

made that the external command carries with itself the obligation to obedience which is the very thing we are trying to explain the origin of.

In addition to the criticism just made, the empirical theory assumes a principle which will compel us to abandon the theory and maintain instead that the moral consciousness may be understood as a form of the functioning of reason itself accompanied by an underived ethical feeling. The principle to which I refer is the capacity of distinguishing between certain painful and pleasant results of action, with the accompanying desire to do what brings pleasure and avoid what produces pain. The theory also assumes reflection upon existing customs and laws and insight into their suitableness for ensuring good and preventing evil, followed by free rational doing of the acts required by these laws and customs.

Now this assumption of reason's activity in view of actions proposed, is what I wish to call attention to. Recognize fully the place of reason in the consciousness of moral obligation and we shall find the empirical theory wanting. The results of action are known. Certain acts are found to produce desirable, others undesirable results. Certain ends of action have a value that others do not. Reflection upon a course of action discovers what reason would say about it. It is a reasonable act, one in which reason may find satisfaction and one which reason would impose on all reasonable beings. A closer examination shows that reason forbids us to view an act only in the present. There is a whole of life to be considered as well. Just so does reason forbid that an act be decided upon solely with reference to its consequences for the actor, because the actor is a member of a community and his acts have necessarily relations to others; so reason, which is supposed to consider all the data, requires a consideration of these other members of the community in reaching a decision as to a given course of conduct.

The act decided upon by reason will be accompanied by an unconditioned obligation, for reason having imposed this duty there can be no reasonable limitation of the obligation to realize the end pointed out by reason.*

This view is essentially that of Kant, but we now go beyond

*Murray's Handbook of Ethics, pp. 57-68.