**Rawls’ Theory of Justice**

* A classic view of justice was first established by Plato. According to Plato, everyone will do his own activities according to his own social position.
* But social rules and circumstances may be such that a person can be unable to adjust and to do his duties in appropriate way.
* Because of such problems in all classic views of justice, John Rawls developed a new concept of justice.
* According to Rawls for getting justice, one condition is that society should be fair. The other condition of Rawls is that the society should be such that all citizens in the society are free and equal.
* Rawls’ main view is that justice as fairness is the most egalitarian principle, i.e., according to this principle all people in the society will equal rights.
* With this purpose, Rawls thinks that the basic structure of the society has to be built up in the following pattern.   
  — All the political and social institutions are to be arranged in a just way.   
   — The institutions will be political constitution, legal system, economy, family, etc.
* Rawls thinks that such arrangement is a society’s basic structure and such a basic structure will have good positive influence on a person’s life prospects, goals, attitudes, relationships and character.
* Rawls also thinks that justification of this structure will make life better.
* Two Guideline Ideas of Justice as Fairness
* Rawls gives emphasis on social cooperation which is necessary for citizens to lead a good life. Social cooperation should be fair to all citizens regarded as free and as equal.
* Rawls gives two theses for this purpose, one is the negative thesis and the other is the positive thesis.
* Rawls’ negative thesis is that citizens do not deserve to be born in a rich or a poor family, to be born more or less gifted than others or to be born male or female, etc. For example, the fact that a citizen was born rich and male does not make him to be favored by social institutions.
* Rawls’ positive thesis is that social goods are to be distributed equally, but if an unequal distribution is good for everyone’s advantage, then unequal distribution is good.
* Just Distribution of Goods
* Principle of just distribution of goods consists of two other principles — (a) the fair equality of opportunity principle and (b) the difference principle.

**The fair equality of opportunity principle**

* This principle states that social or economic inequalities associated with particular offices or jobs can only exist if these offices or jobs are open to everyone under condition of fair equality of opportunity.
* No one should be excluded from, for instance, the best-paid jobs, on non-relevant grounds such as sexual orientation or race.
* This principle of equality of opportunity includes provision of education to allow all people to develop their talent.

**The difference principle**

* This principle insists that any social or economic inequalities should only be tolerated on condition that they bring greatest benefits to the most disadvantaged members of the society.
* This is an implementation of a strategy known as ‘maximin’.
* Maximin means ‘maxmise the minumum’ which explains that choose the option which gives the best deal for the worst case.
* Consider the example of fair wages in a just society.

**Imagine two situations**

* In the first situation, most people earn a high wage, but ten percent of the population can barely earn enough to survive.
* In the second situation, although the average standard of living is far lower, the worst off ten percent of the population have a reasonable standard of living.
* Rawls claims that the second of the two situations is preferable because it guarantees that everyone in the society will be achieving a reasonable standard of living, the worst off are not that badly off.
* In the first situation, however, although there is a good chance of ending up quite well off, there is also a significant risk of being on a wage that barely allows you to survive.
* Adopting the maximin strategy, we should minimize the worst risks, and should opt for the second situation.

**Virtue Ethics**

* Virtue ethics is different from consequential ethics and nonconsequential ethics.
* Both consequential and nonconsequential ethics are theoretical.
* Theory of greatest happiness for the greatest number of people is a consequential view.
* Nonconsequential view is the theory that we shall do our duty for the sake of duty.
* None of these two theories has given an idea about how to practice these theories.
* Virtue ethics explains how we can practice or apply these theories in our actual life.
* In virtue ethics, the main two themes are: (1) virtue, (2) practical wisdom.
* In the West, virtue ethics was initiated by Plato and Aristotle.
* In the East, it was initiated by Confucius and Mencius. Mencius is a Chinese Confucian philosopher of the 4th century BC.
* In the West virtue ethics prevailed until the enlightenment in the 18th century.
* Virtue ethics did not prevail in the nineteenth century. But it reemerged in the late 1950s.
* Virtue ethics does not uphold the spirit of the modern period; it gives emphasis on the post-modernist spirit.
* Since the late 1950s, in the present contemporary period, virtue ethics gives main emphasis on the concept of virtue and on practical wisdom.
* Virtue means an excellent trait of character.
* To do something good or bad is not virtue. Goodness or badness are related with voluntary actions of a person. But virtue is related with the character of a person.
* A person can tell a truth following a rule or may act for happiness following another rule. These may not be virtuous.
* Voluntary actions can be done only due to a persons’ habits, without any rational thinking. Virtue is not such habit based.
* A virtue is a multi-track disposition,   
  -- to notice, to expect, to value, to feel, to desire and then to choose and act.
* To possess a virtue is to be a person with a certain complex mindset.
* Suppose, a person likes honesty and chooses,   
   ─ to work with honest people,   
   ─ to have honest friends,   
   ─ to bring up children to be honest,   
   ─ to deplore dishonesty and not to be amused by tales of chicanery and despises those who   
   succeed through deception,  
   ─ not to think about them clever,   
   ─ not to be pleased or surprised when honesty triumphs,  
   ─ to be shocked when those near and dear do what is dishonest.
* If honesty is valued in such a multi-track complex mindset then it is a trait of character and it is virtue.
* Knowledge of what virtue is — is not enough to be virtuous.
* One may tell a lie to prevent someone else’s hurt feelings; is it virtue?
* Is it always right to act with courage?
* Someone who is generous, honest, compassionate and courageous, can be considered as virtuous; but may act wrongly.
* To be virtuous in the true sense, one needs practical wisdom as the guide line for virtuous activities.
* Motive and emotion for virtue are not enough; rational choice is necessary.
* Children and adolescents may work with honesty, compassion, generosity and courage; but they morally virtuous?
* Children and adolescents can be very nice, but not virtuous in the moral sense.
* Virtue can be inclination based, what Aristotle called natural virtue; but perfection of virtue needs practical wisdom.
* If a person is thoughtless, insensitive, reckless, shortsighted then virtue will not be attained.
* Practical wisdom is the knowledge or understanding that enables its possessor to do the right thing in any given situation.
* Practical comes from the experience of life; it is necessary to be wise about human beings and human life and to be mindful of the consequences of possible actions.
* Practical wisdom needs capacity to recognize some features of a situation as more important than others, the relevant ones.
* On the whole, practical wisdom is possessed by those who understand what is truly worthwhile, truly important and thereby truly advantageous in life, who know, in short, how to life well.

**Ethics and Language**

* In language, meaning of the same word and the same statement may vary depending on the context and situation.
* Such problems may also arise in dealing with ethical judgments. To solve such problems we need to know how language is used in ethics.
* One can say, a puppy is a young dog. In this case we know the definition of the word ‘puppy’.
* One can also say that, a puppy is a nuisance in the house. In this case we get an expression of an observational information about puppy.
* What is justice? This is an interrogative statement.
* Happiness is good. This is an evaluative statement.
* You will never find a country in the world, which is the queen of all countries and it is my motherland. This is an emotive statement.
* In our voluntary actions we choose or prefer or approve something and also command something.
* All these are related with evaluation process.
* In this way the evaluative language is one central issue in ethics.
* There are also other co-relative languages, viz., emotive language, prescriptive language and descriptive language.
* In ethical judgments we judge which voluntary action is good or bad, right or wrong.
* It is the use of the word ‘good’, we have to be aware of how to use this word.
* Because, to say ‘good apple’, ‘good behavior’, ‘good exam grade’; the word ‘good’ will different in all these cases.
* In an apple, good is according to: its size, shape, colour, taste, etc.
* In an exam grade, good is according to: standard of the level of quality; the word quality will be different in an apple and in an exam.
* Good newspaper and good motor car, good will totally different in from all other cases mentioned above.
* Good office staff, good according to efficiency? Or according to sincerity?
* As sown above, same word is used for evaluation in many cases; but standard of evaluation will be different in all the cases.
* In moral evaluation it is not possible to give a definition of ‘good’. Evaluative language will be different in all cases.
* Because of this problem some philosophers upheld that the ethical term ‘good’ cannot be defined in ethics.
* On the whole moral evaluation of a person or his voluntary actions will be related with his whole life and social intercourse.
* In the ethical judgment of an action, one may say: ‘It is too bad’.
* Another person may about this same action: ‘I am disgusted about it’.
* These are expressions of feelings; how a person feels and such expressions are emotional.
* Such emotional use of language is different from the evaluative use of language.
* Criticism of emotive language led to the standpoint that ethics is meaningless. This standpoint was upheld by the philosophers of the Vienna circle in 20th century.
* In ethics sometimes questions are asked, such as: ‘what should we do?’
* Answer to such questions are given in language which is prescriptive in nature; such language is usually used in commanding, advising, guiding, etc.
* Prescriptive language is basically like command, which is also used in ordinary use of language.
* After using prescriptive language, if someone does not follow it, there are two options to do.
* One may use emotive or persuasive language to compel the person to follow the command.
* Or one may use rational analytical use of language to convince the person to accept the command.

**Metaethical Theory**

* Normative ethics makes judgments whether human voluntary actions are good or bad, right or wrong.
* Metaethics does not deal with judgment of voluntary actions.
* Metaethics deals with the analysis of the meaning and definitions of ethical terms and concepts such as good, bad, right, wrong.
* Metaethics also deals with the justification of the rules, principles and theories of ethical judgments.
* In this twofold functions of metaethics, three types of theories have been developed.
* These theories are: (1) naturalistic, (2) intuitionist and (3) non-cognitive.

Naturalistic Theory

* Naturalistic theory is formed on the basis of natural facts.
* Society requires that we keep promise; this is factual.
* We ought to keep promise; this is ethical.
* ‘Ought’ is derived from ‘Is’.
* Such justification if fallacious. It is a circular argument.
* This problem is related with open question argument.
* Naturalistic theory remains open to further questions.
* Naturalistic theories are based on facts and so are based on experience. This is also a problem.
* Naturalistic theory can be metaphysical and religion based. This can also lead to problem.

Intuitive Theory

* Intuitive theory does not accept the psychological, social or natural approaches to value judgments.
* Intuitive theory does not depend on proof of theory; theory is considered as self-evident, i.e. acceptable without proof.
* Intuitive theory is based on intuition. Intuition does not require natural or empirical properties.
* Intuitionism considers moral terms as simple, indefinable and unanalyzable.
* Intuitionism considers a thing of a certain nature is good in itself, e.g., what is pleasant or harmonious is good in itself.
* It is difficult to support intuitionism from ontological and epistemic standpoints.
* It is also difficult to support intuitionism from the psychological and anthropological standpoints.
* Open question argument, as it is used against naturalistic theory, can also be used against the intuitionist theory.
* On the whole, the intuitionist theory is not fully satisfactory.

Non-cognitive Theory

* Because of the unsatisfactory conditions of the naturalistic and the intuitionist theories, some thinkers developed a new theory known as non-cognitive or non-descriptive theory.
* According to this theory, justifications of ethical theories cannot be done in the the field of knowledge.
* Some exponents of non-cognitive theory are extreme in their position and rejects ethics as invalid and meaningless.
* British philosopher A. J. Ayer and German philosopher Rudolf Carnap are known as logical positivists; the rejected ethics and meaningless as logically unjustifiable and meaningless.
* Ayer and Carnap considered ethical theories as emotive in nature.
* Non-cognitive extremist interpretation of ethical theories is self-contradictory and this theory itself is invalid.

Terrorism and Human Rights

**Terrorism**

* Terrorism can be of four different types. These are: (1) predatory, (b) retaliatory,   
  (c) political and (d) moralistic. Predatory terrorist activities include rob, steal, violent or dishonest acquisition of something. Retaliatory terrorism is revenge on someone and some harmful action. Political terrorism can do violent activities for killing upholders of the opposite political views. And moralistic terrorism can also be violent and harmful actions in the name morality, e.g., in the name of religious moral activities some terrorist actions can be done.
* It is usually held that all types of terrorism are always wrong and immoral. But some practitioners of terrorism strongly deny that they are terrorists and they claim that terrorism is wrong doing. But they do terrorism and they argue that they are freedom fighters which is moral.
* Some moral philosophers argue that some types of terrorism are morally justifiable, e.g., revolutionary terrorism. Because of such different views about terrorism, it is difficult to come to an one general view about terrorism and whether it is moral.
* But an adequate description of terrorism of any type will include five elements of terrorism. These are:   
  (1) Socioeconomic or historical and cultural roots cause the terrorist incidences.   
  (2) There will be immediate, intermediate or long-range or ultimate goals in terrorism.  
  (3) Forms or methods of coercion and force which are used in terrorism, determine   
   different types or forms of terrorism.   
  (4) Terrorism is also supported or sponsored by organizations, institutes or political   
   systems. Such cases end up as international terrorism and state terrorism.   
  (5) Terrorism occurs in social, political, economic or military circumstances both in time  
   of peace and in wartime.
* A good definition of terrorism is that terrorism is any organized set of acts of violence designed to create an atmosphere of despair or fear, to shake the faith of ordinary citizens in their government and it representatives, to destroy the structure of authority which normally stands for security, or to reinforce and perpetuate a governmental regime whose popular support is shaky.
* It is also the case that terrorism is a policy of seemingly senseless, irrational, and arbitrary murder, assassination, sabotage, subversion, robbery and other forms of violence, all committed with dedicated indifference to existing legal and moral codes or with claims to special exemption from conventional social norms.
* What is really bad is that in terrorism innocent persons are also victimized.
* On the whole we can have a ‘common core meaning’ of terrorism; this ‘core meaning’ includes the notion that terrorists acts are acts of coercion or of force aiming at monetary gain, revenge, a political end moral end.
* The causes and goals of terrorism also differ with the different types of terrorism; the methods of terrorism also vary depending on these and other factors.

**Terrorism and Human Rights**

* Human rights are fundamental for the existence and wellbeing of human beings. From this standpoint all human beings are considered as equal from the standpoint of human rights. Without human rights no one will be able to lead a good life. On the other hand the concept of terrorism is such that it cannot be considered as good for human rights.
* Of the four types of terrorism, the first two types, viz., predatory and retaliatory terrorism, will never conform with human rights.
* These two types get involved with physical violence and usually in extreme form. As such such terrorism ends up with killing human beings and even innocent human beings.
* The main purpose behind such violence is to do robbery, stealing and taking away innocent people’s wealth.
* In the retaliatory terrorism, revenge is taken in violent form. Instead of taking revenge, one can look for justice and can try for that. Taking revenge can lead to counter-revenge and it may continue.
* Because of the above mentioned facts, terrorism can never be good for human rights; robbery, stealing, killing and revenge are all opposite type of human welfare and will always violate human rights.
* On the other hand, political and moralistic terrorism can considered good to some extent. Sometime political terrorist activities may develop in the name of political revolution; such political terrorism may end up with the develop counter-terrorism from the opponent political activists. Historical truth is that such terrorism always violate human rights.
* In the 20th century, communist political activities were involved with the use of arms and the death of innumerable people all over the world. These are violation of human rights.
* Terrorism is considered as moralistic by the terrorists themselves; for example, they can claim that they are freedom fighters and in this sense their activities are moral. But such claims cannot be accepted. It is a historical truth that the fighting between the Palestinians and the Israeli military rule was vastly outweighed by the evil consequences (*cf*., B. Almond and D. Hill, ed., *Applied Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1991, p. 119). Such evil consequences cannot be beneficial for humanity and human rights.