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Mains Practice Questions

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Q. Ethics is nothing else than reverence for life. Comment. (150 words)

15 Jan, 2019 GS Paper 4 Theoretical Questions

Approach

- Introduce by discussing importance of ethical life
- Discuss how reverence for life uplifts the quality of life making it more charitable, selfless and noble
- Bring out the relation between ethics and life reverence

Introduction:

- Ethics is the activity of man directed to secure the inner perfection of his own personality
- The maintenance of one's own life at the highest level by becoming more and more perfect in spirit, and the maintenance at the highest level of other life by sympathetic, helpful self-devotion to it – this is ethics.
- One of the serious challenges facing mankind in organized social life is ethics - that is, the problem of choice between good and bad, do's and do not's etc. All the creations in this natural world follow certain fixed laws of nature. That is why we can exactly predict when the sun will rise tomorrow. But we cannot predict human behavior in the same way.

Body:

Meaning of reverence for life:

- "Ethics is nothing other than Reverence for Life. Reverence for Life affords me my fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, assisting and enhancing life, and to destroy, to harm or to hinder life is evil." -- *Albert Schweitzer*.
- It refers to fundamental principle of morality, namely, that good consists in maintaining, promoting, and enhancing life, and that destroying, injuring, and limiting life are evil.
- Affirmation of the world, which means affirmation of the will-to-live that manifests itself around one, is only possible if one devotes oneself to other life.
- Reverence for Life does not allow the scholar to live for his science alone, even if he is very useful to the community in so doing. It does not permit the artist to exist only for his art, even if he gives inspiration to many by its means. It refuses to let the business man imagine that he fulfils all legitimate demands in the course of his business activities. It demands from all that they should sacrifice a portion of their own lives for others.
- Reverence for life and sympathy with other lives is of supreme importance for this world of ours

- In every stage of life, right up to the level of man, terrible ignorance lies over all creatures. They have the will to live but no capacity for compassion toward other creatures. They can't feel what happens inside others. They suffer but have no compassion.

Ethics is a reverence for life:

- Ethics is not a religion but not less important for humanity. It is good to maintain life and further life; it is bad to damage and destroy life. And this ethic, profound, universal, has the significance of a religion.
- Ethics alone can put one in true relationship with the universe by his/her serving it, cooperating with it; not by trying to understand it.
- Ethical principles which a person should practice towards other beings - *Respecting autonomy, Doing no harm (non malfeasance), Benefiting others (beneficence), Being just (justice), Being faithful (fidelity).* Following such principles is true reverence for life.
- Ancient Indian scriptures laid emphasis on Principles of Ahimsa (non-violence), Right action, Right Meditation, Right Belief, Right thought etc which are a prerequisite for a peaceful

Conclusion:

- The essential element in civilization is the ethical perfecting of the individual as well as society. At the same time, every spiritual and every material step forward has significance for civilization. The will to civilization is, then, the universal will to progress that is conscious of the ethical as the highest value.
- In spite of the great importance we attach to the achievements of science and human prowess, it is obvious that only humanity that is striving for ethical ends can benefit in full measure from material progress and can overcome the dangers that accompany it.