

MILL'S UTILITARIANISM : EXPOSITION AND EVALUATION

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Introduction

The great leaders of utilitarian school at the time of its flourishing period were Bentham, James Mill, and John. S. Mill. They maintained that pleasure is the sole good. The very name Utilitarianism with its emphasis upon Utility rather than on pleasure, is a case of the “emotive use of language”, prejudicing the readers in favor of this theory. The Utilitarian school had also the advantage of a good slogan “the greatest happiness for the greatest number” which emphasized wide distribution of human pleasure as well as its maximization. Dr. William Lillie in his *An Introduction to Ethics* (1991) says that

... there has been a tendency to use the name Utilitarianism for a theory which holds that actions are right or wrong in them but that their moral quality depends on their consequences.

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The objective of this essay is to critically explicate the views of Mill presented in his *Utilitarianism* in respect of his trying to clarify the concept of happiness principle. In his first Chapter, "General Remarks," Mill argues that moral theories are divided between two distinct approaches: the intuitive and inductive schools. Although both schools agree that there is a single and highest normative principle, they disagree about whether we have knowledge of that principle intuitively (without appeal to experience), or inductively (though experience and observation). Kant represents the best of the intuitive school, and Mill himself defends the inductive school. Mill criticizes Kant's categorical imperative noting that it is essentially the same as utilitarianism since it involves calculating the good or bad consequences of an action to determine the morality of that action. Mill argues that his task is to demonstrate this highest principle inductively. The objective of this essay is of twofold, firstly to show how Mill makes clear the concept of Utilitarianism and then to show how far is the utilitarian principle applicable for judging the contemporary moral issues.

Clarification of the concept of utilitarianism

The essence of Utilitarianism, i.e. the greatest happiness for the greatest number, indicates that only the action that creates happiness not for the individual but for the majority number of people will be a good one. Mill tried to illustrate his concept of utility principle throughout his epoch-making work *Utilitarianism*, in the second chapter of his book *Utilitarianism*, he made clear the misconceptions regarding the happiness principle that holds that actions are right or wrong in proportion, as they tend to promote happiness, wrong, as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness. After that he raised the probable objections against

Utilitarianism and refuted them accordingly. Mill showed that there are two different types of misconceptions *from* two different corners against Utilitarianism.

- a) Misconceptions of the ignorant blunders according to whom utility is opposed to pleasure. Here Mill says that utility as the test of right or wrong, uses the term in that restricted *and merely colloquial sense*. He showed that from Epicure to Bentham maintained the theory of utility, and meant by it, not something contradistinguished from pleasure but pleasure itself.
- b) Misconceptions of the philosophic opponents of Utilitarianism (mainly the intuitionists) which is opposed to the first and holds that utility means the gross form of pleasure, not mental or refined pleasure. But Mill clarified the misconception by saying that by *happiness is intended pleasure and the absence of pain; by unhappiness pain and the privation of pleasure*. Utility is not opposed to pleasure at all rather it renders to mean beauty, ornament, and amusement including all higher elements. It is not opposite to mental pleasure, but all kinds of pleasure are included in it. An action is good according to as much pleasure as it creates. Mill raised several objectionable assertions (probable) against Utilitarianism himself and refuted all of them.

As per utilitarian principle, to have pleasure is the ultimate end of life. But it is said that to suppose that life has no better / higher end than pleasure, no better and nobler Object of desire and pursuit, is utterly mean and groveling; a doctrine worthy only of swine. Moreover if we suppose so then utilitarianism becomes a vulgar doctrine. Mill tried to show that human beings are capable of higher pleasures that vulgar, physical

ones. Utilitarianism takes both higher and lower quality pleasure into account; hence it's not vulgar. In his book *Utilitarianism*, Mill discussed this problem in detail (from Para 5-10 of chapter two). Mill says that the said supposition holds those human beings are capable of no pleasure except those of which the swine are capable. He contends that, if the supposition were true, the charge could not be denied but it would then be no change, for if my source of pleasure were precisely the same for the human being and the swine, then the rule of life which is good enough for the one would be good enough for the other. The comparison is felt to be degrading precisely as a beast's pleasure, do not satisfy a human being's conception of happiness. Human beings have faculties more elevated than the animal appetites and do not regard anything as happiness that does not include their gratification, in Para 4, Mill says there can not be found any Epicurean theory where the pleasure gained through reason or feelings or imagination or moral sentiment is not supposed to be greater from the pleasure of mere sensation. Therefore to suppose that utilitarianism tells about only the sensational pleasure can not be a right assertion. In Utilitarianism not only the quantitative difference but also the qualitative difference is also taken into account.

He asserts that,

Of two pleasures if there be one to which all or almost all who have experience of both give a decided preference, irrespective of any feeling of moral obligation to prefer it that is the more desirable pleasure, (page-08)

Mill also contends that there may be a portion of people who can choose the lower quality of pleasure, the pleasure of the beasts that is due to their inherent selfishness, rascality,

greediness, weakness of character and such lower qualities exercised by him. As Mill says,

Men lose their high aspiration as they lose their intellectual taste, because they have not time or opportunity for indulging them; and they addict to themselves to the inferior pleasures, not because they deliberately prefer them, but because they are either the only ones to which they have access, or the only ones which they are any longer capable of enjoying,

Human beings are beings of higher faculties who require more to make himself happy. He can accept sufferings and liabilities but he can hardly sink into the lower grade of existence. Human beings possess sense of dignity in themselves in different form. Due to this sense of dignity he can not accept the happiness of inferior quality. In this connection Mill says that, "It is better to be a human being dissatisfied than a pig satisfied; better to be Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied."

Thus Mill shows that happiness can surely be the end of human beings but it must be selective; and a human being has the capability to select the happiness suitable for him considering his sense of dignity, judgment of higher quality happiness, noble qualities exercised by him and so on; not necessarily that he has to choose the pleasure applicable for the lower quality beasts. He also holds that utilitarianism can only be attained through the general cultivation of nobleness of character.

Mill also does not accept the assertion regarding utilitarianism or happiness principle that happiness in any form cannot be the rational purpose of human life and action because, a) it is unattainable and b) renunciation of happiness is the beginning of all virtue. He says that it hurts at the root of

the matter. Because if no happiness is to be had at all by human beings, the attainment of it can not be the end of any rational conduct. A happy life consists of a) tranquility and b) excitement. Mill considers that,

If by happiness be meant a continuity of highly pleasurable excitements, it is evident that it is impossible. A state of exalted pleasure lasts only for a moment or in some cases only for somewhat longer periods. If this kind of intense rapture be meant by happiness, then it is impossible (p. 12).

But this was not the happiness meant by philosophers when they taught that happiness was the end of life. The happiness which they meant was not a life of rapture; but moments of such, in an existence made up of few and transitory pains, a combination of tranquility and excitement. The life that possesses this mediate is happy, and no excited life inheres in it. Some do not achieve such happiness because of distress in a) social arrangement and b) educational arrangement.

Less pleasure + tranquility = satisfaction

More excitement + pain = satisfaction. And it is attainable.

Man cannot do without happiness. Unquestionably it is possible to do without happiness and it is done voluntarily by nineteen twentieths of mankind; it often has to be done voluntarily by the hero or martyrs for the sake of something which they prize more than his individual happiness. The utilitarian does recognize in human being the power of sacrificing their own greatest good for the good of others. It only refuses to admit that the sacrifice is itself good. A sacrifice that does not increase or tends to increase the sum total of happiness, it considers as wasted. Mill says that between one's own happiness and that of other's, utilitarianism requires him to be as strictly impartial as a disinterested and

benevolent spectator. He holds that utilitarianism is identical with the teaching of Jesus. As he says "to do as you like to be done by" and 'to love your neighbor as yourself' constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarianism. There are also the teaching of Jesus that includes the happiness of the individual. So it is not right to say that it's a stoical doctrine for the Individual. The history of mankind shows that men become virtuous through the sacrifice of his own happiness. It may be true but the fact is that they sacrificed their happiness, sometimes their most valuable asset i.e. life for the happier life of the most other people. Suppose in any war for freedom a large number of people sacrificed their life so that the larger portion of the common people would live in peace and prosperity. They gain the supreme honour from the whole nation and there might be no happiness superior to this type of happiness. Therefore if any one can think that his supreme happiness lies in the happiness of all concerned then it becomes a utilitarian type of happiness. It indicates that happiness may be attained and be the rational purpose of human being. Mill also says that happiness can be attained, especially with social progress and education. As he says,

... that laws and social arrangements should place the happiness, or the interest, of every individual, as nearly as possible in harmony with the interest of the whole ... that education and opinion ... should so muse that power as to establish in the mind of every individual an indissoluble association between his own happiness and the good of the whole; (p. 16)

Mill rejected the assertion maintained by some that Utility is too high a standard for humanity. For him, the objectors mixed the motive and standard of action. He mentioned that the business of ethics is to provide or tell us what our duties are. If we mix it up with motive, then confusion will arise. The

morality of an action depends upon the consequences of it not upon its motive. Mill also contends, "Motive has nothing to do with morality of an action though much with the worth of the agent. He, who saves a fellow creature from drowning, does what is morally right. Whether his motive is duty or the hope of being paid for it." vli Mill exemplified it by making distinction between principle and motive rule utilitarianism. If the rule of utilitarian morality is generally followed then maximum utility can be gained.

Mill did not accept the assertion of some other philosophers who maintain that Utilitarianism makes man cold and unsympathetic; it chills men's moral feelings towards individuals. It makes them regard only the dry and hard consideration of the consequences of actions not the qualities from which the action emanates. To establish his view Mill used two different ways. Firstly: if this means that Utilitarianism does not allow their judgment concerning the rightness and wrongness of an action to be influenced by their opinions of the qualities of the person who does it, then it is a complaint not against Utilitarianism but against having any standard of morality. Secondly, no known ethical standard decides an action to be good or bad because it is done by a good or a bad man, still less because done by an amiable, a brave or a benevolent man or the contrary. These considerations are relevant, not to the estimation of action but of persons and there is nothing in the Utilitarian theory inconsistent with the fact that there're other things that interest us in persons besides the rightness and wrongness of their action. Mill says that the task of ethics is to tell what our duty is or in what way or through which we can know our duty both to ourselves and to our society. No ethical principle emphasizes to do everything as per dictation of the rule concerned. Actually ninety nine percent of our tasks are done from our

motives. There is no way to confuse between rule of action and motive. Utilitarianism is opposite neither to motive of duty nor to direct obedience to principle.

Moreover, utilitarianism is not a Godless doctrine, as supported by Mill. Some religious scholars want to tell that the appeal to happiness instead of the appeal to the will of God is a Godless ie. irreligious, principle of morality and utilitarianism emphasizes to appeal to happiness, hence by principle it is a Godless doctrine. This is one of the most fundamental objections raised against the utilitarian principle being a standard of our actions. Mill answered the scholars offering some arguments. As he says, well, this depends upon our idea regarding the moral character of God. It is a common opinion of the mass people that God must desire the happiness of His creature despite all obstacles. Not only this, it is also held that this was the purpose of His creation i.e. to keep His creatures in happy conditions both physically and mentally. Now, if these assertions are true, then utilitarianism is not a Godless doctrine. It is profoundly religious in character than any other. If it be meant that the utilitarian does not recognize the will of God as the supreme law of morality then Mill contends that a utilitarian who believes in the perfect goodness and wisdom of God, necessarily believes that whatever God has thought to be good or fit to reveal on the subject of morality, must fulfill the requirement of utilitarianism at a supreme stage. Basically it should be understood that being the Omniscient, God knows both the present and future place of mankind and He knows very well in what man's good or bad is. This goodness and badness is counted as per consequences of the action done by the agent.

Mill holds that Utilitarianism is only an appeal to expedience and an appeal to expedience is not as morality as an appeal to principle. First of all we have to understand the

meaning of the term expedience used in the objection. It means interest, some special interest. Generally expedience means what is expedient for the particular interest of the agent himself; suppose a Vice-Chancellor of a university sacrifices the interest of the institution of which he is the administrative chief for the interest of his own. Such an action of the V.C. is an act of expedience. In this sense Utilitarianism cannot be blamed as a principle of expedience. Utilitarianism does recognize in human being the power of sacrificing their greatest good for the good of others. The happiness, which forms the standard of what is right in conduct, is not the agent's own happiness but the happiness of all concerned. If it were an expedient one then it would not seek the happiness of others.

Mill also does not agree with some scholars who maintain that there is no time for calculating and weighing the effect of any line of conduct on the general rule and thus we cannot estimate the degree in which it promotes human happiness. Mill says that the view is like the speech of those Christians who consider that it is impossible to maintain life through the rule of creed because in every case the question of Old and New Testament will arise and it is impossible to calculate all the consequences. Mill says that there has been ample time, the whole past duration of human species. During all that time mankind has been learning by experience the tendencies of action. So, it is possible for human beings to understand whether the action done or to be done by him is a right one or not. If the experience recommends that the current action may produce more/less pleasure than the other then human beings should prefer the alternative which will give more pleasure to the agent as well as to the whole community. If experience tells that it creates more pleasure to the individual but simultaneously produce pain for the society then it should be rejected seeking the welfare of the society, in this respect the

internal feelings of mankind may help the agent to take the appropriate decision. Therefore it will not be right to assert that we cannot estimate the quantity of pleasure that can be achieved by us through our actions.

Mill disagreed with a stock argument placed against utilitarianism consisting that an utilitarian will be apt to make his own particular case an exception to moral rules and when under temptation will see a utility in the breach of a rule, greater than he will see in its observation. Mill contends that utilitarianism is not only the creed that is able to furnish us with the excuse for evil doing and means of cheating our own experience. They are offered in abundance by doctrine which recognize as a fact in morals the existing of conflicting consideration; which all doctrines do, that have been believed by some persons. So the assertion is made not only against utilitarianism but also against all ethical standards that accept the real fact of action. Actually, it is not the fault of any creed but of the complicated nature of human affairs that rules of conduct can not be so framed as to require no exception, and that hardly any kind of action can safely be laid down as either always obligatory or always condemnable. Some people say that man usually thralls of virtue as a matter to be desired. In this connection Mill says, the utilitarian does not prohibit desiring virtue but the fact is that the virtue is not as universal as the desire of happiness.

He says,

Virtue, according to the utilitarian doctrine, is not naturally and originally part of the end, but it is capable of becoming so; and in those who love it disinterestedly it has become so, and is desired and cherished, not as a means to happiness, but as a part of their happiness. p.34

Human beings desire virtue but also money, power, fame, love for music, good health and what not. Money is desired for human life. Actually man desires money not to establish possession over it but to use it; to buy something, which will fulfill his desire, the desire of happiness. So it is found that money is used as a means to achieve the desired object. Mill thinks that human beings' desire for power, fame, is not the end of desire. They are the parts of the end to be desired i.e. Happiness. As Mill says

what was once desired as an instrument for the attainment of happiness, has come to be desired for its own sake. In being desired for its own sake it is, however, desired as part of happiness.(p.35)

Mill asserts that the love for music, or the desire of good health, all are included in the concept of happiness. *'Happiness is not an abstract idea, but a concrete whole; and these are some of its parts.'*(p- 35) Mill considers virtue as good in the same way like the desire for money or fame or power etc. . . . Virtue is good as it promotes happiness and protects from pain. In respect of desire for virtue Mill says, "those who desire virtue for its own sake, desire it either because the consciousness of it is a pleasure, or because the consciousness of being without it is a pain, or both reasons united" (p.35)

At last Mill considers that

. . . that there is in reality nothing desired except happiness. Whatever is desired otherwise than as a means to some end beyond itself, and ultimately to happiness, is desired as itself a part of happiness, and is not desired for itself until it has done so. (p-37)

In this way, showing multifold analysis on the happiness principle, Mill tried to make the conception of utilitarianism clear to scholars as well as to all personalities interested in the

principle. Next, Mill proceeded to clarify the sanction of morality that is prescribed by the utilitarian principle. Mill explained the moral sanction of utilitarian principle which has been exposed below.

Mill on the sanction of morality / happiness principle

By the term sanction is meant the factors due to which the common people or we are bound to act morally and moral actions are those sanctions for which these are called the sanctions of morality. Every moral standard maintains some sanctions of morality. Utilitarianism, being a moral standard, talks about the sanctions of our moral actions. Before Mill, Bentham in the third chapter of his well-known treatise *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* (1822) tells about the sanctions of morality. He says

There are four distinguishable sources from which pleasure and pain are in use to flow: considered separately they may be termed the physical, the political, the moral and the religious; and inasmuch as the pleasures and pains belonging to each of them are capable of giving a binding force to any law or rule of conduct, they may all of them be termed sanctions.(p.17)

Therefore, it is found that Bentham is the first to use the term sanction in the field of moral Judgment, The sanctions proposed by Bentham have been explained under to make clear the nature and importance of sanction in respect of judging the moral actions.

Physical sanction

Whenever pleasure or pain is expected not by the interposition of the will of any human being or by superior invisible being but is to be considered that the sanction belongs to the physical factor i.e. *the physical sanction*, as Bentham contends it.

Political sanction

By the term *political sanction* Bentham means the sanctions that come from the sovereign or supreme ruling power in the state. It indicates that the rule adopted by the selected persons of the state, which is practiced by the judges of the state, determines the action done by the agent as right or wrong.

Moral & Religious sanctions

When an action is done from the agent's spontaneous disposition and not bothering any settled or concerted rule is considered by Bentham as *moral or popular sanction*. But if the action is performed from the feelings of a superior invisible being, then it is to be said that the action has been done from the religious *sanction*. Bentham also said that in respect of *physical or political or moral sanction* of the pleasure or pain that must be experienced in the present life and in respect of the religious sanction, of the moral action, it is to be experienced either in the present life or in a future life.

Mill argues that although the external sanctions enforce the utilitarian principle, they do not obligate us to follow it. They cannot bind us satisfactorily to any moral principle, since men are truly bound only when they feel inwardly that the principle is binding upon them. It is our "feeling for humanity" which provides the ultimate sanction of the principle of utility, and this Mill calls the internal sanction. Mill made a large analysis of the concept of this internal sanction of our moral actions in his Utilitarianism.

(a) The nature of internal feelings

It is the conscientious feelings of mankind, which are the ultimate sanction of all morality. Mill considers it as the

essence of conscience. It is a subjective feeling in our own mind. It is one and unique in human beings and it derives from sympathy, love, fear, from all the forms of religious feelings, from childhood memory and memory of past life, from self-esteem and so on. There may be some people who do not possess the feeling with required strength. Mill says these persons must be more obedient to the utilitarian principle than any other moral principle. This internal feelings of moral action has no conflicting relation with the concept of 'things in themselves.' Rather Mill believes, the feeling is subjective and is measured by its strength and it is symmetrical with the utilitarian spirit of internal feelings. Mill holds that religious feelings are also strongly included in the concept of internal feelings; the feeling of the belief in God is stronger than belief in any objective reality. The belief in God acts on our conduct in proportion to the subjective religious feelings, the answer to the question as to why someone will obey his conscience, Mill says only those people can ask such questions whose conscientious feelings are very weak and if they do anything moral they do it not because of their belief in any transcendental theory but because of external sanctions. To be noted here that the other two main ethical principles namely the *Intuitionism* and the *Kantian* also accepted the internal feelings as the sanction of morality though in another form. The first considers the benevolence and love for other while the second considers that duty to be done for duty's sake. But utilitarian concept of internal feeling is not synonymous, by meaning, with either noted principles. Neither of those principles considers the consequence of the action done by the agent, that is to say, none of the principles considers the consequence of the action to determine whether the action done is good or bad, right or wrong.

(b) Whether internal feelings are innate or implanted

Mill in his book also discussed the question of whether the internal feelings are innate or acquired. Mill says that if there were anything innate then there must be some innate idea regarding pleasure and pain. He holds that there must be some moral obligation, which is accepted by the intuitive moralists. And these will coincide with the utilitarian and no quarrel will be there. Moreover the happiness principle will be benefited if the transcendental moralist gives any additional efficacy to it. Hence Mill tried to show no contradiction with the other moral theories like intuitionism and transcendentalism.

Mill also holds the internal feelings may be acquired and it is not unnatural for human beings. For him the moral feelings are not indeed a part of our nature like other acquired capacities such as speaking, reasoning, building cities etc. It is a natural outgrowth. The feeling of duty associated with the utilitarian principle is implanted in ourselves through education. Education builds up sentiment, which helps to cherish the utilitarian principle.

(c) The role of social feelings, a by-product of internal feelings

Social feelings play a vital role in developing feelings in the human mind. It constitutes the strength of utilitarian morality. As Mill says,

The deeply rooted conception which every individual even now has of himself as a social being, tends to make him feel it one of his natural wants that there should be harmony between his feelings and aim and those of his fellow creatures (p. 31)

Mill wants to state that whenever an individual acts as a social being, he bears an inclination to make it as a matter of

collective interest, not the interest of the individual. The origin of such cooperating attitude is rooted in the social feelings towards one another. It is as a matter of feelings and develops in human beings from sympathy and influence of education as well as by the influence of external sanctions. Social feelings develop a sense in human being to seek happiness for the other members of the society. Even if he fails to arrange to provide happiness for others, he will go forward to remove the cause that may bring pain or sufferings or an unexpected situation to him.

Unlike other principles of morality Mill offered proofs in favour of the utilitarian principle of morality. The proof provided by Mill has been furnished below.

Proof of the Principle of Utility in Mill's Utilitarianism

Mill in the fourth chapter of his book *Utilitarianism* explains two proofs regarding the principle of utility. Mill says,

The only proof capable of being given that an object is visible is that people actually see it. The only proof that a sound is audible is that people hear it: and so of the other sources of our experience. In like manner, apprehend, the sole evidence it is possible to produce that anything is desirable, is that people do actually desire it.(p.32)

The aforementioned is the first argument given by J.S. Mill to prove the acceptability of the utility principle. The argument may be furnished in the following logical framework:

The only proof for something observable is that it can be seen.

The only proof for something audible is that it can be heard.

Therefore, the only proof for something desirable is that human being desires it.

Mill also contends that this happiness principle is attainable both by the individual and in general. According to this principle happiness is good and it may be of two types on the basis of the number of people who avail it i.e. personal happiness and general happiness; each person's happiness is good to him and that of the general is good to the aggregate of all persons which tends to consider utilitarianism as one of the ends of our conduct; one of the criteria of our free actions. Mill argues that no direct proof of any first principle ultimate principle is possible or and the problem of proof is in reality deduced to the of rational assent;

. . . To be incapable of proof by reasoning is common to all first principles; to the first premises of our knowledge as well as to those of our conduct. But the former, being matters of fact, may be the subject of a direct appeal to the faculties which judge of fact — namely, our sense, and our internal consciousness (p. 39)

Thus Mill tried to show the logical basis of utilitarian principle aiming to attract scholars to pay their close and positive attention towards the utilitarian principle as one of the most acceptable principle for the benefit of individual as well as whole i.e. the largest portion of human community.

Acceptability of Mill's Concept

In respect of testing the quality of happiness Mill proposed those judges who have the experience of distinguishing happiness in quality. But the verdict of qualified Judge does not depend upon sensation but upon reason or understanding and so open to the door rationalism. So the happiness principle turns to the rational principle. While mentioning the fault of

Bentham's Utilitarianism, Mill himself had to face the critic. Emphasizing upon the qualitative aspect of utilitarianism he condemned the *summum bonum* of utilitarianism. To tell that, which is qualitatively higher is desirable is to tell that not merely happiness is desirable but the higher is only acceptable. While establishing his theory Mill made a hotchpotch position. He tried to show that only pleasure is desirable and as an end it is the only thing to be desired.

He also tried to show that we seek pleasure not only for ourselves but also for others. But at the last discussion he was intended to show that some pleasures are more desirable than the others. For this reason some critics find a clue to say that there is confusion in his speech. Mill had made a fallacy of division and composition by telling that men's own happiness is good for him and for that the good is good for all. Because, as it is impossible to make a longer man by adding the lengths of individual man, it is also impossible to create a collective or universal happiness with the collection of Individuals; that means each person's own happiness is good to that person, so the general happiness is a good to everybody is not a valid one. The statement, what is good is what men actually desire, of course commits what Moore calls the "naturalistic fallacy" in supposing, as it appears to do, that good can be defined in terms of what men desire. Lillie mentions, men always desire pleasure and it indicates that Mill's ethical theory is based on psychological hedonism. But it has already been shown that, if psychological hedonism were true, the only possible theory for a moralist would be egoistic hedonism, not utilitarianism.

J. S. Mill in his utilitarianism offered an argument, which is so fallacious that it is hard to understand how he could have thought it to be valid. He says pleasure is only thing desired; therefore pleasure is the only thing desirable. He argues that the only things visible are things seen; the only thing audible is the things heard and similarly

the only things desirable are the only things desired. He does not notice that a thing is visible if it can be seen but desirable if it ought to be desired thus desirable being a word presupposing an ethical theory; we cannot infer what is desirable from what is desired.

Grote in his *Examination of the Utilitarian Philosophy* made his criticism against the utilitarian principle. He says that the claim for utilitarianism as a pre-eminently scientific ethical theory cannot be acceptable. He holds that moral philosophy must be idealist and not positivist in *its* real sense and nature. In utilitarianism there are a number of points, which are still unresolved and confusing. Firstly, conclusion about what is morally imperative cannot be validly derived from the empirical facts about human nature and conduct; there cannot be any logical connection between what ought to be and what is. Secondly, there cannot be a science of the kind of free action that must occur if morality is to have any application. Thirdly, he opposes that happiness is too passive an end. He maintains that the positive improvement of human character is an essential ingredient in an adequate morality e.g. self-control. Basically the facts, to which utilitarianism appeals in support of its slogan, do not have the logical capacity to establish it. That principle is neither empirical nor inductive; it is *a priori*. Finally, utilitarianism fails to recognize the true nature of virtue by defining it in terms of happiness. On the question of the kind of happiness, which utilitarianism takes as its ideal Grote objects that Mill hovers between idealist and positivist conception of happiness, between defining it as what man should desire and what man does desire. He thinks that Mill takes the happiness to be the former, the actual or realized happiness as against expected happiness, in connection with different qualities of happiness. Grote argues that Mill's criterion in terms of preference of qualified judges is in fact quantitative, since in simply preferring the 'higher' to 'lower'

pleasures the judges are simply asserting the former to be more pleasurable.

His fundamental difference with Mill concerns the utilitarian subordination of virtue to happiness. On the one hand he has an unarguable primary conviction that virtue has an intrinsic value of its own and not merely as a human disposition contributory to the general happiness. On the other hand, he is dissatisfied with Mill's theory of moral motivation, of his account of how the general principle can become an operative end for the individual.

It is true that Mill departs from Bentham's conception that all the major differences among the pleasures are quantitative, he could not but accepted the basic role of pleasure and pain in morality, viz., individual psychological happiness and universal psychological happiness. The first holds that an individual's desire for happiness is the sole motive of an action. The second holds that the greatest happiness principle ought to be the individual's goal and standard of conduct. Psychological hedonism is primarily a descriptive doctrine as it claims to be an account of the actual motive of behavior. Universal ethical hedonism is a normative theory. It is the principle by which actions are evaluated in terms of their consequences, irrespective of the nature of the motive. Mill tried to show the possibility of transition from one's own happiness to that of other's, and from a psychological theory to a moral theory. He tried to harmonize the two varieties of hedonism by recourse to the concept of sanctions, the inducement to action, which give binding force to moral rules.

Sidgwick in his *Methods of Ethics* presents his attitude regarding utilitarianism. He differs from the classical utilitarianism on four major points. In the first place, he is not a psychological hedonist. Pleasure conceived as agreeable

feelings is not the sole object of pleasure, that much pleasure can be attained only if it is not consciously pursued. If psychological hedonism were true it would not imply the greatest happiness principle. In the second place, benevolence i.e. the pursuit of happiness in general is not enough. The happiness that is relevant to morality is not just that of human beings but also that of the whole sentient creation, of every being that is capable of happiness or its opposite. He maintains that not only must we increase the happiness of others; we must ensure that happiness is rightly distributed. He holds that equal distribution is the principle of just distribution that recommends itself to reason but that it is not a consequence of the, equally rational, principle of benevolence itself. In the third place, the essence of the objection placed by Kant is that utilitarian theories actually devalue the individuals it is supposed to benefit. If we allow utilitarian calculations to motivate our actions, we are allowing the valuation of one person's welfare and interests in terms of what good they can be used for. It would be possible, for instance, to justify sacrificing one individual for the benefits of others if the utilitarian calculations promise more benefit. Doing so would be the worst example of treating someone utterly as a means and not as an end in them.

Ayer thinks that utilitarianism does not fulfill the proper function of ethics. For him, the function of ethics should mainly be to analyse ethical terms. The utilitarian does this analysis by defining goodness as the greatest happiness of the greatest number and thus they reduce ethical judgments to psychological statements. He concludes by saying that it may be possible to reduce normative terms of ethical philosophy to non-ethical terms, but, in practice due to the convention of actual language, such a reduction is difficult to make. Probably the difficulty of Ayer's thinking is that whereas Mill examined

his view from the humanistic point of view depending on the experience, Ayer took it to analyse from the linguistic point of view.

He also notes that utilitarian theories are driven by the merely contingent inclination in humans for pleasure and happiness, not by the universal moral law dictated by reason. To act in pursuit of happiness is arbitrary and subjective, and is no more moral than acting on the basis of greed, or selfishness. All three emanate from subjective, non-rational grounds. The danger of utilitarianism lies in its embracing of baser instincts, while rejecting the indispensable role of reason and freedom in our actions.

Conclusion

Utilitarianism is both comprehensive and simple. It uses a simple standard with an obvious appeal -promoting happiness for as many people as possible- in order to explain and link together ethics, law and government. It is a forward- looking doctrine, justifying things by reference to future and so it is clearly to be a progressive policy. No wonder that it captures the imagination as a most attractive moral philosophy. To regard utility as the foundation of morals is not to deny the value of pleasure but is emphatically to affirm it. When the utilitarian ascribe the rightness of actions to their expediency, they are not using the word in the colloquial sense. The expediency they have in mind is general or public expediency and it is opposed to the private expediency of self-interest. Elementary animal pleasures are bodily, universal and need neither effort nor skill for their enjoyment and are characteristically intense and short-lived. It is difficult to say more on the theory of such a social reformer as well as a great philosopher. He tried to give a new form to the concept of

utilitarianism instead of the traditional view of it. His attractive and tactful writing easily attract people to study utilitarianism and here is the success of the writer and I think for this reason his theory has been criticised and discussed by so many philosophers of contemporary period. G. E. Moore and B. Russell 's criticism was mainly analytic in nature. But I think Mill *is* not responsible for this because the flow of philosophical interpretation of his era was not like that of the contemporary. Though his view is not fully acceptable, his trying to clarify the concept of utilitarianism is praiseworthy. It may be right to say that whereas the egoism and the altruism are the two extreme views about the standard of moral judgment, thereof the refined utilitarianism of Mill is the consensus between the two. Mill's credit was to use the perfect combination between utility and happiness-principle but his fault was in using experience as the sole criterion. Basically Mill's first objective in defending was to clarify the doctrine. He attempted this both by exposing misunderstanding and by straightforward exposition of the principle where he was in most cases succeeded. Now a day a question arises, how far is this theory applicable in this age of globalization? Undoubtedly, it is one of the most important issues for the present world. Utilitarianism was the moral basis of Mill's political philosophy. It was also the basic inspiration of British democracy. Therefore, if we want to make the theory popular to the mass people of the civilized world who can accept it as their standard of moral action we have to show that no nationalistic attitude inheres in this theory, it is not contradictory with the current tendency of the demand of the people, it may try ensure justice in almost every aspect of the life. Basically the new world is day-by-day facing the acute need of the new moral standard to justify the moral action of the present day. It needs a close and diversified analysis

whether the classical moral theories are enough to evaluate the present-day moral problems.

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