

Religion and morality

[Experience](#), [Human Nature](#)



1- Religion and Morality.

Actually, to know the relationship between religion and morality, we need to define each.

First of all, morality has three principal definitions. At the first one, morality is the belief concerning what is moral and what is immoral that means also what is right and what is wrong. In this definition, the descriptive usage, morality is created from society, philosophy, religion and/or conscience. Also, we need to know that the immoral actions here cause clear harm.

At the second definition, normative and universal sense, “ morality refers to an ideal code of belief and conduct which would be preferred by the sane moral person but under specified conditions” (Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy, 2002) that means the preference of the person plays an important rule. If the action is preferred to be immoral, therefore, it is immoral and if the action is preferred to be moral, therefore, it is moral but of course under certain circumstances. For example, it is common in some societies that eating with your own hand and grabbing the food is not acceptable, so it is in their society immoral and that could mean that if people see you while eating like that, they will stop unless you really stop doing it any more.

At the last definition, morality is equal somehow to ethics in which ethics is the study of morality philosophically and morality deals with values which are studied by ethics. For exam, if you don't steal, therefore, this is moral or ethical action (the same) or we can say you are morally or ethically right.

On the other hand, the definition of religion can be “ a system of human thought which usually includes a set of narratives, symbols, beliefs, and practice that give meaning to the practitioner’s experiences of life through reference to a higher power, deity, or ultimate truth” (Geertz, 1982). Also, we can mention that the definition of religion can differentiate from people to others. For example, the religion for Muslims can mean the best way to live the life, because Allah has sent all his messages which received by the prophets who make us understand what is going on? and what are we? and other things. But for others, religion cannot be that thing which can be related to everything in the life. Also, others could relate the religion to afterlife.

Somehow religion control behavior, for example, it is not allowed to listen to songs which may influence someone too much with non useful feelings such as too much of love (negative love), therefore, the person may isolate somehow and his productivity for the society will be finished, but instead of that the religion will suggest the person to listen to songs that stimulate him to do something useful for the society.

Many opinions were made and discussed through ancient time and modern time according to many religions and religious scholars about the strong relationship between religion and morality. Some of them said that the religion including Allah’s books (the religious books such as Quran, Bible, ... etc), the Teachings of the prophets, and the classification and details of the scholars who came after prophets are the resources of morality, in other words, we can say that every action are directed by religion and if there are

some actions which are new, we can do a Measurement between those in the religious books and the new ones. But the question is why? And the answer comes from Muslims who say that the humankind and life and even everything in the world were/are/are being made by Allah who knows what is suitable for human themselves. For instance, cheating is prohibited in Islam according to what prophet Mohammad (peace be upon him) said “ the one who cheated is not from us”. This example is a direct one. Another action like taking drugs, Muslims here depend on Measurement, therefore, the wrong and the right actions are studied carefully for a suitable time and under specific conditions before we can say it is moral and immoral. And after all, Muslims found that the drugs are as same as wine, which is prohibited and mentioned in Quran, because of its bad effects on humankind, so the drugs are prohibited and it is immoral to take it. (Well even though, sometimes some Muslims don't apply this values and standards).

On the other hand, some philosophers said that the religion does not cover all things that are related to morality, in other words, morality here is not directed by religion, but the religion is a part of morality and we can say here that if you do something religiously or not, it is moral either way (Surely under conditions). So they believe that morality can act without religion. They believe that there are things that we can change and create, so we as humans will put the standards for these things, For example, the animal's right. The animal's right is “ the idea that the most basic interests of animals should be afforded the same consideration as the similar interests of humans” (Encyclopædia Britannica, 2007). Accordingly, the animals should

be treated like human, for instance, they may have right to get a passport, so they can pass the borders with a permission and also you can add to the animal's right the rights for living, eating,.... etc.

2- Conventional and Reflective Moral Standards.

Conventional moral standards are those which we get them from society and they did not change, they may not change, and they may be right or wrong. In other words, conventional moral standards are set of moral things in a society which have been thought to every person in that society. Also, we can define it in another way which is “ a concept of proper behaviour that reflects the values of a particular social or political context, Distinguished from a moral understanding which is authoritative across space and time” (Gumbertb, 2008). For example, in some societies the girl should stay virgin till she gets married, regardless the religion rules. So from the beginning, it is known that staying virgin for a girl is a must and that means if she breaks the rule, she will be punished (we are not going to discuss this issue because it is out of topic). After this we can assume that staying virgin is right to do, so it is moral, and steel or remove virginity knowing that the girl have done something wrong is wrong to do, so it is immoral. On the other hand, it is not that big case in other societies. So, we can say that the conventional moral standards can be a behavior.

Another example is that in some regions people will not mention their moms' names because they feel like it is not important and it may be sensitive although they will mention it if it necessary for the police man, for example. Accordingly, people start doing this thing especially when they face a situation or case.

In 1985, Kohlberg who created the stages of moral development mentioned that conventional but in reasoning concept in which “ the self enters society by filling social roles. Individuals are receptive of approval or disapproval from other people as it reflects society’s accordance with the perceived role. They try to be a good boy or good girl to live up to these expectations, having learned that there is inherent value in doing so”. (We are not going to discuss it because it has psychological reasons) is really exists and everyone in the society should apply it.

For instance, people in GCC countries are so generous, so all next generation are also generous. So we can assume that the generous has developed to be a common behavior in that society and who does not admit it and do it will damage his/ her fame among people, therefore, it is moral to be generous, and it is immoral to be not generous (stingy).

Also, we have to mention that we have like a common related world conventional moral standards. Actually, these standards appeared because of the ease of communication between two or more societies or groups of people in such a way the behavior or action that are traditionally being used in societies may transfer to others. For example, when I was searching in Google months ago, I discovered that Spanish people write (gagagaga) when they laughing instead of (hahahahaha or lol) which are commonly used, and back then I discovered also that some guys are using it without knowing that. Actually, I was surprised because it is too fast (I mean how can?). So, the media are playing important role in delivering not only behavior but also almost everything.

Reflective moral standards can be those in which the person does them because he knows that they may cause damage to another person, in other words, the person will not do things that hurt others because he thinks about others' rights. For example, if the teacher of an high school class gives the all student the same marks like B+ the weak student will not complain, but the good student will definitely complain because he has been harmed and also it is not fear, therefore, the teacher should assure that it does not hurt good students, and he should stop doing such an action. So, we can say that if you are going to harm, stop acting, but if you are going to benefit, don't stop because harming is immoral and benefiting is moral.

Another example is that a government will not allow oil companies to drop their fragment oil in the sea because it may hurt the fishing process in which fishermen fish fishes from water and in order to not harm the environment.

Indeed, many killing cases were happed because of breaking the reflective moral standards, one case in which one high school boy killed another one. The police men were asking him but it was useless. Then they went to that high school to investigate. They discovered that all students who were friends to the killer said that he has been kicked after the school was finished since he entered the school by group of students. Then the investigators assume that the group of students which kicked him helped him to develop hate, and this hate was huge enough to let him kill one of them. After that the police men closed the case without imprison the killer, yet they gave him psychological appointments and tests in the hospital.

Actually, Conventional and Reflective moral standards are related so much in such way they are useful for us to find the moral standards. Basically, we mean that the moral standards are gathered from what we can call it society standards plus the standards in which we do not harm anyone.

Also, we can add that somehow the conventional and reflective moral standards are not the same. Conventional standards discuss things that are inherited from the society and related to human behavior, but Reflective standards are related to the relationship between the person and either individual or group of people. Accordingly, we can do everything that is right, yet we do not stop others' rights.

3- Professional ethics and Morality

“Morals and the expression, ‘moral values’ are generally associated with a personal view of values. Personal morals tend to reflect beliefs relating to sex, drinking, gambling, etc. They can reflect the influence of religion, culture, family and friends” (Lichtman, 1995). That means morality is carrying the rule in which we should follow. For example, when we say don't smoke, don't cheat, or don't harm people, we expect anyone to say that it is a rule that we should apply. Also, we can say that the rule like don't cheat because it is wrong for many reasons like..... etc or drive slow because it is right for certain reasons, so many people know them as dos and don'ts or what is right to do and what is wrong to not do. For instance, when we go to a public place like mall, we should not smoke because it is wrong to do in such place. Also, the morality is influenced by a lot of things such as culture, religion, behaviour, traditions ...etc. So we can find that morality is giving us the rules in which we should apply.

On the other hand, Professional ethics are slightly different from Morality. “ Professional ethics concerns the moral issues that arise because of the specialist knowledge that professionals attain, and how the use of this knowledge should be governed when providing a service to the public” (Chadwick, 1998). That means how the moral issues, values, and standards are used and it gives the explanations about the cases under certain circumstances. In other words, the right action is right this what morality is carrying but the reasons, situations, and circumstances are discussed in a certain profession’s ethics. For example, what is right in business may not be right in teaching. Also we can add that the wrong action is decided in the same way. Therefore, we have ethics in each profession. So we can find that professions play an important role to connect morality and professions.

In fact, the morality has an integrative relationship with professional ethics and it is tough to distinguish between them even when we write their definitions. Actually, morality provide us with rules that comes from many resources and then professional ethics take these rules and change, explain, or edit them, accordingly, ethics have many types according to professions. For instance, in our university it is not allowed to cheat according to the AIP (Academic Integrity Policy) and knowing that cheating is prohibited as a moral standard; we can see how the moral standard is acting like professional ethics which is the teaching ethics here. So applying the ethics can lead us to achieve the moral standard in our university.

Another example is that a new company want to make a rule list for its workers. They would look at the moral standards, and then they will create

or fabricate the rules in such a way it will be suitable for workers, and also it will not harm anyone unless he/she harms the company. In other words, we can find that the company uses the moral values to create its own ethics which is the company's ethics.

On the other hand, people use morality as well as ethics in which they have the same meaning or they are equal to each other. They use morality to decide which is good and bad and which is white and black, yet they use ethics to decide the same thing in the same way (commonly use).

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