

# Mill happiness theory

Experience, Happiness



The moral of utilitarianism, especially in reference to John Stuart Mill, was the proportion of rightness or wrongness in action and living is ultimately determined by the action that produces the most happiness through its endeavor, and by the amount of people affected by it. The most good that can come from an action then is the purpose of utilitarianism, as Mill states, "The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness" (42). Thus, the moral of utilitarianism involves achieving the greatest happiness through actions, which was the original basis for the government.

Pleasure, and freedom are must both be free of pain if they are to be considered true to the moral of utilitarianism. The theory does not only address the fulfillment of happiness for the 'doer' but the lack of pain in any action accomplished. The desire for pleasure is the supreme goal of the theory, and the prevention of pain is the underlining supposition.

Mill states that being of higher intelligence thusly requires more to satisfy him. Although man is more than capable of great joy, this joy is always coupled with great sorrow, yet, man would not trade the sorrow for the happiness of the pig because the joy of man's life is go much more than that of a dunce.

Happiness, joy, or good for the utilitarian is that which is righteous in mankind, his power to achieve greatness sometimes lies in his ability to sacrifice for the greater good and in this is found the pinnacle of the moral of

utilitarianism as Mill writes, " Utilitarianism, therefore, could only attain its end by the general cultivation of nobleness of character, even if each individual were only benefited by the nobles of others, and his own, so far as happiness is concerned, were a sheer deduction from the benefit. But the bare enunciation of such an absurdity as this last, renders refutation superfluous" (45).

On the opposite side of the spectrum of good and bad according to utilitarianism, bad means the selfish nature of man; that is, sacrificing for egotistical reasons. If a man sacrifices, becomes a martyr, and they seek personal gain instead of the aim of increasing happiness for the world, then their actions are deplorable because they were not given for the world but for the self.

Man achieves the Greatest Happiness Principle by not always sacrificing himself for the good of the whole, but by being virtuous on a daily basis, and by acting out of charity, not by gainful employment towards the self and with this fact is found the foundation of political liberalism in its perfect state. For utilitarianism, and the good that is meant in its concept of moral, Mill states, " To do as you would be done by and to love your neighbour as yourself constitute the ideal perfection of utilitarian morality" (49).

Utilitarianism construes good to mean a variety of things such as power, knowledge, beauty, moral quality, etc. and because of these parlayed meanings other forms of utilitarianism are endorsed from the original meaning. Modern utilitarians believe that good is not the sole aim of the theory but other items (as listed above) have intrinsic value. Ideal

utilitarianism states that the actions of a person in the gaining of power, beauty, knowledge, etc. should also increase happiness, which in turn fulfills life. On the other side of the spectrum, Classical utilitarianism suggests that pleasure is the main component of intrinsic good.

This assignment has been given in order to distinguish Mill's philosophy as well as to understand more thoroughly what is meant by individual happiness and a person's right to pursue such happiness.

### **Work Cited**

Mill, John Stuart. *On Liberty*. Modern Library; New Ed edition (2002).