What Defines Right or Wrong

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Human beings are the most distinct of all living creatures because of one undistinguishable ability ─ evaluation. On the basis of this one ability, humans have conquered the impossible. They evaluate their surroundings, like nature, space, earth, and come up with something mesmerizing. Humans can easily evaluate anything as right or wrong. However, it has been observed in most cases that they try to suppress their own evaluation and analysis under their religious beliefs. In line with this, the conscience of a human plays a fundamental role in defining what is right and what is wrong. Moreover, the human conscience provides self-feedback for any act done by a person; if the feedback is positive, the act done is right, and if the feedback given by one's conscience is negative, the act done is wrong.

To believe in something means to follow a specified idea without its evaluation or analysis, and without any proof to support its appropriateness. Such idea can only be a belief of a person if it is obtained from a highly credible source, which in most religions is a prophet sent by God or a trustworthy source like the Holy Books. There are so many religious beliefs and ethical values spread all over the world and followed by different people. These beliefs and ethical values subconsciously design the perception and culture of a group of people or a religion. A member of such group or religion would follow the procedures taught to him or her without raising any question regarding its aptness.

There are some acts which can be clearly regarded as immoral or wrong, but some people deny this fact only because God told them that the act is right. For example, killing someone is unquestionably wrong, but in some religions, killing someone for some religious reasons is a norm. People kill others for minor reasons only because they perceive this act to be right. Their perception is developed by religious beliefs and what God has told them.

According to Josh McDowell (1994), people are conditioned by their society since their childhood. What they see, what they hear, and what they observe others do are factors that get imprinted in their minds. Consequently, when they grow up, they deny rationality and put their religious beliefs forward instead of following logical reasons. These beliefs hinder such people from clearly understanding the logic and truth behind a religious law, or analyzing the rationality behind any course of action advised by their religion.

John Deigh (1995) describes this as the difference between morality and ethics. Morality is something that is *prima facie* right or wrong; there is no question in it. A person can easily evaluate something as moral or immoral. Meanwhile, in ethics, something that is clearly immoral can also be regarded as ethical in some circumstances. For instance, killing someone for going against religious rules is supposed to be ethical in certain religions. However, it is completely wrong when one considers the right for freedom of choice. Ethics is developed by the beliefs prevailing in a society; therefore, it is difficult to go against ethics even if it is immoral.

In conclusion, it can be stated that being right or wrong is defined by a person's conscience. People deny the rationality of an act because of their religious beliefs and their perception. In order to understand the truth behind a belief, a person must evaluate the object as right or wrong, and he or she must analyze the self-feedback provided to him or her by his or her own conscience.

References

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