

# The greatest happiness principle



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

John Stuart Mill a born utilitarian, dedicated all his life explaining the teachings of his father, James Mill and Jeremy Bentham. He studied Greek, Arithmetic, Latin, Logic, Philosophy and Economic theory from a legal official to a writer and philosopher to a parliamentarian; he enjoyed a position of an original thinker.

His major work includes, 'system of logic', 'Principles of political economy', 'Essays of liberty', and 'Consideration of representative government', 'utilitarianism' and an autobiography and 3 essays on religion.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

He defended and found an ethics which would elaborate and define the utilitarian principle of Bentham that 'the object of morality is the promotion of the greatest happiness of the maximum number of members of society' and that happiness is a balance between pleasure over pains.

Unlike Bentham he does not believe in quantification of pleasures plus he adds that mental pleasures are superior than physical pleasures. He tries to formulate a bridge between individual psychological hedonism to universal psychological hedonism, by introducing the concept of sanctions. He says that sanctions come for with in and pleasure felt when the moral law is obeyed and pain felt when it is violated. Thus by virtue of these sanctions Mill bridges the psychological hedonism theory with the moral hedonistic theory that is everyone desires his own happiness with that every one ought to do so to act in public interest.

## **TEACHINGS / EXPLANATIONS.**

Doctrine of utility / greatest happiness principle: Actions are right as they tend to promote happiness, and wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness.

Quantification of pleasures is not important but quality does matter. Mental pleasure are superior to physical facilities.

Pleasures of the higher faculties are preferable to lower faculties.

Choosing a lower pleasure than the light mental pleasures involves lack of access, time or availability nevertheless it does not drop the worth of higher pleasures than the lower.

Greatest happiness principle, ultimate end is to attend the greatest of pleasures and the least of pain, secured to all mankind and not to one alone.

Main constituents of a satisfied life and tranquility and excitement.

Each individual's happiness is equal to any other person self sacrifice are worthy of being good as they promote general happiness although they may deny individual happiness.

Greatest happiness principle rule judges & sanctions the conduct but is not a motive for conduct.

Feeling for humanity provides sanction for the principle of utility which is the internal sanction and a powerful and sound basis for utilitarian morality.

Summary: The Greatest Happiness Principle

John Stuart Mill

From Great Traditions in Ethics by Albert Denise Peterfreund

LIFE

IMMANUEL KANT, 17TH century philosopher lived singularly by a strict routine all his life remained in Kongsberg, East Prussia. The Kant family was religious and Kant was thus sent to prepare for the ministry. He developed interest in philosophy and natural sciences. He was appointed professor at the university in 1770.

His writings ' General History and theory of the heavens' ' critique of pure reason', ' critique of judgment', ' the fundamental principles of the metaphysics of moral' and ' the critique of practical reason' prove him to be a critical philosopher, who tried to explore scientific principles and their foundations. He also took interest in American and French revolutions.

## **PHILOSOPHY**

Kant gives the ' principle of causality' as one of the categories of understanding.

A valid moral principle must be independent of the empirical data of morality if it is binding upon all man.

Universal obligations and moral laws should have consistency, i-e: they should be able to apply on all individuals without discrimination.

Categorical imperative is the only basis for determining duties.

Reason prescribes duty and moral law holds whether or not mean actually follow it.

## **TEACHINGS**

According to Kant, all good things should have a basic foundation of, 'good will' to make them good.

A good will should not be a means to achieve good but the sole motive behind every good.

Reason does not destine happiness but only good will.

Good will lead human action is morally worthy and duty guided by good will rather than inclination and self interest is morally correct.

Difference between praise worthy behavior from moral actions or duty, is inclination derives a person for an actions targeting some self interest, while duty only targets 'good will'.

1st ethical proposition: duty defines a moral act.

2nd proposition: duty is not result oriented.

Definition of duty: – Duty is done out of reverence from the law.

Categorical imperative rational beings would always be guided by ethical principles.

Categorical imperative: not destined to particulars consequence.

Hypothetical imperative: destined to particular consequences.

Categorical imperative: needs the principle of consistency, i. e. implied to everyone.

Categorical Imperative: A two told test requiring. There should not be a contradiction of a moral action universally with logical reasoning and consistency for all, judges, the action right.

Human beings should not be treated as mere means.

Actions, not universalized without contradiction are inconsistent with the idea of humanity.

Pure moral philosophy: reason cannot be corrupted with empirical consideration.

Summary: Duty and reason

By Immanuel Kant

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Albert Denise Peterfreund