

***If an action is done as a result of affection, rather than as a result of obedience to a rule, can it be a moral action?***

If an action was done as a result of affection, rather than as a result of obedience to a rule, then the action would not be moral in a sense *because* it was out of affection - but obviously to the person who is doing the action - it would be seen as moral for they will see that they did it out of love. And it is for the reason that love is portrayed to be the strongest emotion, which in my opinion, it makes people use this as an excuse to do immoral things. The action was done neither from duty nor from direct inclination but merely from a selfish view.

It is important to distinguish which are 'in accord with duty' from those done 'from duty', as Kant puts it. The former are not moral acts, but the latter are. For example, most parents are inclined to take care of their children; they may incline because they are fond of them, or because they fear police action if they neglect them. But anyone who takes care of one's children for these reasons is not acting morally. One is acting 'in accord with duty'. One would be acting from duty only if one recognizes that one has a special obligation to one's children because they are one's children. A person who understands the nature of this obligation and acts upon it is moral; otherwise they are not.

Kant's moral theory explains the many different ways in why we do these actions. The first: **obligation.**

An obligation is one, which we ought to do despite inclinations to do otherwise. Once under an obligation, we ought to attempt to fulfil it. If no obligation exists, then it becomes a matter of inclination or of taste, which we should do.

Some philosophers have held that in matters of morality, one should act upon one's inclinations. He/she should do that act pleases him/her, or which he/she wants to do in those circumstances but Kant strongly rejects such an account of morality. He feels that a ***person is acting morally only when he suppresses his/her feelings and inclinations, and does that which he/she is obliged to do.*** Hence 'doing one's duty', is doing something which one is not inclined or will do, but which he/she does because he/she recognizes that he/she to do it; an obligation exists and he/she must fulfil it.

So if a person does something merely because he/she is afraid *not* to do it (such as the fear of being imprisoned for not repaying a debt) is not a moral person: nor is a person moral who repays a debt merely because he/she wants to, or inclines towards doing that rather than something else. It is only when a person recognizes that he/she *ought* to repay a debt because she has incurred an obligation that he/she is genuinely a moral person. Kant develops a distinction between '**prudential action**' and '**moral action**'. A person who repays debts because he/she fears the legal consequences acts from sense of prudence; he/she is not a moral person. He/she would be moral only if he/she acted from the sense that he/she has incurred a monetary obligation and thus is 'duty bound' to repay it.

***Therefore morality, as Kant sees it, is closely bound up with one's duties and obligations.***

On the other hand, it is a duty to maintain one's life; and in addition, everyone has also a direct inclination to do so. But on this account the often-anxious care, which most men take for it, has no real worth and their maxim no moral import. They preserve their life, *as duty requires*, no doubt, but not *because duty requires*. On the other hand, if adversity and hopeless sorrow have completely taken away the relish for life; if the unfortunate one, strong in mind, indignant at his fate, rather than depressing wishes for death, and yet preserves his life without loving it - from inclination or fear but from duty - then his maxim has a moral worth.

A good person is a person of 'good will', i.e., a person who acts from a *sense of duty*. As Kant puts it in a famous phrase, 'nothing can possibly be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, except a good will.'

In short, we may summarize that a moral action is one done from a respect for duty, and correspondingly, a moral person is a person who acts from duty, not from inclination or even with accord with duty. So if an action was done out of affection, it would be seen as selfish. Some may argue that it cannot be selfish because they are doing something for the other person that they love, but in Kant's theory, this would just be stated as a selfish act.

