Moral Judgement

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Introduction

- Moral judgments are nothing but expressions of, or about, the individual judge’s own attitudes (their thoughts, feelings, personal opinions, etc.). In this section we will study about the nature of moral judgment and related concepts.
What are moral judgments?

- Moral judgments are evaluations or opinions formed as to whether some action or inaction, intention, motive, character trait, or a person as a whole is (more or less) Good or Bad as measured against some standard of Good.
- The moral judgments of actions (or inaction) are usually the primary focus of any discussion of Moral Judgments in particular, and Ethical analysis in general. This is because the judgments of intentions, character traits, and persons are generally based on the judgment of actions that the intention, motive, character trait, or person might potentially do or not do. So limiting the discussion to the moral judgments of actions (or inactions) will also, with suitable obvious modifications, address the moral judgment of intentions, motives, character traits and people.
Decision
Object of Moral Judgment

- A moral judgement as distinguished from a factual judgement is a judgement upon the action of an individual that can be evaluated as good or bad, right or wrong. Obviously it is a judgement upon the voluntary action of the individual.

- Voluntary actions and habitual actions are objects of moral judgement. Non-voluntary actions are excluded from the scope of moral judgements. Habitual actions are objects of moral judgements, because they are the results repeated voluntary actions.

- Thus ultimately only voluntary actions are judged to be right or wrong. Whatever has not willed has no moral worth.
Actions

- Do we judge an act by its motives or consequences? Moral judgements are not passed upon all kinds of action, but only upon conduct. But conduct or willed action has two aspects. It is will and it is action, it involves an internal factor and external factor.
- There is a lot of controversy between hedonists and intuitionists. Hedonists regard consequences as the object of moral judgement. Intuitionists regard motive as the object of it. The view is wrong. The idea as the end is the real motive. It induces the self to act. It is the end of action.
- On the otherhand, Kant says: "The effect of our action can not give them moral worth." But Ler says that rightness or wrongness of an act depends very much upon the motive for which it is done.
- Now, the question is to the motive or consequence of a voluntary action is the object of moral judgement which of them determines its moral quality. When there is a harmony between the inner motive and the outer consequence as a foreseen and desired.
Intensions

- Thus we come to the conclusion that intention is the object of moral Judgement. It includes the motive or the idea of the end as well as the idea of the means. An action is good if its intention is good, in otherwords, if the end as well as the means adopted is good. The end never justifies the means. Thus the motive alone does not determine the moral quality of an action.
- Intention is the object of moral judgement. It is intention including motive that determines the moral quality of an action. An action is right when the intention of the agent is good. An action is bad or wrong when the motive or the end and the means are good; an action is wrong if either of them is "bad.
- We may distinguish between the outer and the inner intention of an action. If a begger comes to you; you help him in order to remove the painful feeling from your mind, which is excited by the sight of his distress, your outer intention is to help the man in distress, but your inner intention is to remove your painful feeling.
- The inner intention of an action is an object of moral judgement. An intention is the end that is definitely adopted as an object of will together with the means, which are consented to by the agent as necessary for the realization of the end. The intention as a whole, rather than the motive or the idea of the end is the object of moral judgement.
Situations

- The possibility to make judgements as to how one ought to act in concrete situations requires antecedent moral principles. In the absence of such principles there is no rational basis for making such judgements. The possibility to make judgements as to how one ought to act in concrete situations implies:
  - (1) that the situations about which we make such judgements must already have moral significance independently of the principles one may bring to bear upon them; and
  - (2) that the rightness or wrongness of one's actions in concrete situations depends on this moral significance of situations.
Is Intention or Character the Object of Moral Judgement?

Intention is not an isolated mental phenomenon. Intention is the expression of the character. We pass moral judgements on the character of a person when we want to determine his moral worth. But we do not determine the moral quality of an action by considering the character of the agent, because a person of good character has not always a good intention and similarly a person of bad character may not have necessarily a bad intention always.

So it is better to hold that intention is the object of moral judgement. Intention of the agent determines the moral quality of an action. It is wrong to hold that character is the object of moral judgement. It determines the moral worth of a person, but not of his particular actions. The moral quality of an action is always determined by the intention of the agent. The ideal or rational self is the subject of moral judgement. The spectator or the judge in a person is the ideal self.
Conclusion

Here we studied the object of moral judgment and its basic concepts such as action, intentions, situations and character. This is a most important concept in academic ethics.

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