

Morality

Definition

- Morality speaks of a system of behavior in regards to standards of right or wrong behavior. The word carries the concepts of:
 - moral standards, with regard to behavior;
 - moral responsibility, referring to our conscience; and
 - a moral identity, or one who is capable of right or wrong action. Common synonyms include ethics, principles, virtue, and goodness.

- Morality has become a complicated issue in the multi-cultural world we live in today. Let's explore what morality is, how it affects our behavior, our conscience, our society, and our ultimate destiny.



Morality and Our Behaviour

- Morality describes the principles that govern our behavior. Without these principles in place, societies cannot survive for long.
- In today's world, morality is frequently thought of as belonging to a particular *religious point of view*, but by definition, we see that this is not the case.
- Everyone adheres to a moral doctrine of some kind.

Morality and Our Behaviour

- According to renowned thinker and scholar C.S. Lewis, there are three levels in which morality relates to our behaviour:
 1. to ensure fair play and harmony between individuals;
 2. to help make us good people in order to have a good society; and
 3. to keep us in a good relationship with the power that created us.



Based on this definition, it's clear that our **beliefs** are critical to our moral behavior.

Reflection

- *A Muslim brother according to the Quran, can have as many as four wives. He can also beat his wife she does not follow him (or being high-mindedness).*
- Is it moral for the Muslim brother to have four wives and beat them?

The Science of Being Virtuous

- Those who are considered morally good are said to be virtuous, holding themselves to high ethical standards, while those viewed as morally bad are thought to be wicked, sinful, or even criminal.



- Morality was a key philosophical issue for Aristotle, who first studied questions such as
 - “What is moral responsibility?”
 - “What does it take for a human being to be virtuous?”
- Dante Alighieri who named the seven deadly vices (sins): Vanity, jealousy, anger, laziness, greed, gluttony, and lust.

- People associated with vices, or immoral behaviors, are thought to have poor character. Yet some say that virtue often disguises a hidden vice. It just depends on where we tip the scale from a **virtue** to a **vice**.

Morality & Our Conscience

- Morality impacts our everyday decisions, and those choices are directed by our conscience.
- Again, we must decide for ourselves where the conscience originates.
- Many people hold to the idea that the conscience is a matter of our hearts, that concepts of right, wrong, and fairness are "programmed" in each of us.

- Those who do not believe in God are left with the only possible conclusion they can come to - that our decisions are based solely on our need to survive.
- What we call our **conscience**, then, would be based on learned behavior, rather than part of a Divine design.

Reflection

- *A man is forced to kill the man attacking him in order to defend himself.*
- Is it moral for the man to kill another man?



References

- <https://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/morality.htm>
- <http://www.muslimhope.com/JamesArlandson/DomesticViolenceInIslam.htm>
- <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/ethics-and-morality>