

POSTULATES OF ETHICS

Every science has some important and essential presuppositions or postulates. "A postulate is a necessary assumption taken for granted in order to explain a phenomena". Ethics is a normative science. Hence it has also some postulates, which are called as the 'postulates of morality'. These postulates are of two types. Such as, :-

I) Primary Postulates

a) Personality

b) Reason

c) Freedom of Will or self - Determinism.

II) Secondary Postulates -

a) Immortality of soul.

b) Belief in the existence of God

c) Freedom of Will or Universal Cosmic Order.

a) PERSONALITY - Personality is the first primary postulate of morality. "The central fact of morality is called personality." It is the basis of morality. Moral judgement presupposes the existence of an agent or person which is endowed with the power of apprehending moral principles and acting according to such knowledge. As it is known that the self is a real, permanent, self-conscious and self-determined agent. It has a person. As Calderwood says, "Personality is the basis of morality. Where there is no knowledge of self as the intelligent source of action, there is no discrimination of motive, act and end, and where such discrimination does not exist, there is no morality. The knowledge of moral distinction and the practice of morality are, in such a case, equally impossible."

Now, here a question arises by the ethicists that "what is involved in the conception of 'personality'?" "What is meant by a person?" - The conception of personality involves that of self-conscious and self-controlled reality. And what makes a person to be a person is self-consciousness and self-controlled activity.

A person is a being who is conscious of himself in and through his own mental states and processes. In the words of Calderwood, "self is known not merely as intelligent but also as power, I am a self-conscious, intelligent, self-determining power, - - - personality, thus involves self-conscious being self-regulated intelligence and self-determined activity."

According to Empirical psychologists and sensationists the self or personality is a mere conglomeration of conscious states and processes which takes away all meaning from morality.

As true psychology tells us that the human self is an individual personal reality - a repository of power, a centre of rational activity and is the ground of all experiences. We cannot think of states and activities without thinking of 'something' of which they are the states and activity - we cannot think of feeling, willing and thinking without thinking of some conscious being that feels, thinks and wills. which gives contribution in unity and connection as functions of one reality.

~~The state and processes of consciousness are but empty abstractions about from the mental substance underlying and supporting them and manifesting itself through them.~~

It is the self-conscious mind which has an active rational principle, makes every outer experience by reaction on, and interpretation of, the impression imposed on it from without. Hence, Personality is the basis of our mental and moral life.

2) REASON → Reason is the essential element in the self or personality. It has both theoretical and a moral function. Reason can co-ordinate sensation into a system of knowledge, thus is the intellectual or mental function. On the other hand, reason can organise feelings and impulses into harmony of moral life, this is its moral function. Reason organises sensations into the unity of knowledge so in the moral sphere it regulates.

and subjugates passions. All moral judgements presuppose 'Reason' which, in the form of conscience and understanding enables us to determine the rightness and wrongness of actions and thereby our duties in particular cases. It is reason that gives us a knowledge of moral standard and of the actual circumstances and thus makes moral judgement possible. Because of 'Reason' we can differentiate animalism from humanism. Since animals have not the power of subjugating passion through reason like human beings.

[regulates, subjugates and transforms feelings, emotions, instincts, appetites impulses and desires into vehicles of rational life.]

Reason is not a slave of passion as David Hume supposes. It is the master of passions; it controls, regulates and subjugates passions.

As Reason intuitively apprehends the moral and ideal of the self. It judges the actions to be right or wrong through inference. It deliberates on the merits and demerits of different lines of actions and choose a particular course of action by exclusion of others. Thus, a Voluntary action is an action which is performed by a rational being not through blind impulses, but knowingly and intelligently with provision, desire and freedom of will and free choice of means and ends. That means the agent of Voluntary action must be a rational person and that is why they are the subject of moral judgement.

Thus we can say that rational person endowed with reason but actions of insane person, idiot and animals are devoid of reason and they can not discriminate between right and wrong.

Thus, we cannot give moral judgement on their actions.

Hence, 'Reason' means rational capacity i.e., the power of interpreting apprehending or understanding. The different intellectual faculties are

instinct
passion

and subjugates passions. All moral judgements presuppose 'Reason' which, in the form of conscience and understanding enables us to determine the rightness and wrongness of actions and thereby our duties in particular cases. It is reason that gives us a knowledge of moral standard and of the actual circumstances and thus makes moral judgement possible. Because of 'Reason' we can differentiate animalism from humanism. Since animals have not the power of subjugating passion through reason like human beings.

[regulates, subjugates and transforms feelings, emotions, instincts, appetites impulses and desires into vehicles of rational life.

Reason is not a slave of passion as David Hume supposes. It is the master of passions; it controls, regulates and subjugates passions.

As Reason intuitively apprehend the moral end and ideal of the self. It judges the actions to be right or wrong through inference. It deliberates on the merits and demerits of different lines of actions and choose a particular course of action by exclusion of others. Thus, a Voluntary action is an action which is performed by a rational being not through blind impulses, but knowingly and intelligently with provision, desire and freedom of will and free choice of means and ends. That means the agent of voluntary action must be a rational person and that is why they are the object of moral judgement.

Reason

Thus we can say that rational person endowed with reason but actions of insane person, idiot and animals are devoid of reason and they can not discriminate between right and wrong.

Thus, we cannot give moral judgement on their actions.

Hence, 'Reason' means rational capacity i.e., the power of interpreting apprehending or understanding. The different intellectual faculties are

all applications of reason. Reason is the privilege
of man that secures his rational and moral life.
Without reason the self can have neither knowledge
nor morality. As Aristotle says Man is a rational
animal. Through rationality he can understand the
universal principles.