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**Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals: Section 2 (19-29)**

In this section, Kant continues his argument for morality based on pure reason as well as introducing the idea of imperatives, concepts he considers important in establishing a groundwork for a metaphysics of morals.

Main Ideas:

* There exists no action that can be guaranteed to be one taken solely from duty
  + Quote: “there is absolutely no possibility by means of experience to make out with complete certainty a single case in which the maxim of an action that may in other respects conform to duty has rested solely on moral grounds and on the representation of one’s duty.” (407, page 19)
  + This is part of the reason that Kant says actions cannot form the basis of morals.
  + Question: Can you come up with a counterexample where you are 100% sure an action is taken based on duty? If not, does that prove Kant’s claim?
* Morals must be based on the idea of a rational creature, not just humans
  + Quote: “How could laws for the determination of our will be regarded as laws for the determination of a rational being in general and of ourselves only insofar as we are rational beings, if these laws were merely empirical and did not have their source completely a priori in pure, but practical, reason?” (408, page 20)
  + Something that is true and valid in the context of humanity may not be valid outside of the context of humanity.
  + Question: Do you agree that morals can only exist in the context of rational creatures, or could they exist in some other context?
* Morals can be determined by pure reason, and do not rely on the empirical
  + Quote: “There is no genuine supreme principle of morality which does not rest on pure reason alone, independent of all experience” (409 page 21)
  + Part of the reasoning Kant gives is that any experience on which morals are based would then have to be held as a standard for all morality
    - This contrasts with the popular approach to morals of the time
  + He also claims morals based on pure reason have a stronger influence on people than those based on inclinations and experiences.
  + Question: Why does Kant claim that any experience (as opposed to pure reason) used for the basis of morals must be held as a standard for all morals, could a moral standard not be contingent on the empirical context?
* Imperatives are the “formula” for a command of reason, i.e. what, according to morality, one *ought* to do.
  + A command of reason is an objective principle insofar as it necessitates the will.
  + Quote: “Imperatives say that something would be good to do or to refrain from doing, but they say it to a will that does not always therefore do something simply because it has been represented to the will as something good to do.” (413, page 23)
  + Imperatives are hypothetical or categorical
    - Hypothetical imperatives represent the necessity of an action as means to another end.
      * Kant further divides these into Rules of Skill, and Counsels of Prudence
    - Categorical Imperatives represent an action necessary in and of itself.
  + Question: In terms of a rule of skill, why does Kant argue that willing the end necessarily means willing the means to the end?
* A categorical imperative can only exist a priori
  + Quote: “the categorical imperative alone purports to be a practical law, while all the others may be called principles of the will, but not law.” (420, page 29)
  + This is because, as mentioned before, there is no action which we can sure say is based on duty
  + This makes it more difficult to establish the existence of a categorical imperative, which Kant discusses in the rest of the section
  + Question: What is the categorical imperative Kant describes and what does it mean?