

Responsibility and Its Place in Ethical Judgement

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Abstract

Human action of ethical worth is free and voluntary one. And ethical judgement concerning human action carries with it particular inference about the nature of man: the fact that s/he is *a responsible being*. This derives from man's ontological status as reasonably acting being of care and accountability to and for one's self and others. This qualitative research critically analyses the place of responsibility in ethical life of man. It discloses that free responsible human action is in fact deliberately rational action, and that in lived experience there is a unique logical relationship between responsibility and the quality of human society and environment. It emphasizes that maturity is an index of developed existence. It then makes the submission that the inevitability of responsibility in human existence is part and parcel of what we may call the ethical cost implicational character of our moral consciousness and freedom.

Keywords: Responsibility, Morality, Conscience, Ethical Judgement, Human Existence.

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INTRODUCTION

Morality deals with the principles concerning right and wrong or good and bad human actions in society. Man is the only ratio-social being that raises the question of the morality of his/her actions. Living a moral life is part of what it means to be human; it enables an individual to positively and fully realize himself/herself. It is evident and stands to reason that human beings possess freedom of will. For if human activities were entirely predetermined by physical and psychological causalities, as some argue, ethical appeals to personal responsibility would be out of place. A human being's action could be somewhat influenced by the pressure of physical or psychological force. But men and women experience themselves not merely as instruments in the hands of perhaps higher forces, but as creative agents, able to choose among alternatives and capable of self-determination. This is the constant and universal conviction of humans in their dealings with one another (Peschke 2001). A free moral agent cannot slip away from responsibility; s/he is normally answerable for his/her action. In other words, one is existentially responsible for one's action and its resultant outcome/effect. Responsibility is an interesting concept in ethical discourse and issues around it have important place in current ethical debate; existentialist philosophy contributed much to this recognition.

This paper reflects on the ethical *meaning* of responsibility in human existential situations and its relevance to societal life. It involves, for the most part, the principles guiding the choices we make at each moment of our lives: how we should decide on what to do at these moments? What does my responsibility in each situation of life consist in and according to which criterion should I judge insightfully? Moreover, how should I react to a given existential situation I am involved in, in which I have a role to play? For ethical problems are always issues of what to do in terms of proper assessment of situations, and the right actions to carry out thereof. Since good ethical judgements are beneficial to man and bad ones are definitely harmful to him/her, there is need for human beings to always make more careful ethical decisions in various moments of life, in their deeds, and in their relationships with other human beings. These questions lead us into searching for why we, human beings, should live responsibly. It is the case that ethical judgements must be backed by good reasons, for morality requires the impartial consideration of the moral agent's and other individual's interests. We are aware that "in our daily life engagements we are confronted with the questions of whether our actions are just or unjust, with the problem of duty and responsibility to self, [others,] and Country" (Udoidem, 2001, p. 1). All things considered, it is in this context of justification of human actions that life's enlightened choices and decisions, dilemmas, and actual experiences are critically

weighed and judgements expressed. Since it is a reasonably established fact that man is morally responsible for his/her actions and conducts, s/he should strive to achieve fairness in all his/her dealings with his/her fellows; for man can only claim to live authentically when s/he takes responsibility for the outcome of his/her actions. We shall now explain the concepts we employed in this discourse.

Explication of Relevant Concepts

The concept, “responsibility”, simply means liable to give answer to what one has done or liable to account for oneself and one’s actions. It is about answering for something to somebody. To be responsible means to be accountable for one’s actions and the effects of one’s actions on others and on the society at large. According to Molinski (1975), responsibility more profoundly means disclosing oneself by owning up one’s action when it and, through it, one’s own self is called in question. It is seen as a specific personal attitude, since only a person can be called in question by another. There can be only indirect responsibility with regard to things, where one’s treatment of things has to be answered for to another. Hence, responsibility only enters insofar as one can be called in question by another with regard to oneself and one’s action, and insofar as one can answer this summons. For him, responsibility towards oneself and one’s fellow members of society can exist insofar as one can be called in question by oneself or by others. But it is limited by one’s power over oneself and others. It derives from human being’s ontological status as reasonably acting entity of care and accountability to and for one’s self and others. We can therefore say that responsibility is a concept expressed by *a relational system of social force that binds one to the course(s) of action demanded by that force in reasonable terms of an expectation of an action or its result*. To be responsible or to take responsibility for something (or someone) means that somebody is obliged to an addressee for actions, tasks, states of affairs, and the results therefrom, and that s/he has to justify these actions and results before (in the face of) a judgement according to standards, criteria, or norms. The responsible person has to justify his/her actions: s/he has to be accountable (answerable) for them. The formation of a strong sense of responsibility is a basic demand of our nature, a concrete exercise of our freedom, and part of our development as ratio-social beings. Gorman (2003), notes that the general connotation of the concept is either of imputability or of accountability notions always related to ethical obligation and freedom. It is the human sense of answerableness for all acts of thought and conduct. In other terms, responsibility has to do with a person’s moral accountability for his/her thoughtful choices, decisions, and actions. The notion of responsibility comes in as one of the most important concepts in human moral experience because man is imbued with rationality and so is expected to make rational decisions in accordance with his/her being. It

anchors much on the inseparable relationship between thought and human action.

Conceptually, “ethical judgement” designates the rational evaluative process whereby human action is reckoned as good or bad, right or wrong, just or unjust. It involves the application of ethical principles to human conduct in concrete cases and situations. According to Hare (1952), “moral judgements always have a bearing on our conduct, in that we cannot in the fullest sense accept them without conforming to them” (p. 143). That is to say that an ethical judgement has direct relation to our conduct, for to make such judgement is to commit oneself to what one says. If we make a moral judgement but are not prepared to commit ourselves to it, then we are insincere. Ethical judgement involves self-commitment to doing good and avoiding evil. In ethical judgement, one must weigh the merits and demerits of obvious resultant consequences of a decision or an action before one ventures into it; this enables one to take rationally balanced decision and positive course of action. One must always sift and evaluate the evidence before one in a given moral situation if one is to ethically judge aright. *Reason* as human natural endowment is supposed to reign supreme in ethical judgement. In other words, ethical judgement is an intellectual act of reason which should not be overshadowed by the passions or emotions (that when not controlled could becloud our levelheaded nature). The passions have to be kept under control by reason at all times. It is important that one assesses situation(s) well in order to act well and achieve best results. In human existence and action, ethical principles of judgement “take on flesh”: they are actually expressed and realized. An important instrument in ethical judgement is conscience.

Formation of Right Conscience

On the moral sphere of life, we face one of the most engagingly decisive of struggles which is basically of the moral conscience. Etymologically, the word “conscience” comes from the Latin word “*conscientia*” which originally means “joint knowledge or knowing with”. It was coined from the expression “*cum alio scientia*” meaning “the application of knowledge to a particular or individual case” of human conduct. It is simply the relation of knowledge to the morality of human acts judging same to be either good or bad. Conscience is an essential part of *man as man*. It characterizes human beings as the source and inner sense of moral decisions, of right and wrong in day to day life. It is not a special faculty distinct from the intellect, otherwise our judgement about the rightness or wrongness of individual acts stands the risk of being non-intellectual and non-rational. Rather, conscience is a function of *practical* intellectual judgement; it deals with the practical question of what action to take *hic et nunc*. It is not normative but prescriptive ethical principle of action. This “practical intellect” guidance is “subjective”, that is, conscience tells one whether the action one performs here and now is good or bad, and

whether one should perform them as good, or avoid them as evil. Thus, whereas the (moral) law is the objective norm of ethical conduct, the conscience is the subjective ethical awareness mechanism in man. Put squarely, in its primordial reality, conscience is "...an act of a person's intelligence, the function of which is to apply the universal knowledge of the good in a specific situation and thus to express a judgement about the right conduct to be chosen here and now" (Pope John Paul II, 1993, Nr. 32). Thus, it is simply the intellect or reason in its moral function. Man's moral life is guided by conscience (practical intellect/reason) formed according to the fundamental ethical principles. Conscience stands as the inner voice of my being to be myself resolutely in my decisions and choices; it tells me inwardly at the right moment: do this, shun that. As it acquires the truths about the rightness or wrongness of actions by both reflection and intuition, it evokes moral rectitude and responsibility. Conscience has important place in man's overall moral development. When we say that conscience (the proximate norm of personal morality) is the application of the law to a particular case we mean that this application of the law thus becomes an inner dictate for the individual, a summon to do good in this particular situation. Conscience thus formulates moral obligation in the light of the natural law. The judgement of conscience is said to be a practical judgement, for it makes known what man must do or not do, or assesses an act already performed by him; it is a judgement which applies to a concrete situation the rational conviction that one must love and do good, and avoid evil. Such judgement states in an ultimate way whether a certain particular kind of action is in conformity with the law and formulates the proximate norm of morality of a voluntary act, applying the objective law to a particular case.

Conscience as an ethical concept has been categorized into many ways and kinds because of the differences in sensitivity of people to moral values. Hence, a conscience can be *antecedent* (when judgement on the morality of an act and the obligation to perform or omit it comes before the action is carried out), or *consequent* (judgement or valuation of an act already done or omitted); it can be *right* (judges the actual situation as correct), *erroneous* (misplaced judgement of situation). Also, a conscience can be *certain* (judges without fear that an action is right or wrong) or *doubtful* (hesitates to make any judgement) (Hastings, 1922). It is not within the province of this paper to give extensive detailed analytical discussion of the different categories of conscience, but what we want to underscore here is the point that even though man is said to have the obligation to always obey his/her conscience, it does not remove the possibility of erroneous ethical judgement sometimes. This however does not mean that the value of conscience as moral evaluative instrument of dignity in man is diminished because its ordination to the true, meaningful, and good in itself remains. Second Vatican Ecumenical Council (1965), points out that through loyalty to conscience, we are joined to other people in the

search for truth and for the right solutions to so many moral problems which arise both in the life of individuals and from social relationships, for the more a correct conscience prevails, the more do persons and groups turn aside from blind choice and try to be guided by the objective standards of moral conduct. Hence, the formation of right (correct) conscience that considers various viewpoints on particular issues that come up is an imperative in our ethical judgements, for with it one makes one's choice between what is right and what is wrong in practical existential situations and actually takes responsibility for whatever choice of action one opts for.

Proper evaluation of free deliberate direction of one's actions to other persons calls for an assessment of envisioned possible effects of one's actions to the best of one's knowledge, which has to align with one's decision to act in a given conscientious way to the best of one's ability. The necessity of human ethical obligations binds a person to take moral decisions in the light of conscience which s/he cannot refuse to obey without becoming guilty. One can say that corruption and other forms of immorality are partly as a result of misjudgement as to how best to act on particular occasions due to lack of formation of right conscience. Moral agency is clearly connected with human action and responsibility.

Moral Agent, Human Action, and Responsibility

Deep reflection leads to the understanding of freedom as a presupposition of moral life, for it is the basis of responsibility. This is why ethics as the science of the rightness or wrongness of human action is concerned with voluntary actions for which man is held responsible. Human action requires consciousness and free will, regard for other persons with whom the moral agent lives in society. The moral agent must therefore be aware of the implications of the path s/he takes with regard to the self-fulfillment of his/her actions and be responsible for it. Moral society has a right to an answer and explanation from the moral agent because human action involves an attitude towards the transcendental norm of morality, towards perfection, and the striving after it. Of course we know that awareness is essential to free and voluntary acts; it necessarily follows that a person is accountable for his/her action whether or not s/he accepts the consequences of what s/he is doing at the moment. Within this context, being responsible involves that one must have an adequate knowledge of the bearing of one's actions and its impact on oneself and others. The reasoning here is the affirmation that man in his/her action is responsible both to himself/herself (autonomous) and to others (heteronomous). S/he is autonomous insofar as s/he must give account to himself/herself to show that his/her subjective action(s) correspond(s) to the acknowledged end of man's subjectivity. The sense of responsibility to self also arises from the fact that man's moral action is decided on the basis of his/her existing past and his/her links with the present in view of a future which s/he sees as significant

for own well-being. S/he is heteronomous insofar as s/he must render account to his/her neighbour to show that his/her action aligns with the objective moral order. The impact of his/her actions on others discloses—within the range of his/her ethical responsibility and judgement—its influence on the well-being and personal development of those affected. Since mutuality is a necessary factor for optimal self-realization of man in society, it demands respect and reciprocal rendering of positive responsible service to one another for social harmony and common good of all.

When we live moral lives we focus on the most intelligent thing to do in existential situations of life, for man is a rational animal imbued with sense of honour and guilt. Man is reasonable and in the conduct of his/her life has different mannerisms; s/he is capable of acting in ways that could be viewed as good or bad. Ozumba (2008), notes that “it is moral obligation based on duty that obliges a man to do certain things because of their rightness. And not to do other things because of their wrongness” (p. 85). Thus, sense of duty directly contributes to human effort towards moral conduct rectitude. Although “the ways we see, judge, and act are all tied to the imagination, which is influenced by the communities to which we belong and to the images by which our communities live” (Peschke, 2001, p. 18), man is still ultimately the final decision-maker of what s/he does or does not do and ipso facto is responsible for the outcome of such action or inaction. So, once a decision is made and action carried out man is at this point inexcusably held responsible for the implications of this action which s/he cannot validly deny any more. Out of our skill and alertness we must expedite the task of our daily lives in terms of the continually changing situation and of the exigencies which emerge in the doing (Jonsen 1968), for the common good of all humanity. To be responsible is indeed indicative of matured existence.

Responsibility as an Index of Matured-Developed Existence

We know that a being acts according to its nature (*agere sequitur esse*), but it is only human being that raises the question of goodness or badness of his/her action, which indicates that there is something uniquely different about the human being that calls for morality. Insofar as man’s responsibility to himself/herself and to others pertains to optimum development of own being and health of the society, it is therefore in keeping with human sociality and interdependence an actuating principle of moral wholeness. We thus posit that: *living responsibly is an index of matured-developed existence*. The existentialists emphasize that one is entirely free and responsible for creating, projecting, and making oneself what one wants to be in human existence. One is responsible for choosing and fashioning oneself into the kind of person one wishes to become. It is one’s responsibility to decidedly make educated insightful choices and decisions, for the daily choices and decisions one makes help one to realize one’s potentials fully and

attain the fullness of one’s being. Thus, adherence to moral values with a view to realizing the fullness of one’s being is each person’s responsibility. This adherence is a conscious engagement, a singular responsibility of each moral subject, the “I”, who should take studied stance in concrete situations of life. This entails that it is up to the moral agent as a free being to be either coherent in his/her acts or inconsistent. S/he must always examine his/her actions to find out whether there is justification for them or not; for responsible existence avoids an uncritical adoption of the views of people in society.

One thing to be borne in mind is that although we have the same ethical goal of the good life, the manner each person “creates” and realizes his/her potentials in the world could differ. This disparity results from the singularity of our different life-endeavours or projects. Each person pursues his/her own life-project, our common ethical goal notwithstanding (Asiegbu, 2005). Since responsibility derives from human being’s ontological status as reasonably acting entity of care and accountability to and for one’s self and others, to be genuine to oneself and to others one must live up to this elevated status of one’s being and engage in positive activities that enhance and improve one’s well-being generally. It entails that in responding appropriately to someone or something, one needs an understanding of the data of experience to be able to make critical decision flowing from ethical judgement on this data of experience. This is because on a closer analysis, human actions are about translations of values that ethical principles engender in concrete situations of life.

Responsible existence elicits high standard of conduct from possible alternatives from human beings, since it entails that one fully embraces the consequences of one’s actions. It thus brings about attitude of constant openness and pursuit of the good life which enable one to combine right judgement with proper action even in most complex situations of life. This is why to shirk or abdicate one’s responsibility or act irresponsibly is a clear ethical sign of inauthentic existence. Every human society/state endeavours through education to mold its citizens into responsible individuals in the polity, and in this way check human tendency toward anti-social actions and habits therein. It is when man as a moral and social being relates integrally and responsibly in his/her societal existence with his/her fellows that s/he can be said to have, in a way, attained developed existence.

The Place of Responsibility in Ethical Judgement

The aim of life for man is to achieve happiness; s/he strives to achieve this by continuous exercise of his/her contingent acts. But since man has a distinctive nature and end, his/her actions must be proper or conform to man’s essential nature to achieve good end. Responsibility as an ethical issue has a basic bearing on human action; and in fact we cannot talk of ethical responsibility without its concomitant relatedness with human act. According to Fagothey (2000), “a *human act*

(*actus humanus*) is one of which man is master, one that is consciously controlled and deliberately willed, so that the agent is held responsible for it" (88). It is such human act or conduct that is appropriate for moral discourse. Higgins (1949), explains that human act is a free, deliberate act, of which man is fully master: the act of man as man. He is of the view that three elements are there in every human act, namely: motion of the will, previous intellectual knowledge of the purpose of the act, and freedom. For the fact that human act is something intelligible, controlled by the agent's intentions, reason and purpose for, and knowledge of the act, it should therefore be understood that for such to qualify as a human act, it has to issue from (i) human freedom, (ii) voluntariness (it has to be willed), and of course (iii) there has to be possession of knowledge of the act—the three essential qualities of human act. Human actions have moral connotations because they express and determine the goodness or badness of the life of the individual who performs them. To the extent that they are deliberate choices of the person who performs them, they give moral definition to him/her, determining his/her profound moral traits/orientations and convictions. One's moral life has to be ordered to the ultimate end (*telos*) of man to be authentic; clearly, such an ordering must be rational and free, conscious and deliberate, by virtue of which man is responsible for his/her actions.

Responsibility and ethical judgement rest on the nature of man as a being who is not only rational but also possesses freedom. Hence, *responsibility is inseparable from freedom, for to be free is by this very fact to be responsible*. By reason of man's freedom, s/he has alternative courses of action from which s/he can choose. Man is therefore subject to the moral law which is demanding on him/her and is not only obligatory and necessary but also imperative. Ethical principles work then as sure guides to human actions, for "good must be done and evil must be avoided". In line with this ethical insight for the well-being of man, Immanuel Kant in his categorical imperative exhorts: "Act only on that maxim whereby thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law" (qtd. Stumpf, 1994, p. 317).

Man as a moral being acts in a unique way and this unique way is the human act, which with frequent repetition forms habit, which in turn coalesce into character. Man's actions are voluntary and deliberate and s/he cannot but be accountable for them. This is why Jean Paul Satre says that man has no right to complain because s/he is responsible for all his/her actions and experiences. By this he means that once there is a human act, man should not complain about it because s/he is responsible for it. This responsibility of man for his/her actions merit him/her either praise or blame, reward or punishment as a consequence. Some factors, however, varying from physical, psychological, social and environmental in nature can in ethical judgement remove or at least diminish moral responsibility. For example, a man is

completely excused from moral responsibility for an action performed in the state of insanity or under a constrictive situation of physical force in which case s/he could not have done otherwise. Other factors such as quirkiness, anger, fear, or any strong emotion, psychic illness (not complete insanity), drunkenness, etc., diminish moral responsibility but do not completely remove it. In the cases of anger and drunkenness, the responsibility is an indirect one. A person is responsible for actions performed under the influence of anger and drunkenness because s/he could have avoided them by exercising self-control. It should be noted, according to Gula (1989), that in difficult moral situations that require technical knowledge and expertise, as in other professional matters in which an action has to be taken, a non-specialist acts responsibly by following the counsel of trusted expert.

Critical Assessment

The question of ethical judgement implies that man is a free being and responsible for his/her actions. Free will makes evident human moral reasonableness-possibility. The logical consequence of freedom is responsibility. Man's freedom is unquestionably true, but this freedom is tied to accepting the consequences of his/her choices and actions. As a responsible moral agent, man is accountable for his/her decisions on what to do and for the outcome of their practical implementation. Hence, s/he should act virtuously at all times. The importance of having enlightened right conscience in human existence for leading morally responsible lives cannot be overemphasized. When we understand that conscience is the inner voice consciousness of the human person as being of care manifest in his/her sensible attitude toward his/her appropriate duties, then we can see that it is what basically shapes activities of a responsible moral agent. Enlightened conscience offers an orientation for basic discernment of the mind, an essential help for a well-founded ethical judgement. It is thus the ethical obligation of human beings to rightly form or educate their consciences taking cognizance of good ethical theories with regard to external moral realities. It is always proper that before ethical assessment of a given situation is done, effort be made to gather all relevant facts concerning the issue/situation. Knowledge of these facts would help immensely in the right moral assessment process of the situation so as to guide human action thereof.

Most often, we act from the background of our ethical judgement. Virtuous acts result from ethical judgements we make on existential issues of life and the moral excellence of the actions we carried out. It involves firmness and constant good will, a conscious resolution to judge and act rightly and as best as one can. To act irresponsibly is not only to judge and act illogically and disorderly but also to show lack of care for consequences of one's actions on fellow human beings. The honest, prompt, and efficient discharge of

one's duties is an index of moral maturity and alert sense of responsibility. In order that any society be able to progress and fulfill the purpose for which it exists (to cater for the basic needs of all its members), the individual members that constitute it must cultivate certain basic positive moral disposition. The individual members must be morally matured and always act responsibly if the society in which they live is to develop and progress. "It is simply an illusion to talk of development in any society whose members lack moral maturity and social responsibility, for moral laxity and irresponsibility on the part of the members of any society is an obstacle, the greatest obstacle to the development of that society" (Omogbe, 1993, p. 109).

African ethics, which is communalist in nature, emphasizes the point that because man is basically a community-being, we live in common and owe one another certain ethical undeniable demands. Responsibility here is not only a strong sign of developed existence but also of integrity of life. It decries shirking of responsibility and performing other anti-social morally reprehensible actions that negatively affects the ontological web of relations of existent beings and harmonious social order, for these have adverse effects on the whole community and the state at large. Age and experience play significant roles in the exercise of good ethical judgement, and development of his/her sense of responsibility. To live truly as rational human beings is to live responsible moral lives. From ontological social interrelatedness of human existence, the action of any person has considerable influence on the well-being of others proximately or in the long run. This imposes socio-ethical obligation on man to always properly assess situations and act in such a way as not to endanger one's life and those of others in the society.

Actually, there is a unique relationship between responsible human action and quality of human society cum environment. This is why responsible life, responsible parenthood, responsible government, etc., are so important in a healthy state. Similarly, humankind has collective responsibility for the world at large: we have to live in a responsible manner in conservation of our environment as the ground of human physical existence so as not to jeopardize the rights of future generations to inherit a habitable earth. This point must be borne in mind that we should always carry out eco-friendly and responsible actions when exploiting the natural resource of the world. Human beings should begin to assume responsibility for human-induced conditions of life in the world, which conditions can still be improved upon by their concerted positive efforts. That is to say that we have the responsibility to perform meaningful activities that shape to our lives for the greater good of humanity. We have the ethical responsibility to preserve our species which stems from fundamental natural urge to self-preservation. Responsibility requires that we carry the spirit of good ethical principles into those areas where no clear rules

exist which in a sense requires moral uprightness creative direction. The implication of our findings here is that since judging responsibility is a preliminary to judging moral merit or demerit of action performed, it follows that the purpose of judging responsibility must be primarily to provide for correct ethical judgement, and its ultimate purpose of upholding moral goodness at all times must be the same as the purpose of making these judgements.

CONCLUSION

Moral reflections concern questions about how we should decide on what to do and the best way to act in given existential situation such that our action in this case accords with our being. It is clear that freedom is the precondition of moral responsibility. In other terms, moral responsibility is the logical outcome or consequence of our freedom. Moral judgements must always be backed by good unassailable reasons in practical decision-making process as an underlying rationale for virtuous living. Our analysis has shed more light on free, deliberate, and most especially, responsible acts of man. Human being possesses free will and conscience as the faculty that monitors and judges their actions; it approves right human actions and disapproves wrong ones. We have to respect the dignity of moral conscience and human freedom of will/choice. The idea of responsibility based on the dignity, value, and the integrity of humanity is an acceptable and unique frame of moral orientation. Responsibility is not restricted to special realms, but is in principle universal (applicable to everyone), pertaining equally to everybody in comparable situations. It does not admit of postponements and delegations; to be sure it is direct and immediate, mostly individual and role-specific. It can at times be collective. Morally speaking, a human being with right conscience cannot and should not intentionally withdraw responsibility for his/her actions. A responsible moral agent is one that is adjudged to be living authentic developed existence. With the guiding dictates of our conscience, we should endeavour never to act contrary to our better ethical judgement especially when there are other possible but irresponsible courses of action. We hold that responsibility is never merely accidental to man's being; it is constitutive of human reality. Insofar as man is responsible for his/her individual acts, they express his/her way of being. However, responsibility can be diminished insofar as an action can be sufficiently explained by motives over which it can be reasonably presumed that the doer has not sufficient control, since the individual unfortunately yields to laws which s/he cannot evade. For instance, this happens when someone—through inner compulsion or outward coercion—is left with so constrained a choice of motives that s/he has no power to choose an accountable mode of action or is left with only a very limited choice. Another morally relevant issue here is the point that causal-negligence (of duty) seems to presuppose conscious motivation, and there are methodological problems with regard to the yardstick for holding alleged

damagers accountable in cases they claim their non-involvement.

Both reduced sense of responsibility and irresponsibility weaken the moral fiber of a society and as such hinders the elevation of humankind. With education, one is stimulated to begin to act more responsibly towards the persons affected by one's actions. It entails deepening therewith one's sense of dignity and value of human persons, as well as increasing one's sense of awareness of the effects of one's actions which can only be done by a grasp of the laws of earthly reality. We can then draw the conclusion of our discourse that we should always live in such a way as to carry out only those actions that are most important to advance our well thought-out positive goals. It is then proper to charge someone with responsibility, the precondition of merit, reward or punishment, when it can be reasonably presumed that one quite knows the effects of one's actions on other persons and can foresee these effects. In the final analysis, one can say that for the fact that human freedom is the necessary condition of moral duty-reasonableness, the inevitability of responsibility in human existence is part and parcel of the ethical cost *and* the implicational character of our sure moral consciousness.

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