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Materialism and Happiness

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### Materialism and Happiness

Loyalists of deontology state that the actions of individuals are right or wrong when compared to rules. According to deontological ethics, individuals are supposed to act according to their obligation to society. Deontologists also believe that people's actions are more significant as compared to the consequences of these actions. Under this theory, humans decide what is right or wrong by setting rules that monitor actions (Tännsjö, 2013). Kantianism, named after its creator Immanuel Kant, is one of the theories that lie under deontology. Kant believes that all people should behave in respect to laws or their duty. Under deontology, there are also followers of the theory that believe that religion is also an important aspect. They believe that people should act in respect to the laws in the Bible or the Quran. For instance, if the Bible states that a man is the head of his household, all people should obey this without question. Because of these beliefs, there are general and special responsibilities in deontology. General responsibilities mainly relate to all religions of the world (Tännsjö, 2013). They include actions considered as immoral, such as murdering, lying, and torturing. These apply to all human beings, because they are fundamental aspects that man cannot evade. Special regulations involve specific individuals such as doctors and teachers. They are in the form of contracts or agreements that individuals promise to respect. For example, a doctor must remain secretive regarding all details of a patient, because they signed a contract to be secretive. These special responsibilities also apply to people who belong to religious pacts, such as Islam and Hinduism.

A scenario that one can apply in deontology is the case in which a certain leader orders all citizens of a county to work only for him, because the law states that all citizens of several counties should work for their county leaders. According to deontology, these citizens should obey the leader's demands, because the law prompts them to do so. In such a case, it is the duty

of the nationals to respect the law no matter how undemocratic it sounds (Tännsjö, 2008). In solving some of the ethical questions that may arise because of this issue, I would apply the same rule of deontology in a democratic manner. For instance, the law also provides that all working citizens should be compensated according to the capacity of their work. The leader will also obey the law and pay citizens who work for him. This indeed is deontology. As long as regulations state that citizens should receive a fair pay after working for their citizens, all the people that are involved in this scenario should obey their duties (Tännsjö, 2008).

Just like other theories, the deontological ethics has its own strengths and weaknesses. The outmost strength of deontology is that it promotes the rule of law. Law by itself is a good will, because it protects the rights of every person (Tännsjö, 2013). Those people that act in obedience to laws have good intentions regardless of the consequences of this action. In addition to this, deontology promotes equality of all people; this means that whether or not a person is, a Christian or Muslim, black or white, they must respect laws, because it is their duty. Such philosophers as Kant argue that the notion of deontology is derived from superior basic principles (Tännsjö, 2008). For instance, the provisions of deontology promote perfect duties. These duties are superior principles that every person should obey. For instance, a law that prohibits a person from lying is a perfect duty. This law protects people and ensures that they conform to the truth all the time. Imperfect duties, such as lying and murdering have no place in deontology. Deontology is specific, because it marks a line between what people should do and what they should not do. It is specific and rational (Hutchings, 2010).

Such scholars as W.D. Ross strongly reject the theory of deontology (Hutchings, 2010). Ross explains that deontological moral duties have no place in society as compared to common sense. He questions why these moral duties are moral duties and yet they have no philosophical

origin. For instance, the right to speech is a law that was only made by man. There are no philosophical theories that support it and neither can deontology support this claim (Hutchings, 2010). Deontology may just claim that this is a moral duty, because it is among other men's laws. This, according to Ross, is not a sufficient reason to support such a law. So, Ross relates the fact that human beings are erroneous and can make mistakes at any time. This proves that laws that human make may have some faults, which may influence negatively on those who support deontology (Hutchings, 2010). Secondly, many laws are contradictory, so they create confusion among human beings. For example, many countries state that murder is illegal and yet they indulge in the murder of innocent citizens who are fighting for their rights and participate in mass demonstrations. In such a case, deontology appears to be a counterfeit principle, which lacks concrete provisions. The ultimate weakness of deontology is its failure to acknowledge results of an action. For instance, if a murderer with the intention of killing approaches someone and asks them the place of residence of their friends. By law, one must be honest with the murderer by telling the truth. The consequences of such actions would be damaging, because the murderer will kill the friends. This is a weakness of deontology that deontologists should resolve to ensure consistency of their principles (Hutchings, 2010).

This theory will definitely assist me in resolving ethical dilemmas. For example, if my friends were to ask me to duplicate an exam and its answers. It will be my duty to reject their request, because it infringes the laws of my school. In the same way, if I am a strict Christian and I am caught in an adulterous situation, I will refrain from adultery, because Christian laws state that adultery is immoral. Deontology will be helpful in solving dilemmas, since I will only have to refer to laws and decide what is wrong and right. Deontology will also be useful in deciding how to interact with individuals who have special responsibilities. For example, members of all

parliaments in the world always swear to act in support of laws in their constitutions. In case I meet a leader who acts contrary to this duty, I will try to make them accountable for their unlawful actions. In this way, I will be acting to save the lives of other citizens. Having read the opposing comments of this theory, I will also be forced to use common sense to solve some issues. For instance, if someone asks me to inform them the truth about an issue that may lead to negative consequences, I will refrain from doing such actions, because I am applying common sense that may oppose or support deontology.

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