

Principles of Ethics

Introduction

WHAT IS ETHICS?

Ethics, or Moral Philosophy, is the branch of Philosophy dealing with the questions of what is good and bad, what is right and wrong, trying to assess what moral duty is.

What is Ethics?

Examples of Ethical Questions:

- **What is a morally good outcome?**
- **What is a morally right action?**
- **Are moral values universal or relative?**
- **Where do moral values come from?**
- **What is a just political system?**
- **Are you responsible for poverty?**
- **Do we have a right to a good death?**
- **Would you invade a country that is practicing ethnic cleansing or genocide?**

WHAT IS ETHICS?

THREE AREAS:

- 1) **Metaethics:** where our ethical principles come from (for example, Social invention? Will of God?) and what they mean.
- 2) **Normative Ethics:** propose moral standards that regulate right and wrong conduct (for example, What are our duties? Are consequences important?).
- 3) **Applied Ethics:** examining specific areas (for example, business ethics) and specific controversial issues (for example, abortion, capital punishment).

WHAT IS ETHICS?

- “ 2 things please and surprise my soul: that is a sky full of stars, and the moral law inside me.” – E. Kant.
- Main question of the lecture: where ethics comes from? What are the main sources of it?

WHAT IS ETHICS?

1. Customs;
2. Rules/samples/norms.
3. Customs + norms = morality.
4. Ethics is a practical philosophy.
5. It has ideas: truth, kindness, beauty, etc.
6. A moral man: what is it?
7. Ancient scholars: thought of MORAL VIRTUE first.

WHAT IS ETHICS?

- Ethics is connected with: philosophy, religious studies, cultural studies, etc.
- Ethics is an “art to live”.
- The main value in ethics is a HUMAN LIFE, and a human being.
- A human being is unique: has consciousness, instincts, memory, soul, plans, mysteries, etc.
- Aristotle: “A man is a social/political animal”

Human abilities

- Mind: an ability to understand and realize;
- Mind gives an ability to create, remember and make a choice;
- Instinct: given by nature, but it does not give a choice;
- Instincts are inside us, but often mind adds to them a “human feature”.

Human Abilities

- Will: an ability to achieve desires and plans;
- Will settles goals;

- Shame: a feeling of guilt; has different interpretations;
- Honesty / honor: allows us to judge our actions.