, that one should do, irrespective of the consequences.

Utilitarianism, does not pay attention, or does not talk about, these acts, that which we feel perhaps, morally obliged to do. Or, have somehow, our sense of necessity to be done, irrespective of the consequences, that it brings along. Now, the second point, we talk about, what about failed great attempts. Now, the Utilitarian is a quiet, is in fact, uncharitable and unkind, to failed great attempts. Because, attempts that are made for great things, but do not achieve their consequences. Judging by the consequences, it does not matter.

So, this is although a very Utilitarian could counter argue, that well, this is a rare thing to happen. But nevertheless, even if it is rare, it is possible. And, if it is possible, well, there is one instance, where we see that, the moral act is not rewarded. Or, acts that we perhaps, tend to believe that, this moral is discarded. Because, it does not achieve the objective. Now, the next limitation, that they talk about is, the central flavour of Utilitarianism.

There is a spelling mistake here. The central flavour of Utilitarianism is, that goodness does not inhere in an action, but is only given by setting that action, in the context of the greatest happiness of the greatest number. So, this is a crucial philosophical position of Utilitarians, that goodness does not lie in the action. It lies in the setting, that brings about the

consequences. So thereof, we can see that well, the Utilitarian takes the goodness away from the action, and into the entire setting.

Now, how would you judge an act, which is out of the setting, or which could not achieve its intended consequences. Another limitation, that it has talked about that, the Utilitarian is more of a goal centred approach, than an agent centred approach. This is essentially continuing in the same flavour, that we talked about. That, the Utilitarian is so much fixated on the goal, that the agent does not matter for, in any move.

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more..

- Justifies a paternalistic approach
- Does not take seriously the distinction between persons (Rawls) - attempts at an impersonal approach to some greater good.
- Bernard Williams: What about recognizing the individual, the rights & projects of the individual.
- Hume: 'The effects of an action form part of a chain that stretches into an indefinite future. There is always the possibility that a very positive result of an action may subsequently lead to very negative consequences.' Question  
Caution

Now, looking at another limitation of Utilitarianism, that it justifies a Paternalistic Approach. Now, and the Utilitarian, since it values the collective, or the greater number, more than the individual. So, it does good the individual, into a pathway, that is leading to the benefit of the greater number. Now, Paternalistic Approach in certain manner, is contrary to having one's own rights.

Now, another limitation, which Utilitarianism talks about. That is about Utilitarianism. That, he does not take seriously, the distinction between persons. This is pointed out by a Philosopher called Rawls, that Utilitarianism impersonal, an approach to some greater good. So, it does not take into account, what is each unique position, that each individual is in. It puts everybody, in one common denominator.

Now, another Philosopher called Bernard Williams, has pointed out that, what about recognising the individual, the rights and the projects of the individual. Now this has been a

very common critique of Utilitarians. That well, it is contrary to the rights of the individual. It is always letting the greater good, dominate over the individual. And, the individual intrinsically, no matter of what the consequences is, is supposed to have some rights. Now, this is the attitude, which is being subsumed by the Utilitarian.

Now, the last critic of Utilitarianism, that we would be talking about, is by a philosopher called Hume. Hume says that, the effects of an action, form part of a chain, that stretches into an indefinite future. There is always the possibility that, a very positive result of an action subsequently leads to, very negative consequences. Now, this is an essential claim, which question our quosition, or our principal.

Now, if you would remember the example, that we talked about, the spoon full of sugar in a cup of tea, making it sweeter. Without that, putting a spoonful of sugar in the cup of tea, only makes it sweeter. So, there is nothing questionable about that. In fact, it seems to be trivially true. But, it is perhaps not the case. Because, Hume's claim here, brings about the fact, that well. We see that, Hume's claim brings to light this notice, that well perhaps, what we anticipate and what happens, need not always be the same.

In a relatively smaller example of, the sugar mixing in the tea, to make it sweeter. It seems to be more renew. But, on a larger scale, when we do something, which as Hume says, is an act, that stretches into an indefinite future. The possibility, that a very positive result of an action, may lead to very, very negative consequences. So again, we are not very sure about, what it is, that an act could lead to. That, this greatest good of the greatest number, eventually over time, is not for us to see.

It perhaps, requires a god's eyes, god's point of view, or to say, perspective from nowhere, or from everywhere, to know what is the greater good. Because, greater good over greater time, we have found many cases, where our notion of the greater good of the greatest number, has changed over time. Say, paternalism. Say, a form of governance, where the collective takes important decisions, on behalf of the individual, was supposed to lead to the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

But then, it did not. Governments, that follow the policies, have failed. There are various instances throughout history, where we find that well, the greatest happiness of the greatest

number, has been the motivation for policies and acts. But, in course of time that, greatest happiness has not only become insignificant, but also has been the cause of the greatest unhappiness.

If you look around in India, the green revolution was supposed to be, where the moral decision that we took, was interfering in the course of nature, to yield more food. The green revolution was supposed to be a successful, a scientific intervention, into the order of nature and agriculture, for getting out the greatest good of the greatest number, providing food for all.

But, maybe 50 years of hence scientists today, do not have such an opinion that, that intervention in nature, has been for the greatest good of the greatest number, over time. So, something like producing too much of food, something like affluence. Affluence is, India is in the throes of a growing, burgeoning, developing economy. So, does it mean that, rational now is that, it will bring about the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

But, will it, that is for us to see. So perhaps, the Utilitarian in his ambitious effort and claim, or ambitious but well natured intention of understanding, what acts would eventually lead to, what kind of consequences, is way over estimating our ability, to forecast consequences, over the length of time, and the breadth of people. That would be all, for Utilitarianism.