Utilitarianism – John Stuart Mill

Review Questions:

1. State and Explain the Principle of Utility. Show how it could be used to justify actions that are conventionally viewed as wrong, such as lying and stealing.

The Principle of Utility states that the ultimate end with reference to and for the sake of which all other things are desirable. When we lie, we are faced with options. In these options, we consider our own good and for the good of others so that we would all be far from feeling the pain.

1. How does Mill reply to the objection that epicureanism is a doctrine worthy only of swine?

The sources of pleasure is same to human beings and to swine. The rule of life which is good enough for the one would be enough for the other. The objection that epicureanism is a doctrine worthy only of swine because epicurean of life to that of the beasts is felt as degrading. Beast’s pleasures do not satisfy a human being’s own way of happiness.

1. How does Mill distinguish between higher and lower pleasures?

It depends on the people, people having different ways perceive pleasure.

1. According to Mill, whose happiness must be considered?

Happiness which forms the utilitarian standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent’s own happiness, but of all concerned.

1. Carefully reconstruct Mill’s proof of the Principle of Utility.

Happiness is desirable, and the only thing desirable, as an end; all other things being only desirable as means to that end. An object is visible is that people actually see it, and so of the other sources of our experiences.

Discussion Questions:

1. Is happiness nothing more than pleasures, and the absence of pain? What do you think?

I think it is because it is not always pleasure that comes with happiness. It can be that although you are in pain you are happy because you let go.

1. Does Mill convice you that the so-called higher pleasures are better than the lower ones? What about the person of experience who prefers the lower pleasures over the higher ones?

I don’t think the higher pleasures are better than the lower ones because it depends on the people. You might be satisfied with either of the two.

1. Mill says, “In the golden rule of Jesus of Nazareth, we read the complete spirit of the ethics of utility.” Is this true or not?

Yes, it is. Jesus shows the these through the parables and his works.

1. Many commentators have thought that Mill’s proof of the Principle of Utility is defective. Do you agree? If so, then what mistake or mistakes does he make? Is there any way to reformulate the proof so that it is not defective?

I don’t it is defective.