

Section I.

By investigating pure and genuine rational moral knowledge, Kant hopes to offer a metaphysical case for the supreme principle of morality, thus universally and necessarily binding objective morality upon all rational beings; morals are liable to corruption, contingency, and uncertainty without the "supreme canon" by which to estimate them correctly. (2).

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Transition from Preface:

Ethics is not a eudaimonistic, teleological theory of the full realization of human nature.

The basis for moral obligation does not lie in facts about human nature.

According to our ordinary understanding of duty & moral rules, moral obligations, if there are any, are not binding due to certain facts about human beings.

If, as we think, moral laws are to be binding on all rational beings, they must follow from universal principles of rationality.

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I. Good Will & Intrinsic Goodness:

Basic claim: Good Will and only a good will is unconditionally, absolutely, or intrinsically good.

Two types of extrinsic goods: gifts of nature (talent; temperament) & gifts of fortune (wealth, power, honor, health, happiness). Extrinsic goodness is a kind of accidental property: it is not essential to what the things are that they be good. They are only good if they are informed by a good will.

Virtues are not intrinsically but extrinsically good. Consequences are not intrinsically good. Actions which produce good consequences are not for that reason good. Success & failure in reaching goals of action is of no moral significance.

Intrinsic goodness is goodness in itself; if an object is intrinsically good, its goodness is essential to it; it cannot be what it is without being good. Therefore, goodness does not & can't depend upon anything other than itself; it cannot be value-neutral.

Intrinsic/extrinsic distinction is used to contrast the goodness of the good will with the goodness of every other sort of thing which can be said to be good:

(1) Extrinsic goodness: X is contingently good but possibly bad depending on factors other than self.

(2) Intrinsic goodness: X is essentially good: it is not possible for X to be bad, & its goodness is not a function of factors other than itself.

II. Anti-Eudaimonism & Skepticism regarding Practical Function of Reason:

A. Only a good will, not happiness, is intrinsically good (Eudaimonism lit. means doing & faring well. Happiness in Aristotle's work means "the final end" or "human good.")

B. Reason, not natural impulses, guides action for the sake of happiness is false. Parts of living organisms perform their proper function by serving the survival and welfare of the whole organism; Natural instinct rather than reason provides better for happiness.

C. Reason produced science and while science has produced luxury, it has also helped to produce misery.

D. Misology objection (hatred of reason).

1. Since nature gave us reason, it must have its proper function. However, reason's proper function is not an instrumental one, a means to survival or happiness.

2. If reason's function was to promote happiness, it is a defective tool..

3. Reason's proper function is a moral one, to produce a good will. Without a good will, there is no guarantee of the proper use of scientific knowledge.

4. This, morality is opposed to happiness: The "cultivation of reason" limits the pursuit of happiness by imposing morality's constraints.