

AN EXPOSITION OF THE MEANING OF THE TERM “VALUE”

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ABSTRACT

Though the term ‘value’ is of very common use in recent philosophy no less than in other spheres of our everyday life, yet it is one of those terms which have been the source of much misunderstanding. The reason is that value is of such a nature that any outlook on life and the universe involves some phase of it. Value from the realistic outlook will be different from value which either the empirical or the idealistic outlook will mean by it. Again, the economist will take an entirely different view of it. In philosophic literature we come across other terms like ‘worth’, ‘good’, ‘excellence’, ‘perfection’, but to avoid confusion we deem it wise to prefer the term ‘value’ to cover ‘worth’ and ‘good’ and reserve the term ‘perfection’ to mean consummation of all values.

In moral philosophy value is attached with morality. The domain of moral value is confined with the moral consideration of human being. When we say that a man ought to have done something different in the circumstances, we there by imply that the man is free to choose between two alternative courses of action. It is clearly the business of metaphysics or general philosophy to inform the moralist whether he has any real ground for making such an assumption as that of human freedom of choice. Such assumptions are called postulates. Ethics has to accept certain truths without any proof moral life will be impossible without this supposition. This paper will be an exposition of achieving moral destination of human being in the light of some Western thinkers and some Indian schools or philosophers.

THE VIEW OF ARISTOTLE: -

According to Aristotle, human values depend on two fundamental things namely: Justice and Equality. Accordingly, Aristotle, justice is the most important value of human beings. The justices are two in types. The first types are called the Universal justice which is depending on some laws. And another is particular which is based on equality. Although universal justice he introduces as lawfulness, but goes later to characterize as “complete virtue in relation to other people’. He believes that one who plays all the virtues in relation to himself need not do the same in relation to others, whereas the converse does not happen. Consequently, the man who is just in this universal sense will actually have complete virtue without qualification, but still all that is meant by saying that he is just is that he behaves to others with complete virtue.

It is relevant here to note his discussion of ‘equity’. As the particular justice will be fruitful if and only if it is applied equally through the help of a universal justice. To him a law must be framed universally, so that there will be an unlimited number of situations that falls under it. The Government of a country has the power to inspect whether the particular justices are equally distributed with the help of a universal justice or not.

THE HEDONISTIC THEORY OF VALUE (MILL):

The psychological theories of value deficit as a quality of anything that satisfies a human need or evokes a feeling of pleasure, and use it as a synonym for empirical good. The first and the foremost immediate condition for the origin and development of ideas of judgments of value lies:

- a) in human desire and feeling,

- b) in the human wish and volition, and
- c) ultimately in the impulses instincts and tendencies which they presuppose.

In other words, every judgment of value is dependent on the experiences of the affective volitional life of man.

But in the psychological theories of value the staring difficulty is its attempt at isolation of the individual psychical center from the rest of existence which, however, is an organized whole, and this is the fundamental difficulty under which any empirical or phenomena list, view pitifully labors. But the more characteristic difficulty of the psychological theories of value is that they base themselves upon unsound psychology.

Mill for instance, in his utilitarianism observed “that which is in itself valuable is in itself desirable”. Producing of pleasure and absence of pain is likely to be the fundamental values. All other values are derivative from this value and they serve as means to its attainment. According to the hedonistic theory, the objective content of the act is only a means, while the real aim is the subjective feeling of pleasure for the acting agent. The structure of the act of will in this view, is only eidetic, to borrow Husserl’s terminology, without an objective reference.

THE MEANING OF VALUES FROM INDIAN POINT OF VIEW:

Accordingly Indian Ethics, among the four purusharthas, the Dharma is the first and then Artha, Kāma, and Mokṣa come respectively. Although the mokṣa is the state where the human beings get everlasting pleasure, we cannot get it an illegitimate way. We have to get Mokṣa in the path of Dharma i.e. in the lawful path. The term ‘Dharma’ is very significant in Indian Ethics. It is so value loaded that the writer Budhadev Basu in his *Mahabharater Katha*’ (page-116) said “ধর্ম! ধর্ম! ধর্ম! কতবার আমাদের শুনতে হলো ধর্ম _ ভীষ্মের মুখে, বিদুরের মুখে, ব্যাসের মুখে নারদের মুখে __ সবচেয়ে বেশি যুধিষ্ঠির ও ধৃতরাষ্ট্রের মুখে __ অবিরাম অফুরন্তভাবে পুনরুক্ত”! That is to say we have heard the term ‘Dharma’ for many times-but the actual meaning of dharma is so much subtle that it is almost indefinable-sometimes it seems to us as ambiguous - it is a heterogeneous concept.

The view of Jaimini.

But Maharsi Jaimini in his Mimamsa Sutra 1.1.2 says “*Codonā-laksano rtho dharmah*”. Sabaraswami in his Vāśya gave the definition of *codonā* in the sutra that, “*Kriyā prabartakam-bachanam-codonā*” that is to say the *vedic* injunction which inspires us in action are called *codonā*. The role of *codonā* can easily be known as it is the only means to prove dharma which is not at all conceivable through any ordinary means. As the dharma is not endowed with external properties like color, size etc. it cannot be known through perception. Again, *anumāna* cannot be the proof of dharma because it is a super-sensuous object. Testimony and comparison also cannot be the proof of it. Hence, only the *codonās* are the proofs of dharma. *Codonā* are nothing but the laws which human beings abide by or in other words if a man decide to do anything he ought to follow some rules which are given in the sastras. For example, if a man wants to get a child he has to perform the “*putreṣṭi yoga*”.

The view of Manu.

According to Manu also, Dharma is the means of the attainment of the good (*śreyah*). Dharma is as Manu says, performed by honest and intellectual person having no malice and support of the conscience. Those who are real *dhārmikas* in nature should possess thirteen moral virtues which include service to others (*aparopatāpitā*), non-jealous to others (*anasuyatā*), softness in temperament (*mṛduta*), non-harshness to others (*aparūśyam*), friendliness (*maitratā*), capability of speaking lovable words (*priyamvādātā*), sense of gratitude (*kṛtajñātā*), pity to others (*karuṇyam*) etc. All these moral

virtues constitute Dharma and hence they are to be developed for the sake of justice to the social beings. If such dharma is properly preserved, it protects all. If not, an individual is ruined. One should try to achieve the harmonious pursuit of *trivarga*, but *kāma* and *artha* are to be forsaken if they are not harmonious with Dharma.

The view of *Jaina*.

In *Jaina* Ethics the concept of *Pancacil* is very important. These *Pancacil* are as follows:

Ahimsā: Abstinence from all injury to life – Life, as we have seen exist not simply in the moving beings, but also in some non-moving ones such as plants and beings inhabiting bodies of the earth. So, the ideal of the *Jaina* is we must not hurt either the moving creatures of the world or the non-moving creatures or the universe. The *Jaina* saints who try to follow this ideal are, therefore, found even to breathe through a piece of cloth tied over their noses lest they inhale and destroy the life of any organism floating in the air. Ordinary laymen would find this ideal too high. They are advised, therefore, to begin with the partial observance of *Ahimsā* by abstaining from injury to moving beings which are endowed with at least two senses.

Satyam: Abstinent from falsehood- This vow also is taken very rigorously. Truthfulness is not speaking what is only true, but speaking what is true as well as good and pleasant. Without these qualifications the practice of truthfulness would be of little use as an aid to moral progress. Because, merely speaking what is true may sometimes descend into vulgarity, laughing and joking, etc. It is also pointed out that for the perfect maintenance of this vow; one must conquer greed, fear and anger and even restrain the habit of jesting.

Asteayam: Abstinence from stealing- We cannot take anything which is not given to us. The sanctity of the property of others, like that of their lives, is recognized by the *Jaina* writer wittily remarks the wealth is but the outer life of man and to rob wealth is to rob life. If human life is impossible without wealth in some form or other, there is no exaggeration in the *Jaina* thought that depriving a man of his wealth is virtually to deprive him of an essential condition on which his life depends. This vow, therefore, may be said to be logically inseparable from the vow of ahimsa, the sanctity of property being a logical sequence of the sanctity of life.

Brahmacaryam: Abstinence from self-indulgence- Generally we mean by *brahmacaryam* to keep our selves away from any kind of sexual activities. But the *Jaina* attaches to this also a deeper meaning that raises the standard of this vow far above mere sexual self-continence. It is interpreted as the vow to give up self-indulgence (*kama*) of every form. The *Jaina*, bent on self-criticism, discerns that though outwardly indulgence may stop, it may continue still in subtle forms in speech, in thought, in the hopes of enjoyment hereafter in heaven, even in asking or permitting others to indulge themselves. For the complete maintenance of this vow, one must, therefore, desist from all forms of self-indulgence –external and internal, subtle and gross, mundane and extra- mundane, direct and indirect.

Aparigraha: Abstinence from all attachment –This is explained as the vow to give up all attachment for the objects of the five sense – pleasant sound, touch, color, taste and smell. As attachment to the world's objects mean bondage to the world, and the force of this causes rebirth, liberation is impossible without the withdrawal of attachment.

So, The Indian idealist attitude towards value substantially agrees with the conception of value formulated above. To the Indian mind in general value is frame work of life and the universe and permeates everything, every event and stratum of being. The finite individuals gradually rid themselves of their biological and psychic adjuncts are impediments (*kosas*) by way of spiritualizing

them. Purusartha is the common term in Indian philosophy for that which is value for the *puruṣa* or finite individual. That which is ultimately valued are prized by the *puruṣa* can only be that in which his highest good or value. The highest good of the *puruṣa* is his fullest nature and fullest nature is his freedom or *mokṣa*. Freedom or *mokṣa* is thus the highest value for the individual self.

A man may be educated; but if he fails to behave sympathetically with his fellow beings and deprives them their dues, we say that he is amanous i.e., not possessing the qualities of man. A man is thus not bon, but made. It is not truly his physical appearance that characterizes him properly what he is. It is rather his achievement, his continuous endeavor of unfolding and becoming that makes him a man proper that is why swami Vivekananda exclaims: ‘man–making is my mission’. Far ‘man-making’ Swamiji emphasizes the rove of ‘character building’. When you build up your character, you not only become a man yours self but also become able to make another a man. That is why Swamiji’s clarion call; ‘Be and make’. Sri Ramakrishna the spiritual designer and molder of Swami Vivekananda, used to say: to done thing a think another is not Dharma. Dharma, on the contrary, consists in a harmony are unity between what one says and what one does. To the insightful vision of Sri Ramakrishna: A man is one who is conscious of his own stander, his own ideal ‘man samparkehuns’ manus’.

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