Virtues and values as behaviour determinants

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The article deals with the problem of the relationship between moral values and virtues. It should be noted that the concept of moral values is confronted with difficulties of trying to solve the problem of why moral values would be used in an absolute sense: why we ought to behave well and not to behave badly. Ludwig Wittgenstein was the first to raise and formulate this problem in his *Lecture on Ethics.* Nobody, however, has put forward any adequate solution thus far. In our opinion, even the most mature solution proposed by Hare, which discerns the prescriptive and descriptive aspects in the concept of good, is unsatisfactory. We consider that the solution could be found on the basis of the classical theory of virtues. It should be noted that the concept of good when it is associated with the values is actually used in the analogical sense. The primal meaning of good is associated with a person, and only in an analogous way it is used in the notion of value. Therefore, in order to understand the determination of a human moral action it is necessary, in the analysis of conduct, to turn to the classical theory of virtues. This analysis helps us to understand the obligation of human behaviour. Without relation to an individual it is impossible to justify the obligation of a moral value. Hence, moral values have to be investigated only in relation with the virtues. On the other hand, the analysis of value allows us to understand virtues more thoroughly.

Keywords: prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, prescription, description, virtues, moral values

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays the concepts of values occur in a wide range of contexts: they refer to cognitive, ethical, social, economic, personal, religious and other values. In the simplest terms values are steady and strongly-held beliefs, ideals, properties or subjects recognized by the members of a certain culture about what is good and worthy. According to Schwartz (2012: 3–4), the concept of values can be specified by six main features: 1) values are beliefs linked inextricably to the affect. When values are activated, they become infused with a feeling; 2) values refer to the desirable goals that motivate the action. People for whom such values as knowledge, health or helpfulness are important are motivated to pursue these goals; 3) values transcend specific actions and situations. Obedience and honesty, for example, may be relevant in the workplace or at school, as well as when communicating with friends or strangers; 4) values serve as standards or criteria. People decide what is good or bad, worth doing or avoiding, based on possible consequences for their

cherished values; 5) values are ordered by importance relative to one another. People's values form the priorities system that characterizes them as individuals; 6) the relative importance of multiple values guides the action. Any attitude or behaviour typically has implications for more than one value. Values relate to the norms of a culture but they are more abstract than norms. Norms provide rules for behaviour in specific situations, while values identify what should be judged as good and evil. While norms are standards and rules which serve as signposts for our behaviour, values are abstract concepts of what is important and worthy.

Recently the concept of values spread into a philosophical context. With the passing of time it is becoming more and more prevalent, replacing the concept of virtue which was used in classical philosophy. Such a shift in our heads is associated with the popularity of utilitarian philosophy and empiricism. Classical philosophy was based on the assumption that goodness of human acts depends on three subjects: a) on its object, i. e. on the subject by which human will is moved, b) on the intention of the end, and c) on a circumstance (Aquinas 1944: 334–347 (S. T. I–II, Q. 19)). Utilitarian philosophy simplifies the classical approach greatly and states that the value of human behaviour depends only on the consequences of the action, i. e. on the results obtained, which are measured in the amount of pleasure. According to Bentham, "nature has placed mankind under the governance of two sovereign masters, pain and pleasure. They alone point out what we ought to do and determine what we shall do; the standard of right and wrong, and the chain of causes and effects, are both fastened to their throne. They govern us in all we do, all we say, all we think; every effort we can make to throw off our subjection – to pain and pleasure – will only serve to demonstrate and confirm it" (2000: 14). There are no actions that are good or bad in themselves irrespective of the consequences. In addition, the value of an object or action is determined not only by the pleasure which is experienced immediately but also by that which produces its further consequences. Therefore, utilitarianism is a doctrine of common sense rather than the theory of feelings. At last, good is not only my experience of pleasure, but pleasure received by every individual.

Although the values do not necessarily have to be associated with the amount of pleasure and pain (we think that they should not be linked), it is much easier to relate them rather than virtues to the principle of consequences because keeping to them should ensure a good result, in other words, good consequences. This makes it possible to distinguish between what is value and what is not. Therefore, the theory of values can easily be compatible with the utilitarian position. The utilitarian interpretation of values seems simple and attractive, but a more detailed study proved unacceptability of this position because the obligation of moral virtues cannot be justified. We will try to show this position further. However, using the classical theory of human action and virtues it is possible to propose a consistent concept of moral values. Moreover, the value analysis is important to the development of classical moral philosophy, which, together with the theory of virtues, allows new features of the concept of good to be discovered.

The problem of obligation of moral values has not been satisfactorily solved in modern philosophy. This problem is impossible to be solved if values are regarded as independent qualities unrelated to an individual. Our main thesis is that the primal meaning of good is associated with a person, and it is only in the analogous way that it is related to value. Virtues characterise a person's goodness. Therefore obligation of moral values should be substantiated on the basis of a person's goodness and the characteristics of that goodness, namely, virtues.

MORAL VALUES AND THEIR PROBLEMS

The concept of values is closely related to the concept of goodness. Something is valuable because it is good. What the reason presents as good, the will of the subject begins to wish for. Therefore, linguistic expressions, which evaluate something, are not mere descriptions in which the word 'good' simply enumerates certain features, attributes or actions of the subject but they are also prescriptions, norms or rules specifying what should be achieved and how to behave. According to Hare, we have to distinguish the descriptive part in the evaluating expression where some features or attributes of the subject are enumerated and the prescriptive part indicating that this is good. A general scheme can be illustrated by the following example: "this car is good because it uses little fuel, is easy to operate and is durable, inexpensive and fast". The descriptive part is: "it uses little fuel, is easy to operate, it is durable, inexpensive and fast". The prescriptive part in this example is: "is good", and this suggests that the car is worth buying. If the prescriptive part is permanent, the descriptive part can change in the course of time. For example, the drop in a petrol price can change the feature "uses little fuel" in such a way that it would not be the point.

The analysis, however, where the descriptive and prescriptive parts are distinguished in evaluating expressions, precludes us from separating moral values from cognitive ones. The descriptive and prescriptive parts do not allow us to separate cognitive values from moral ones. When we talk about a good car, a good player, about the right road, the best theory, etc., we talk about cognitive values, which operate differently from moral values as evaluations of human behaviour. Being aware of this difference, Hare applies two evaluation methods. Using the first method, decisions associated with the function of the subject, which is different from the subject itself, are evaluated. For example, a knife is a good tool to slice bread, just as a car is a good tool to travel.

In the second case, evaluating decisions is associated with the object itself and the object is recommended because of itself. According to Hare, "when we use the word 'good' in order to commend morally, we are always directly or indirectly commending people. Even when we use the expression 'good act' or others like it, the reference is indirectly to human characters" (1952: 144). In explaining the difference Hare points to two ways of describing good features – instrumental and intrinsic. In point of fact, it is not always easy to distinguish between them. For example, is sweetness of a pineapple an intrinsic or instrumental quality? Hare says the following: "one of the virtues required in a good pineapple is that it should be sweet; is its sweetness an intrinsic quality of the pineapple, or is it the disposition to produce certain desirable sensations in me? When we can answer such questions, we shall be able to draw a precise distinction between intrinsic and instrumental goodness" (1952: 139).

Both intrinsic and instrumental qualities describe goodness of the subject. Hence, we have two descriptions of the descriptive part of the value. First, the value depends on the result of the action of the subject, which is different from the subject itself. Second, the value depends upon the existence of the subject itself. In Hare's view, the normative part is the same: in both cases something is being recommended in it.

Hare linked moral judgments with the second case of the description of the value where the value depends on the existence of the subject itself. According to him, we are confused about human goodness because we are people. It means that when we make our judgment about goodness of the actions of others in certain circumstances, we put ourselves into similar circumstances and say that we would act in the same way. We cannot get out of being men as we can get out of being certain specialists. Therefore, we cannot avoid sequences of our stable moral decision.

According to Hare, goodness, as it is used in morality, has the descriptive and evaluative meaning, and the latter is primary. To know the descriptive meaning means to know by what standards the speaker decides. According to Hare, "that the descriptive meaning of the word 'good' is in morals, as elsewhere, secondary to the evaluative, may be seen in the following example. Let us suppose that a missionary, armed with a grammar book, lands on a cannibal island. The vocabulary of his grammar book gives him the equivalent, in the cannibals' language, of the English word 'good'. Let us suppose that, by a queer coincidence, the word is 'good'. And let us suppose, also, that it really is the equivalent – that it is, as the Oxford English Dictionary puts it, 'the most general adjective of commendation' in their language. If the missionary has mastered his vocabulary, he can, so long as he uses the word evaluatively and not descriptively, communicate with them about morals quite happily. They know that when he uses the word he is commending the person or object that he applies it to. The only thing they will find odd is that he applies it to such unexpected people, people who are meek and gentle and do not collect large quantities of scalps; whereas they themselves are accustomed to commend people who are bold and burly and collect more scalps than the average. But they and the missionary are under no misapprehension about the meaning, in the evaluative sense, of the word 'good'; it is the word one uses for commending. If they were under such a misapprehension, moral communication between them would be impossible" (1952: 148). Those who interpret the word 'good' in a similar way as the word 'red', find this paradoxical.

However, the question remains on what grounds and according to what criteria actions should be considered as good. After all, it is possible to derive prescriptions only from prescriptive premises. Hume established this many years ago (2005: 469). Therefore, initial premises should be accepted without justification. They are either accepted or rejected but not justified. Hare tends to take the utilitarian approach. According to him, it is necessary to verify the moral principles that are sometimes adhered to on the basis of the consequences that result from them and then it will be clear whether they can be accepted or not. On the other hand, he has no doubts that people are influenced by general, socially approved and culturally inherited moral principles, which are accepted as customs. Having violated them, an individual might be conscience-stricken. Hence, the moral principle is a matter of self-determination which an individual is responsible for. To adopt a moral principle Hare proposes "golden-rule argumentation": in adopting a moral decision I have to consider whether I can wish everyone to behave in the exactly the same way in all possible worlds irrespective of what I would be in those worlds. Hence, Hare tries to base prescriptions in his categorical imperative by arguing in the same way as Kant did: behave in the way as though the maxima of your behaviour should become the universal law of nature through your will.

Hare distinguishes between logical and moral necessity. In his opinion, the requirement for universality is logical and unquestionable because the universality of predicates is a logical precondition. Then, however, the question why some logically correct instructions must be a moral obligation remains unanswered. On the whole, why should we be concerned about morality? It is possible to give an answer to these questions only after the precondition has been made that a human being is a moral subject in his essence and he has power to make free decisions seeking for what his brain presents to his will as good (Plėsnys 2011: 122–123).

Nonetheless, problems about the values do not end with the statement about such differentiation. Hare interprets the prescriptive part of both moral and non-moral judgement in the same way – as an encouragement to choose that good. However, it was still Wittgenstein who drew attention to the fact that the word 'good' was used in the language ambiguously:

either in the relative or absolute sense. The word 'good', when used in the relative sense, can be related to a certain actual state of affairs. For example, certain features (actual state of affairs) can allow us to establish that a certain, say, tennis-player is a good player. Rating systems, which show how often and playing with whom in certain tournaments the players win are created and according to them, points are assigned to the players enabling their ratings with respect to other players to be determined. Thus, following Hare, we can say that the descriptive part of the word 'good', in its value-related expression 'this man plays tennis well', can be unambiguously defined on the basis of factual statements. "Supposing, explains Wittgenstein, that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said "Well, you play pretty badly" and suppose I answered "I know, I'm playing badly but I don't want to play any better", all that the other man could say would be "Ah, then that's all right"" (1956: 5). Hence, the prescriptive aspect of the word 'good' in the expression 'a good player' functions so that I do not necessarily have to want what is presented as good.

In fact, quite the opposite is the case with moral or absolute normative expressions. But suppose, says Wittgenstein, I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said "You're behaving like a beast", and then I were to say "I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better", could he then say "Ah, then that's all right"? Certainly not; he would say "Well, you *ought* to want to behave better". Here you have an absolute judgment of value" (1956: 5). The prescriptive part of the word 'good' in moral expressions has the (absolute) meaning of obligation, whereas in non-moral expressions it has merely the (relative) meaning of recommendation. Judgements in which the word 'good' is used in the relative sense can simply be substituted with the statements about facts. For example, the word 'good' in the sentence "The pupil learned his lesson well because his answer was assessed 10 points" means a certain quantitative measure, that is, a certain actual state of affairs. In this case we have a specific aim with respect to which the state of affairs is evaluated. In the case of the pupil this aim is the whole of correct answers. In Wittgenstein's opinion, however, no state of affairs can be related to good in the absolute sense. "The absolute good, if it is a describable state of affairs, would be one which everybody, independent of his tastes and inclinations, would necessarily bring about or feel guilty for not bringing about" (Wittgenstein 1956: 11). Moral decisions are absolute in the sense that it is necessary to pursue them. But this necessity does not follow from any state of affairs. In Wittgenstein's opinion, "My whole tendency and I believe the tendency of all men who ever tried to write or talk Ethics or Religion was to run against the boundaries of language. This running against the walls of our cage is perfectly, absolutely hopeless. Ethics so far as it springs from the desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable, can be no science. What it says does not add to our knowledge in any sense" (1956: 12).

Consequently, Wittgenstein does not agree to what Hare stated later that the prescriptive meaning of the word 'good' functions alike in moral and non-moral judgements. On the other hand, he also disagrees with the statement that the descriptive meaning of the word 'good' can be formulated non-contradictorily on the whole. Taking into account the way the word 'good' is used in moral judgements, we have to agree with Wittgenstein's rather than with Hare's opinion.

At the same time we are faced with a third problem. It still remains unclear how the descriptive part of 'good' is related to the prescriptive one. If we accept Hume's opinion, we shall have to maintain that the descriptive and prescriptive parts are not related.

The problem of this differentiation remains unresolved in modern philosophy, which separates metaphysics from ethics, and in the philosophical tradition associated with it.

SOME ASPECTS OF CLASSICAL THEORY OF VIRTUES

Therefore, we think it is worth exploring this issue on the basis of images of classical philosophy. In it, good expresses the correspondence of being to the appetitive power, for good is what everybody desires. On the other hand, good is what corresponds to the essence and to the end of a thing. As Thomas Aquinas noted, good and existent are interchangeable. Hence, someone who possessed no existence or goodness at all could not be called either bad or good. But because goodness is defined by fullness of existence, what does not exist as fully as it should is not called good unreservedly but good only to the extent that it exists. Thus it is good for a blind man to be alive but bad to be without sight. In a similar way then actions must be called good in so far as they exist but in so far as they exist less fully than human actions should, they will lack goodness and be called bad: if, for example, we do not do as much as we reasonably should (1993: 343–344).

The concept of good which we encounter when speaking about values is used in an analogous sense. The analogy of this kind is called by Thomas Aquinas "the analogy, i. e. proportion, related to the same end". And this is said when one concept is attributed to a great number of things according to before and later but it has existed in one of them only; for example, 'healthy' is said of the body of animals and of urine and of food but it does not signify the same thing in all these cases. For it is said of urine, insofar as it is a sign of health, of body, insofar as it is the subject of health, and of food, insofar as it is the cause of health; but all of these concepts are related to one and the same end, namely, health (see Aquinas 2016: 6). The term 'healthy' is a general feature of food, climate and the way of life; however, the concept denoted by it is attributed to all these things insofar as 'healthy' means various relationships with one object, namely, with a human being or his/her state – healthiness. We see that the conception of health is neither quite similar nor quite different in the above-specified cases. When speaking about a human being health is a certain feature, whereas when people speak about healthfulness of food, climate or lifestyle the word 'healthy' means relationship rather than a feature. The essential feature of the analogy of this type is that the first analogate realises perfection formally, whereas others have it only outwardly, i. e. only for the same of the name. The case with the concept of values is similar. Value is what is good and desirable, what ensures an individual's goodness. But good is that which corresponds to the essence and to the end of thing. The meaning of this prime analogate of good which is related to the same end will denominate as the focal meaning of good. Something is a value insofar as it is the cause of good.

However, something is a value as it is the cause of good. Therefore we cannot understand values without elucidating the focal meaning of good. In studying how linguistic expressions in which the word 'good' has both moral and non-moral meaning function in a language, we always encounter unsolvable problems if we do not take into account the fact that the concept of 'good' in those expressions is analogous and cannot be understood without a broader conceptual system in which its focal meaning is defined. (In our case the focal meaning of good is that which corresponds to the essence and to the end of thing.)

Values determine an individual's behaviour in a sense that they indicate to an individual what is good and desirable. However, the value analysis cannot reveal why man seeks for what is valuable. Why must I behave well? Why cannot the case of good behaviour be

similar to the case of buying a good car? I buy the car that I like and there is nothing bad if I purchase the car that is considered to be bad by the majority of people. The classical theory of virtues helps us find an answer to this question. It is the values that determine the fact that an individual chooses what is good and valuable. Obligation is determined by a certain feature of an individual's character rather than by merely a good thing. This case is different from the case of the law of universal gravitation: the Earth attracts all physical bodies and due to the Earth's gravitational force they inevitably fall down to the Earth unless they are prevented from falling by other forces – support reactions, Archimedes or similar forces. In other words, we can understand how values function only when we make clear the classical theory of virtues.

Traditionally, virtues are understood as essentially good habits of action providing us with both the skill and inclination to do readily what befits rational nature seeking to achieve true happiness. It is usual to divide virtues into perfect and imperfect ones. Perfect virtues, ethically considered, are an essentially good operative habit that gives the power and the impulse to do readily that which befits rational nature so as to achieve true happiness. Perfect virtues dwell in a free faculty. Imperfect virtues act in such a way that their action is not related to freedom. For example, wisdom, science and understanding are imperfect virtues of the speculative reason. Art is an imperfect virtue of the practical reason.

Virtues are intellectual and moral. Prudence is a perfect virtue of intellect. The moral virtues perfect the appetitive powers, namely, the will and the sensitive appetite, giving them the facility to act well, and causing them to act well. All moral virtues are perfect virtues. Justice is a perfect virtue referring to action (or to will). Fortitude and temperance are perfect virtues referring to passions. Imperfect virtues make a man capable of good work and perfect virtues make a man good.

Together with intellectual virtues moral virtues are necessary for right human actions because reason and will have disparate activities, and it is necessary that both the reason should be well disposed by intellectual virtue and the will by moral virtue (Davis 1943: 254–256).

Can there be moral virtues without intellectual virtues? The answer to this question was given by Thomas Aquinas. According to him, "the other intellectual virtues can, but prudence cannot be without moral virtue. The reason for this is that prudence is right reason about things to be done, and this not merely in general, but also in the particular, where action takes place. Now the right reason demands principles from which reason proceeds. But when reason is concerned with the particular, it needs not only universal principles, but also particular ones. <…> Consequently, just as by the habit of natural understanding or of science, a man is made to be rightly disposed with regard to the universal principles, so, in order that he be rightly disposed with regard to the particular principles of action, viz., the ends, he needs to be perfected by certain habits, whereby it becomes connatural to man, as it were, to judge rightly about the end. This is done by moral virtue, for the virtuous man judges rightly of the end of virtue <…>. Consequently the right reason about things to be done, viz., prudence, requires man to have moral virtue" (Aquinas 1944: 427 (S. T. I–II. Q. 56, a. 4)).

It is clear that prudence should guide the intellect, enabling it to discern what is a reasonable thing to do, and that justice should determine the will to act justly. But it is not obvious how we can speak of the sensitive appetite as the subject of temperance and fortitude. The point was explained by Thomas Aquinas: "the irascible and concupiscible powers can

be considered in two ways. First, in themselves, in so far as they are parts of the sensitive appetite; and in this way they are not competent to be the subject of virtue. Secondly, they can be considered as participating in the reason, because it belongs to their nature to obey the reason. And thus the irascible or the concupiscible power can be the subject of human virtue; for, in so far as it participates in the reason, it is the principle of a human act. And to these powers we need to assign virtues. For it is clear that there are some virtues in the irascible and concupiscilbe powers. Because an act which proceeds from one power, according as it is moved by another power, cannot be perfect unless both powers be well disposed to the act; for instance, the act of a craftsman cannot be successful unless both the craftsman and his instrument be well disposed to act. Therefore, in the case of the objects of the operations of the irascible and concupiscible powers, according as they are moved by reason, there must needs be, not only in the reason, but also in the irascible and concupiscible powers, some habit aiding for the work of acting well" (Aquinas 1944: 424 (S. T. I–II. Q. 56, a.4)).

CONCLUSIONS

Moral virtues perfect the appetitive powers, namely, the will and the sensitive appetite by forming the habit and inclination to act well. Together with intellectual virtues moral virtues are necessary for right human actions. On the other hand, prudence, the perfect virtue of intellect, cannot exist without moral virtues.

Virtues are an acquired rather than inborn habitus, therefore they cannot be accounted for exclusively by nature. They determine man's decision on what moral values to subscribe to and he seeks to keep to them. In this way moral values acquire the feature of obligation.

Absolute obligation of moral values cannot be explained on the basis of the very values themselves. That obligation can be understood from the relationship between values and a human person and his/her good. The focal meaning of good is associated with a person, and it is only in the analogous way that it is related to value. Virtues characterise a person's goodness. Therefore obligation of moral values should be substantiated on the basis of a person's goodness and the characteristics of that goodness, namely, virtues.

Therefore, contraposition of virtues and values, both seeking to eliminate virtues from the studies of human action replacing them with values, and the opposite tendency – to ignore values – are unacceptable. The value analysis helps us understand the peculiarities of functioning of moral values, whereas the study of values deepens the concept of values.

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ALBINAS PLĖŠNYS

Dorybės ir vertybės kaip elgesį lemiančios prielaidos

Santrauka

Straipsnyje nagrinėjama moralinių vertybių ir dorybių santykio problema. Atkreipiamas dėmesys, kad moralinių vertybių samprata susiduria su sunkiai sprendžiama jų privalomumo problema – kodėl būtina elgtis gerai. Pirmasis problemą suformulavo ir iškėlė L. Wittgensteinas savo *Paskaitoje apie etiką*. Tinkamo atsakymo neaptikta. Net ir brandžiausias R. M. Hare'o pasiūlytas sprendimas gėrio sąvokoje atskirti preskripcinę ir deskripcinę dalis nėra patenkinamas. Galbūt sprendimą galima rasti pasirėmus klasikine dorybių teorija. Atkreiptinas dėmesys, kad gėrio sąvoka, kai ji siejama su vertybėmis, iš tikrųjų vartojama analogine prasme. Pirminė gėrio prasmė siejama su asmeniu ir tik analoginiu būdu vartojama kalbant apie vertybes. Todėl, siekiant išsiaiškinti, nuo ko priklauso moralus žmogaus veikimas, tenka atsigręžti į asmens elgesį aiškinančią klasikinę dorybių teoriją. Ta analizė padeda suprasti moralaus elgesio privalomumą. Nagrinėjant vertybes atskirai be asmeniškumų, to privalomumo pagrįsti neįmanoma. Todėl moralinės vertybės turi būti nagrinėjamos tik dorybių teorijos kontekste. Kita vertus, vertybių analizė leidžia giliau suprasti dorybes.

Raktažodžiai: supratingumas, teisingumas, tvirtumas, susivaldymas, preskripcinis, deskripcinis, dorybė, moralinė vertybė