

# **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.