**MPYE – 002: Ethics**

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**1. What makes international ethics important? Discuss how philosophical schools of thought focus on various aspects of international relations.**

**International ethics** refers to the good that international interactions, exchanges, relations can bring to our planet earth and to all life forms and which can be harmed by unfriendly, hostile, uncooperative behaviours. Ethical questions are central to the study of international relations, as it is a field of study concerned with war and peace, trade and production, and law and rights. International ethics may be defined as which enables one to participate more actively in shaping and building good international community.

Ethics **provide a systematic framework** to assess the moral dimension of human behaviour and reflect on the role moral evaluation should play in politics. Politics without conscience **threaten** all societies and bypass the minimal requirements of justice. There are no moral free zones absolving the political strategist from accountability, whether that strategist is a head of state or the head of a terrorist organization.

Ethics are a **source of conscience**, while at the same time, they should also be "a critique of pure conscience.” International ethics may be fruitfully defined as that which enables one to participate more actively in shaping and building good international community.

International ethics **guides** international relations and **resolution** of international conflicts. International ethics guides the international environmental effort to fight against issues such as ozone depletion, global warming, etc which are common shared problems and which require actions from many nations who are major contributors to forces generating such problems.

International policies favour movement of talented and highly capable populations. Nations compete in the international space and national advantages are the drivers of the space of international ethics and what happens to it. Dominant nations, their strategies appear to be the ones that are meeting any kind of success. Moral aspirations never stand outside of the context of power and interests. Moral arguments are not won by ascribing moral motives to one side and evil deeds to another. Moral standing is achieved by understanding difficult choices between competing moral claims and recognizing that trade-offs and uneasy compromises are often necessary. In the shadows of dominant countries, other nations have evolved certain international cooperation and collaboration agreements for various reasons. International ethics is the context of cooperation and collaboration as these are based on recognition of their mutual interests in each other.

International ethics directs us in the direction of building an international community in which every other community can actively and fruitfully participate and flourish. These help resolve some of the major international problems, issues, and provide insight into international conflicts.

**2. Explain the distinctive features of environmental ethics. Why has environmental ethics become an important issue of human concern today?**

Human existence is not possible without a good and healthy environment. Environmental ethics is having a conscience or moral that reflects one’s commitment and responsibility toward the environment as well as present and future generations of humanity. It is an important issue which we are dealing today, to adjust the relationship between humans and environment. It is a **discipline** of philosophy that deals with the ethical problems surrounding environmental protection. It considers extending the traditional boundaries of ethics from solely including humans to including the non-human world.

There are several distinctive features of environmental ethics:

**First, environmental ethics is extended.**

If we do not constrain our actions towards nature, then that ethic is considered to be anthropocentric.”, which means “human-centeredness,”. Environmental ethics extend the scope of ethical concerns beyond one’s community and nation to include humanity as a whole, the whole of nature, which is the green environment, which includes forests and trees, animals, wild and domesticated.

**Second, environmental ethics is interdisciplinary.**

There are many over lapping concerns and areas of consensus among environmental ethics, environmental politics, environmental economics, environmental sciences and environmental literature.

It is a matter of argument that the changes required to slow or reverse the climate change would be very costly. In the environmental ethics series it was important to get the input from an expert in economics in order to gain an intelligent and balanced assessment of the potential role of economics in changing human behaviour.

**Third, environmental ethics is plural.**

Environmental ethics is been an area in which different ideas and perspectives compete with each other. All these topics provide reasonable justification for environmental protection :

Anthropocentrism: referring to the point of view that humans are the only, or primary, holders of moral standing.

Animal liberation/rights theory: refers to Exposing Cruelty to Animals.

Biocentrism: refers to an ethical point of view that extends inherent value to all living things. It includes the preservation of biodiversity, which is the variety and variability of life on earth, and environment protection, which is to protect the natural environment. Rapid changes in environmental causes mass extinctions. In industrial economies, voluntary environmental agreements often provide a platform for companies to be involved in moving beyond the defined regulatory standards and support the development of best environmental practice.

Eco centrism: refers to nature centred, rather than human centred system of values. It is grounded on the belief, that the ecosphere has a very valuable and significant part in the creation of humanity.

**Fourth, environmental ethics is global.**

Ecological crisis is a global issue. Environmental pollution is not limited to national boundaries. This is not a concern of a single country.

**Fifth, environmental ethics is revolutionary.**

The environmental revolution is the process of moving out of from pollution causing and climate-changing technology and resorting to efficient and clean technology. It critiques the materialism, hedonism and consumerism accompanying modern capitalism, and calls instead for a ‘green lifestyle’ that is harmonious with nature. It argues for pacifism and against an arms race.

In the current era, the need for green technology is being realized, and the development of electric cars and alternative energy is gradually started to being adopted.

3. Answer any two of the following questions in about 250 words each:

**a) What do you understand by cultural and ethical subjectivism?**

One’ own mental activity is the only unquestionable fact of one’s experience, is Subjectivism. It claims that all moral values are true. It is the claim that beliefs are relative to each person’s individual perspective. It deals with the moral aspects of being right or wrong in a group or an individual’s action is, based on that cultures standards and what they feel is right or wrong in a particular situation; or based on each person’s individual perspective.

**Cultural Subjectivism** school of thought hand accepts both the ontological and semantic version and says that all moral statements are true. It is the claim that all beliefs are relative to a particular culture. What is said to be right and wrong depends completely on the society, and what the society feels is ethical depending on their culture. Since morality is based on the understanding of the society, and different societies have different views of right and wrong, there can be no moral absolutes. Hence, all moral values are considered to be true, even if they conflict or not.

Every individual is a member of various groups at the same time like cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious and so on. The values that exist in each of group can conflict with other groups. It is up to each individual’s choice to resolve the conflicts.

Ethical Subjectivism: A value is objective if it is more fundamental than the pro-attitudes in relation to it, i.e., if it exists independently of our desires, preferences, emotions etc. A moral objectivist adopts the model of perception. In this sense, a moral objectivist is a moral realist. Hence, **Ethical Subjectivism**, supports that what is good or badly depends on individuals or cultural groups.

**b) How do you understand human freedom and moral responsibility? Explain.**

Human freedom is a social concept that recognizes the dignity of individuals. **Human freedom** is inherently valuable and plays a role in human progress.

Human freedom comprises of the list of liberties:

1. Freedom from control or restriction , i.e. the power of choosing, thinking, and acting for oneself.
2. The right of access to particular place, or places.
3. To be free, unoccupied, or unrestricted
4. Taking the liberty to venture

Moral responsibility is the status of morally deserving praise, blame, reward, or punishment for an act or omission, in accordance with one's moral obligations. Humans hold themselves or others morally responsible for their actions, assuming that the action was done knowingly and willing in other words freely. The idea of responsibility seems to connote and presuppose that of freedom.

Moral responsibilities do not override the legal responsibilities. In case that when a person is morally responsible for an act, they are also legally responsible for the same, although the two scenes do not always coincide.

4. Answer any four of the following in about 150 words each:

**a) Briefly explain the emotivism of A. J. Ayer.**

**Emotivism** is an ethical theory which regards ethical and value judgements as expressions of feeling or attitude and prescriptions of action, rather than assertions or reports of anything. It is a theory that claims that moral language or judgments:

1) are neither true or false;

2) express their emotions;

3) try to influence others to agree

An analytic statement is one that is true because of logical connections and the meaning of terms, not by empirical investigation. Ayer recognizes that analytic statements don't have to be empirically verifiable in order to make truth claims. If a statement has to be empirically verifiable, some possible observations must be able to make it highly probable. Moral judgments are significant because of their emotive impact. Ayer suggested that in saying that something is wrong, one is not merely expressing one’s disapproval of it. One is also encouraging those to whom he speaks to share his attitude. People bother to argue about their moral views, while on matters of taste they may simply agree to differ.

**b) Describe the doctrine of karma.**

The concept Karma signifies that there is a uniform moral law, governing the actions of man and the rewards and the punishments appropriate to their actions. In Bhagvad Gita, Karma Yoga means the practice of one’s own **duties without any attachment**. This way is described as the method of disinterested action (Nishkama Karma). The basic philosophy of ‘karma’ relates to the performer of ‘karma’, the circumstances under which an action is done, the results or reaction of karma and inspirations leading to ‘karma’.

The Doctrine of karma states that a man suffers or enjoys the fruits of his own deeds, as a harvest sprung from his own actions, good or bad committed in this and his previous lives. It is a direct outcome of the extension of the age-old and well-established principle "as you sow, so you reap" to the spiritual sphere. Every action of human beings generates results in some way, which is called “**karmaphal**”.

Karma is defined in four categories

**1. Sanchita Karma** : which is the history of actions in the past lives. It is ripe and cannot be avoided or changed.

**2. Prarabhdha Karma** : which is the history of actions in this life lived,It is a part of Sanchita Karma. It is chosen in the course of this lifetime.

3. **Kriyamana Karma** : which is the present wilful actions, or freewill. The fruits of this will be experienced in future.

4. **Agami Karma**: which is the immediate results of our immediate actions.

**c) Name the seven norms proposed by Bentham for the measurement of pleasure.**

Bentham argued that as societies are made up of individuals, it would be quite in order to view the subject of ethics from the perspective of individual utility seeking. He holds that pleasure is the only good and actions are right in so far as they tend to produce pleasure or avoid pain. These are the clear datum and are the chief motives for human decision making. Hence, pain and pleasure are the final cause of individual action and the efficient cause and means to individual happiness.

This standard is not known to most humans in real life, hence, it they do not know how to apply this standard.

He offered a felicific calculus, as guideline for the common man to follow the process, which describes the elements or dimensions of the value of a pain or pleasure.

He proposes seven norms to help one in making such a measurement. It is a matter of focusing on the pleasure concerned and checking out its

1. intensity,
2. duration,
3. certainty,
4. nearness,
5. fecundity (its capacity to include other pleasurable sensations),
6. purity (its freedom from any admixture of unpleasant sensations)
7. inclusiveness (the number of people affected by it).

**d) Briefly discuss the right to life.**

This is the most fundamental of all rights for human beings. Humans have a natural urge for self-preservation. It is a moral principal, that a human being should not be killed by another human being, or community, or government.

The law enforcement offices, are directed by international laws, to take life, only in cases where it is absolutely necessary to defend themselves and their societies, in case of imminent threat to life.

Aquinas defends killing in his Principles of double effect as killing one's assailant is justified, he argues, provided one does not intend to kill him. He Says “The act of self-defence can have a double effect: the reservation of one’s own life and the killing of the aggressor. The one is intended, the other is not.” However, in exception he says, if the person, uses more than necessary violence, it will be unlawful.

Helder Camara wrote, in the book Spiral of Violence, to be wary of the definitely biased understanding of the term that vested interests and the powers project. He called on the youth of the world to take steps to break the spiral of structural injustice with escalating rebellion and repressive reaction, saying their elders became addicted to those escalating steps.

5. Write short notes on any five of the following in about 100 words each:

**a) Moral pluralism**

The word ‘**pluralism**’ generally refers to the view that there are many of the things in question. People hold different moral values, and views on topics, and work on different moral frameworks with different moral methodologies. Since Moral issues are extremely complicated, no single philosophical approach would be good to provide all the answers.

**Moral pluralism** is the idea that there can be conflicting moral views that are each worthy of respect. It is the idea that there are several values which may be equally correct and fundamental, and yet in conflict with each other. Moral value pluralism does not entail relativism. The idea is not that all values or value systems are equally true. It is independent of any particular meta-ethical view.

Hence, there is a middle ground, where the relativism claims that that “there is no right answer”, as said by moral absolutism, and “there is no wrong answer” as said by moral relativism, which is moral pluralism.

**b) Svadharma**

Dharma widely means and includes duties, rights, laws, conduct, virtues and "right way of living". An individual must realise his own best set of dharma, which would be his individual principle of growth, called Svadharma.

It may vary as per individuals stage and duties in life, based on varna and asrama. These are defined as per the proportions of the three gunas in each individual. The Sattva, Rajas and Tamas.

1. **Tamas**: darkness state, due to inertia, inactivity, and material. It manifests from ignorance. It deludes individuals from their truths.
2. **Rajas**: virility state, due to energy, action, change and movement. This strongly binds us to the fruits of our work. Its nature is attraction, longing and attachment.
3. **Sattva** : Purity state, due to harmony, joy and intelligence. This is to reduce the qualities of rajas and tamas, and make liberation possible.

**c) Intuitionism**

Intuitionism says that there are objective moral truths, and that human beings can find them by using their mind in a way which is termed as conscience (by Ockham), logic (by Stoics), Moral sense (by Shaftesbury), right reason (by Thomas Aquinas). It says that basic moral propositions are self-evident,[1] and that moral properties are non-natural properties.

Basic moral propositions can be known without the need of any argument. Argumentation, or deduction, is knowledge that is ultimately derived from what is immediately apprehended, either by sensation or by the understanding. Immediate consciousness, or feeling, is the mind's awareness of its own existence and mental states. Immediate self-consciousness is immediate apprehension by sensation. Intuition is immediate apprehension by the understanding.

**d) Pancasila**

Buddha gave its disciples five precepts, called Pancasila, or the basic codes which are to be followed voluntarily. These were for individual self-development as well as an order to live in the civilised communities with mutual trust and respect. A precept is a general rule intended to regulate behaviour or thought. The precepts are indispensable basis for those who wish to cultivate their mind, or else the power of meditation, or self-development could be used for motives of selfishness.

The following are the five precepts or five virtues

1. To undertake the rule to abstain from killing.

2. To undertake the rule to abstain from taking what is not given.

3. To undertake the rule to avoid sexual misconduct.

4. To undertake the training rule to abstain from false speech.

5. To undertake the precept to refrain from intoxicating drinks and drugs which lead to carelessness.

**e) Teleology**

Teleology, (from Greek telos, “end,” and logos, “reason”), means the explanation by reference to some purpose, end, goal, or function. It is also described as final causality, in contrast with explanation solely in terms of efficient causes (the origin of a change or a state of rest in something).

‘Teleological’ ethics comprises all those kinds of ethics which see the criterion of morality in terms of whether an action fulfills the overall total end of human life in general and of moral activity in particular.