

TOPICS INCLUDED AT GENERAL STUDIES PAPER - 4

Human needs and modification

Philosopher/Thinkers, Social Workers/Reformers

Attitude

Aptitude

Emotional Intelligence

Corruption

Case Studies

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Human needs and modification

This part will include questions on the Ethics, Philosopher/Thinkers, Social Workers/Reformers, Attitude, Aptitude, Emotional Intelligence, Corruption, and Case Studies.

Ethics is a philosophical discipline to inquire into the nature of morally good, and the criterion of morally right action as well as nature of virtue. Aristotle used this conception for the first time and designated by this discipline the inquiry into the virtues or the human characters which are conducive to the maintenance and development of a city state (polis). In this sense, ethics was considered as a portion of political science or political philosophy. As soon as the polis, the foundation of morality, was destroyed by Alexander the Great, and people started wondering what makes one morally good, and further what makes one happy as an individual. This is the beginning of the new meaning of ethics. In terms of the question of the criterion for a morally right action, there are two irreconcilable positions: one is called utilitarianism, which considers the outcome of one's action must be the criterion, while the other viewpoint is called deontology, according to which a moral action is right, regardless of its consequences, as long as it is performed from the moral imperative or pure ought. In this case, as shown above, the criterion of a right action has nothing to do with morality, but is essentially concerned with the knowledge of what is to be done and the action which is purely motivated from the moral ought and nothing else. The representative of this position is Kant, while the former is generally represented by Bentham and by Mill in a much modified form. As to the nature of morally good, here are also two distinct positions in which the nature of good is philosophically understood. One considers the good is related to pleasure, the sensuous pleasure, because it is more in its intensity, and this was represented by hedonists (Epicurus, Bentham). Since this position tries to reduce the nature of good to pleasure or pain, it is often called naturalistic. The other considers the good either should be known by a priori intuition more primordially than the mere object and natural characters. This point of view is repre-

presented by Max Scheler, a phenomenologist. In this view point, value is totally different from thingness and can be known by a different kind of cognitive act of a priori feeling and preference. This point of view was called intuitionism by G.E. Moore. Kant's approach is totally against Hedonistic reductionism, but is not necessarily considered as intuitionism, for Kant considers the nature of good is not an object of our cognitive act, but it is determined by the accord of an action with moral law or principle, which Kant called categorical imperative.

Origins of ethics

The origins of ethics have a meta-ethical basis. Several philosophers have argued that human beings are inherently ethical. Mencius, asserts that human beings are naturally virtuous in that if people follow their nature, they will be able to do good. Rousseau contends that the origins of ethics are natural human sentiments. Pity is considered as a natural human feeling which tempered selfishness and consequently contributed to the mutual preservation of the whole species.

Centuries of debate on the origin of ethics culminate in either ethical principles, such as justice and human rights which are independent of human experience, or they are human inventions.

The choice between these two understandings regulates the difference in the way we view ourselves as a species. It measures the authority of religion and it determines the conduct of moral reasoning.

In the empiricist view, ethics is behaviour advocated consistently throughout a society to be expressed as a code of principles. It reaches its precise form in each culture according to historical circumstance. The codes, whether adjusted as good or evil by outsiders, play an important role in determining which cultures flourish and which decline. The thrust of the empiricist view is its emphasis on objec-