

T. D. C. 3rd Year (6th Semester)

Sub - PHILOSOPHY (ETHICS)

REFINED OR QUALITATIVE ALTRUISTIC HEDONISM
OR UTILITARIANISM OF J. S. MILL

J. S. MILL is a Hedonist. According to him the creed which accepts as the foundation of moral utility or the greatest happiness principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness and wrong when they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. By 'happiness' is intended pleasure and the absence of pain and by 'unhappiness', pain and the privation of pleasure. The only things desirable is pleasure and freedom from pain and all desirable things are desirable either for the pleasure inherent in themselves or as means to the promotion of pleasure and the prevention of pain. Mill uses 'pleasure and happiness' as synonymous.

He regards virtue, health, love of honour and the like as means of happiness.

According to Mill an action is right if it gives pleasure or excess of pleasure over pain and action is wrong if it gives pain or excess of pain over pleasure.

This is pure and simple hedonism.

Mill bases his Hedonism on Psychological Hedonism. According to him desiring a thing and finding it pleasant are two modes of naming the same psychological fact. In simple language, it means that we always desire what is pleasant and that therefore we desire pleasure. He is also an advocate of ~~the~~ Ethical Hedonism. His Ethical Hedonism is based upon Psychological Hedonism.

J. S. Mill recognises the kinds of pleasures: For the first time Mill introduces the distinction of quality. He holds that the distinction of quality

is independent of quantity and the qualitative distinction is as real as the quantitative. He says that it is quite compatible with the principle of utility to recognize the fact, that some kinds of pleasure are more desirable and valuable than others. His Hedonism is also called Refined Hedonism.

J. S. Mill appeals to the verdict of competent judges. ~~Competent~~ Competent judges always prefer intellectual pleasures to bodily and sensual pleasures. If there is a conflict of opinion among the competent judges, we should abide by the verdict of the majority of them.

J. S. Mill's Hedonism is altruistic. He says that no reason can be given why the general happiness is desirable except that each person, so far as he believes it to be attainable, desires his own happiness. Each person's happiness is

good to that person and therefore the general happiness is good to the aggregate of all persons. For example,

A's happiness is good to A.

B's happiness is good to B.

C's happiness is good to C.

∴ General happiness is good to all.

J. S. Mill offers a psychological ~~explanati~~ explanation of the transition from egoism to altruism. At first we were egoists and relieved the miseries of others in order to relieve our own pain. Then by ~~repetition~~ repetition our own interest was transferred from the end to the means, we forgot our own pleasure, and came to take delight in relieving the miseries of others, and acquired sympathy. Thus sympathy is acquired by the individual in his own life time.

Mill assumes that there are two kinds of sanctions for altruistic

conduct, external and internal. External sanctions are sympathy, fellow-feeling, social feelings of mankind, a feeling for the happiness of mankind, a desire to be in unity with our fellow creatures. J.S. Mill says that the internal sanction of duty is a feeling in ~~our~~ our own mind, a pain, more or less intense, attendant on violation of duty. This feeling when disinterested, and connecting itself with the pure idea of duty, is the essence of ~~conscience~~ conscience.

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