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**Where Do I Get My Ethics?**

Ethics are a set of virtues that appear to be increasingly scarce in an age of technological marvels and social media. These platforms were originally intended to connect us all as people, but instead seem to have divided us beyond measure. As someone who cares deeply about the world and all the living creatures that inhabit it, I find myself lost in a sea of indifference. Almost every person I encounter is completely immersed in his or her own little world. The only time people open their eyes to the world around them, is when it fails to provide them with even the most trivial of their desires. Is that really human nature? I like to believe that as a species our society is simply in its infancy and that one day everyone will embrace their responsibility to do good, not as a burden, but rather as an inalienable part of what it means to be human.

It stands to reason, that in order to instill ethics in our global society, we must first reach a consensus as to what they are and how we acquire them. In previous attempts to establish a unified code of ethics, people have drawn on external sources. I think that in order to sustain ethical behavior, we must first learn the value of ethics. Only then can we each develop our own definition of what it means to be ethical.

Personally I behave ethically by nature. Every time I make a decision, I have a strong internal sense of whether or not it is “the right thing to do”, and I try to act accordingly. I believe that the internal process described is the only true path to achieving an ethical lifestyle because it is sincere and organic. Additionally, I believe that any other process is doomed to undo itself over time. While my convictions to be morally conscious come from within, my situational decisions draw inspiration from the ideologies and teachings of others. It is imperative, however, that I choose which principles to apply whenever I make a decision.

If I were to base all of my moral decisions on someone else’s framework, as is practiced by the “virtuous” school of thought, then my actions would be considered more law-abiding than ethical. I do not believe that these two terms are synonymous. My Ideology is almost that of “Natural Law” with the caveat that there are no absolutes. I find the black and white interpretation of morality to be ludicrous. The world in which we live is far too complex to simplify so extremely. Because of this, we must factor the consequences of our actions into our evaluation of right and wrong in order to achieve an objectively “ethical” decision. Furthermore, what I believe to be right or wrong is not static; it varies by situation, which is why I place such value on the internal nature of ethics. I would practice “divine command” as a source of ethics if I were sure beyond a shadow of a doubt that my creator had provided me with a list of rights and wrongs; but in the absence of a definitive guide, I must assume that if such a creator existed, he or she intended for my conscience to serve as my code of ethics.

Developing a framework for ethics is a daunting challenge considering the subjective nature of the goal, the infinite complexity of the world we live in, and the self-serving nature of its inhabitants. With that in mind, I think it is imperative that we strive towards this goal even if it is truly unattainable. If we all commit to behaving in a more morally conscientious way, we will see “the greater good” that utilitarianism strives for as a consequence of our decisions rather than a means by which to make them.