

Quadrant II – Transcript and Related Materials

Programme: Bachelor of Arts (First Year)

Subject: Philosophy

Paper Code: PIC 101

Paper Title: Theories of Moral Standard

Unit: 02

Module Name: Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarianism

Module No: 11

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Glossary of terms/words:

Consequentialism is the view that morality is all about producing the right kinds of overall consequences. Here the phrase “overall consequences” of an action means everything the action brings about, including the action itself. For example, if you think that the whole point of morality is (a) to spread happiness and relieve suffering, or (b) to create as much freedom as possible in the world, or (c) to promote the survival of our species, then you accept consequentialism. Although those three views disagree about which kinds of consequences matter, they agree that consequences are all that matters. So, they agree that consequentialism is true.

Utilitarianism is a form of consequentialism. Its core idea is that whether actions are morally right or wrong depends on their effects. Utilitarians believe that the purpose of morality is to make life better by increasing the amount of good things (such as pleasure and happiness) in the world and decreasing the amount of bad things (such as pain and unhappiness). They reject moral codes or systems that consist of commands or taboos that are based on customs, traditions, or orders given by leaders or supernatural beings. Instead, utilitarians think that what makes a morality be true or justifiable is its positive contribution to human (and perhaps non-human) beings.

Possible misconceptions/clarification

Case Studies and Additional Examples/Illustrations