

Question-I What is meant by term moral relativism?

Can morality be placed on a rational basis without reference to religion or existence of GOD?

Answer Moral relativism which is a 20th century world view and found to be the primary moral philosophy of modern society claims that there is nothing called good or better ethical system compared to the other. It believes that there are no objective standards of morality and does not believe whether something called absolute morality can exist. This philosophy is understood in different ways and has different nuances . Its main thesis is that there is diversity of moral system and therefore there is moral disagreement. It comes out with an ethical postulate that the truth of a moral judgment is limited to its persons bound by their culture and their place and therefore it is relative. Since ethics is never absolute and morality is alterable, values have no fixity or universality and hence they cannot be imposed. The world is seen not as it is or ought to be but as they want it to be. Since the truth or falsity of moral judgment is not absolute or universal it cannot be rationally resolved. Moral relativism is relative to tradition, convention and practices of a group of persons and questions of good or bad, right or wrong are determined by their values and cultural diversity.

The critics of moral relativism belonging to school of moral objectivism maintain contrarily that moral judgments are true or false in an absolute sense and people accept truth of moral judgment on the basis of evidence available to reason and they are rationally explainable. It is a fact that large moral disagreements are noticed across different societies. Nonetheless each moral proposition has some moral authority or normative force relative to some group or section. People of one group may have different evidence available to propound a value but it may differ from the other group. It is not therefore rationally resolvable unless the truth value is explained or justified in an absolute sense. There would be endless debates and biased presentations unless there is some reference to absolute standards. It would be difficult to argue or resolve the issues of moral disagreements, conflicts or the truth of moral argument without reference to some superior moral standards. That is the reason why we talk of a "virtue centered morality" focusing on good community and the "rights centered morality" stressing the value of individual freedom. Both these references are derivatives from the natural and divine traditions. Every behaviour and conduct has to be understood with reference to this standard of universal nature. Relativism cannot rationally resolve moral arguments since it does not have absolute assumptions or standards for reference. Simple explanations of morality or its understanding may lead to conflict of interests and

incompatibility between the moral propositions of one and the other side. But if they are traced to values of righteousness, courage, tolerance, co-operation, they form a part of inner morality across societies for better rational explanation. If we assume, that there is no one objectively correct morality for all societies and that human nature and situation are going to govern a particular morality it does not promise or bestow a normative authority for the same morality. The natural law traditions based on Judeo-Christian world view made assumptions of morality of a universal type which formed the foundations of several civil laws thereafter.