

The Inner Quality Philosophy of Ethics and Government

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To those who look within themselves for truth and understanding

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Introduction

This book presents the philosophical argument that knowledge and application of one's best character can influence individual morality, society, and government in ways that are beneficial to all of mankind. Understanding one's best character can be approached from two perspectives. One perspective is that mankind's innermost best character is a product of nature's evolution: the feelings of altruism and empathy in one's consciousness strengthen cohesion within society and thus helps the human species to survive. The other perspective is that mankind's innermost best character reflects his spiritual side: the soul's character as given it by God at the moment of its creation. From the spiritual perspective, the soul is embodied in human form to learn the proper use of free will, which necessarily includes decisions based on goodwill and the betterment of mankind. From either perspective, the knowledge of one's best character and the expression of that character in thought, word, deed, and emotions are key factors in improving human beings personally, socially, and politically.

In this book, I use the term "inner quality" to refer to mankind's best character, whatever its origins. For reasons made clear in the next chapter, which describes the discovery of my personal inner quality, I am inclined to integrate the above two perspectives because it appears to me that human beings have both material and spiritual sides. It seems logical, therefore, in discussing mankind and his various conditions in life that we consider the whole of man – material and spiritual – rather than focusing only on one side of his nature. My goal is to present the case that the knowledge and expression of one's inner quality will enhance individual morality, strengthen society, and improve governance. Throughout the book, I endeavor to support my arguments by referencing the research, findings, and views of experts in fields of science, religion, philosophy, ethics, governance, and other disciplines.

Organization of Book

In addition to this brief introduction, the book is organized into three chapters and a summary, as described below.

Chapter 1 defines the inner quality, notes some of its major implications, and discusses the enhanced rationality of the higher mind and the multidimensional nature of reality. Sections include how I discovered my inner quality and how one may validate one's own inner quality; major ethical, social, and governance implications of the inner quality; the identification of key gaps in human understanding of reality; and current theories of a multidimensional universe and phenomenology.

Chapter 2 develops an inner quality philosophy of ethics. Major sections include the definition of ethics, morals, and morality; a comparison of inner quality ethics and traditional ethical theories in meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics; and the inner quality perspective on key ethical questions raised through the centuries. The chapter also notes areas of uniqueness in inner quality ethics by examining such topics as the relationship between morality of self and society, the relationship between inner quality ethics and modern spirituality, and how inner quality ethics might be applied in politics and other challenging situations.

Chapter 3 constructs an inner quality philosophy of government. The chapter explains the role of ethics in governance theory, and then builds the inner quality philosophy of government along the lines of traditional political issues such as how reality is to be defined, the nature of man, the purpose of government, the proper balance between idealism and pragmatism in politics, and the ideal form of government. An overview of the political philosophy concludes the chapter.

The *Summary and Comparison* restates the principal philosophical argument of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government and then compares the philosophy with 36 well-known ethical and political theories from the past.

Since everyone has a unique inner quality, a philosophy built around one's best character will also include some unique insights. My personal and professional interests revolve around ethics and government, so the inner quality philosophy I discuss in this book focuses primarily on how the inner quality might be applied to theories of ethics and governance. Other individuals who apply their inner qualities to their chosen interest or profession will no doubt have much to add to this discussion. Indeed, it is this unlimited potential for human creativity that inspired me to write this book, as I contemplated a fundamental question to which we all can contribute: what would happen if individuals lived their lives according to the standards of their best character?

Definitions

Before beginning our exploration of the inner quality philosophy, it will be useful to define a few key terms as used in the book. More extensive definitions of these and similar terms will be found in the various chapters.

God. God in the inner quality philosophy is considered to be the Initiator of all things, including the source of the “big bang” referred to in current cosmology.¹ God is also spoken of in this book as the Supreme Being or Creator. God and His Representatives (such as angels, Elohim, World Teachers, masters, saints, and bodhisattvas) play an important role in mankind's evolution, especially as it relates to the soul.

¹ See, “Universe 101: Big Bang Theory,” National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), http://map.gsfc.nasa.gov/universe/bb_theory.html.

Soul. The soul is defined as the spirit of God individualized in a human lifestream. The soul can be embodied on earth multiple times, and it can exist in various spiritual dimensions before or after embodiment on earth.² The soul is who we are in a spiritual sense. The soul is the spirit inside our bodies which gives us life, consciousness, and the sense of self-awareness and self-identity. The inner quality is the character of one's soul. The inner quality, then, is the unique characteristic given by God to our soul.

Spirituality. Spirituality refers to man's awareness and understanding of, as well as interaction with, the spiritual dimensions which intersect with human life. All people have an innate sense of spirituality, although some individuals are more sensitive to the spiritual dimensions of life than other people.³

True Self. The true self, also referred to as the *real self*, is the ideal person an individual would be if they fully expressed their soul's character while in embodiment.⁴ When used in a spiritual sense, the true self is the perfected soul. Almost all references to the true or real self in this book refer to the ideal person an individual is trying to become by maximizing the expression of his or her inner quality here on earth. The process of becoming one's true self in embodiment contributes to the soul becoming the true self in spiritual dimensions. Achieving that dual goal is one of the main purposes of the soul

² For an overview of how different cultures view life after death and the soul, see Stephen Elliott, "On the Immortality of the Soul," *Religion and Spirituality*, Winter 2013, <http://www.vision.org/visionmedia/religion-and-spirituality-immortal-souls/64176.aspx>.

³ A great deal of research is being done on spirituality in the context of healthcare. See, for example, Christina M. Puchalski, "The role of spirituality in health care," *Baylor University Medical Center Proceedings*, 2001 Oct; 14(4): 352–357, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1305900/>.

⁴ Searching for one's true self is one of the time-honored quests for mankind. See the interesting article by John T. Chirban, "Seven Qualities of the True Self: The Essence of Human Being," *Psychology Today*, April 14, 2013, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/alive-inside/201304/seven-qualities-the-true-self>.

embodying on earth, a goal which is often called self-mastery as reflected in the recorded life of Jesus.

Consciousness. Consciousness is the vehicle through which we experience the material and spiritual dimensions in which we live.⁵ Consciousness is fluid and can be controlled by the mind, much like an elevator, moving between different levels of perception. Our consciousness is the gateway to our awareness of different dimensions of human existence.

Higher mind. The higher mind is an enhanced mental capacity latent in all humans, which enables people to interact with, understand, and integrate in consciousness both the material and spiritual aspects of themselves.⁶ The higher mind can become more easily activated once an individual recognizes his or her inner quality, or the character of their soul.

Evolution. Evolution is a process of change, occurring in all dimensions of existence, whereby the characteristics of existing things change within certain perimeters according to their nature and the environmental conditions in which they exist.⁷ Life, matter, energy, spirit, consciousness – all evolve within the laws of their existence. For example, the laws of physics operate within physical dimensions, whereas the moral laws of karma

⁵ Consciousness is one of those big issues about which little consensus exists. See the discussion by John Smythies, "Space, Time and Consciousness," *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 10, No. 3, 2003, pp. 47–56, <http://www.imprint.co.uk/pdf/smythies.pdf>.

⁶ The higher mind is often referenced in spiritually oriented works. Here it is considered to be akin to the superconscious. However, the higher mind is not only transcendental; it is also highly rational in the sense of logos, or enhanced reasoning or rationality. The higher mind integrates one's spiritual and material perceptions into a coherent view of reality in ways that are highly rational, intuitive, and processed very quickly. Of related interest, see Daniel Kahneman's discussion of mankind's two minds in *Thinking, Fast and Slow* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013).

⁷ Evolution is usually associated only with life, but cosmologists view evolution as also occurring in the material universe as well. See, for example, "The Evolution of Matter," <http://www.see.org/garcia/e-ct-1.htm>.

and reincarnation operate within spiritual dimensions. The laws of cause and effect, however, work in both physical and spiritual dimensions.

Karma, reincarnation, and dharma. *Karma* is the law of moral cause and effect, whereby we receive what we have given to others, whether good or bad. *Reincarnation* is the rebirth of a human soul in successive embodiments as the soul balances the negative karma it generated in previous lifetimes and works to fulfill its dharma. *Dharma* is the duty of a soul in a particular embodiment; sometimes dharma is referred to as one's mission in life. Dharma can also refer to the mission of a group of souls (or *mandala*) working together through various lifetimes; dharma might also refer to the overall mission of a particular soul carried over through many lifetimes.⁸

Perfection and permanence. As used in this book, perfection and permanence in an absolute sense have meaning only when referring to God's spiritual dimensions.

Perfection in a human sense means always making decisions and acting on the basis of the soul, as it is understood to be at the moment of the decision. *Permanence* has little relevancy in a human sense, because the material universe of which man is part is constantly changing.

Chapter 1 opens our discussion with a brief description of how I unexpectedly discovered my inner quality, along with some initial thought on the moral, social, and political implications of everyone having a unique inner quality of their own.

⁸ The concepts of karma, reincarnation, and dharma are common in Hinduism, Buddhism, and other Asian spiritual traditions. The ancient Hindu story of the *Bhagavad-Gita* explains these principles through Krishna's lessons taught to Arjuna. For one translation, see *The Bhagavad Gita* (Penguin Classics Paperback, February 25, 2003), translated by Juan Mascaro with an introduction by Simon Brodbeck.

Chapter 1: Defining the Inner Quality

The inner quality is one of those things that can only be experienced by the individual. It is not something conveyed or transmitted from one person to another. The discovery of the inner quality is a natural phenomenon that, while perhaps remarkable when first experienced, quickly becomes part of one's normal, waking consciousness.

The Inner Quality

The discovery of my inner quality was completely unanticipated. I was trying think through a central dilemma in my life: how could I be amoral in my outer personality and professional duties, yet also have a sense of being an essentially good person deep within? I decided one evening to trace the origin of that sense of inner goodness by following the thread of that sense deeper and deeper into consciousness. At one point in this meditation, I suddenly “saw” a brilliant white-green source of light. As I examined this light more closely, I realized that it radiated a distinct quality of honor and integrity. The quality was vivid and clear. It truly felt spiritual, being pure and infinite.

I intuitively understood that I was looking at my innermost character. Honor and integrity were the essence of my individuality as a human being. This character was the seed core of my selfhood. I called this point of light my “inner quality,” and I could only interpret the inner quality as being the character of my soul.

Upon reflection, it was clear to me that a similar best character must exist in all people, regardless of who they are or where they live. As I thought further about the origin of the inner quality, I realized the possibility exists that this best character of people might either be spiritual in origin or evolutionary in origin. Or perhaps it exists in both spiritual and material dimensions of man since it appeared to reflect the character of the soul as well as serving as a mechanism

through which the human species could improve and thus strengthen the evolutionary urge for long-term survival. If the dual-origin theory was true, then the inner quality is a possible bridge in mankind's consciousness between his physical existence and his spiritual connection to God. Perhaps there is something of a continuum between spirit and matter, such that evolution is spiritual life unfolding in the material world.

As I contemplated these things, I determined that, whatever its origins, the most important practical conclusion was that the inner quality is my best character as a person because it is my primary virtue and what gives my life its greatest meaning and highest value. If I had such potential best character and other people likewise had their own inner qualities, then I realized there truly must be the possibility that mankind in general can greatly improve its personal, social, and political conditions. This possibility has enormous implications, which I have tried to explore in this book.

Finding the Inner Quality

There are several ways to find one's inner quality. One way that I can attest to is contemplating the source of one's inner goodness. A second way is to identify with one's soul consciousness. Since the inner quality is the character of the soul, if one is able to commune with the soul, then one will find the inner quality.

A third way is to think deeply about the purpose of humanity and its evolution. Human beings have a degree of control over how the species will evolve. Since it is in the interests of the species to survive and prosper, then human beings can rationally find within themselves those characteristics most likely to enable the species to survive and prosper. One of those characteristics is altruism, whereby individuals try to feel and express a sense of goodwill

towards others. Altruism, if pursued, leads to the conclusion that an individual ought always to express their best character. A person's best character is very close to one's inner quality.

A fourth way is to work with spiritual teachers who are committed to help people find their true self. Spiritual teachers on the path of their own self-awakening can often point to what stands in the way of one's self-realization and give advice on how to overcome these barriers. In some cases, this kind of advice might also be found through the counselling of highly trained, compassionate, and sensitive therapists. As an individual comes to see the various impediments that stand between knowledge of one's true self and the outer consciousness, the character of the true self gradually becomes clearer. The character of one's true self is virtually identical to the inner quality.

A fifth way is to ask God or His Representatives for assistance in showing one the inner quality. There have been many instances throughout history where individuals have changed their character in significant and positive ways due to spiritual intervention.⁹ It only makes sense that, if God is the Creator of the soul, then He would want mankind to awaken their consciousness to the reality of their true character.

A sixth way is to feel the force of nature all around and to think deeply about its meaning. Some might find their consciousness uplifted by looking at the stars; others by visiting a forest or wind swept plain or towering mountains; others by watching the comings and goings of humanity in their multitudes. Life is all around us, and the inner quality is the essence of the soul's life. By studying life, one can sense the oneness of all things. That sense of oneness closely aligns with one's sense of the inner quality.

⁹ One can't help but be reminded of the story of Saul on the road to Damascus as recorded in Acts 9 of the *Bible*.

There must be dozens of other ways to discover or come to know one's inner quality, because it is very natural to want to be one's true self. And being one's true means being one's best character, which is a reflection of one's inner quality. The inner quality is not a secret hidden from view; it is a broader and better view of yourself. If you find a flicker of goodness in your motivations and persistently pursue the source of that goodness, you will come to your inner quality.

Validating the Inner Quality

Since people generally have complex personalities, one immediate issue in trying to find one's inner quality is distinguishing the inner quality from the host of other traits that characterize human beings. In other words, how do you validate your own inner quality? One way, of course, is to have such a profound personal experience that there is no question as to the inner quality's authenticity. Others may turn to a more rational approach for validation. In this regard, I would suggest that individuals validate the character they believe to be their inner quality by measuring that character with the following criteria or something similar:

- The inner quality should appear to be the predominant character of one's soul, true self, or best personal character.
- The inner quality should have substantial moral value and be inherently good in a moral sense.
- The inner quality should appear to be timeless – that is, a virtue that ought ideally to exist at all times and places.
- The inner quality should have infinite potential for expression – in other words, a quality that can never be exhausted.

- The inner quality should be able to be expressed by oneself, even if not perfectly.
- The inner quality should provide a standard to assist one in making proper moral choices under almost all conceivable circumstances.
- The inner quality should be a character of goodness that can be shared with others.

When these conditions exist in an identifiable character within oneself, then one can have a high degree of confidence that this probably is the inner quality. There is a caveat here, however, in that as one increasingly comes to know the character of their soul or true self, the virtues and attributes of that character become more refined in one's mind. This means that, even though the initial insight into one's inner quality is true, one's perceptions of selfhood changes over time as one's understanding of the true self evolves through experience and reflection on life.

Implications of the Inner Quality

After discovering my inner quality and reflecting on its various attributes, I asked myself a basic question: what would happen if everyone knew and expressed their best character? The areas I especially wanted to explore were ethics and morality, as well as the principles of how man ought to be governed. In subsequent chapters, I develop these ideas in greater detail, but here are some of my initial thoughts.

Ethics and Morality

One of the common attributes of the inner quality seems to be the existence of a moral code within every person, often reflected in their sense of conscience as to the ethical correctness of some action.¹⁰ The fundamental principle of that internal moral code is that everyone has, not

¹⁰ Interesting in this regard is Pope Francis' reaffirmation in 2017 that people should use the "primacy" of their own conscience to make tough moral decisions. See, "Pope stands by using one's conscience" *Washington Post*, November 12, 2017, p. A16. The Dalai Lama has also written and spoken extensively on the importance of an inner ethical sense. See, for example, his *Beyond Religion: Ethics for a Whole World*, 2011.

only the opportunity, but also the responsibility to be the best person they can be. Circumstances often limit what we can do, but we ought always from an ethical and moral point of view to aspire to become our true self. This implies that we ought constantly to try to improve ourselves.

What I found and describe in the next chapter is that the inner quality contains not only the best character of ourselves but also a discernible ethical “roadmap,” which we can use as a moral guide as we move toward becoming our true self. This moral guide is personally derived and intended solely for the individual within his or her life circumstances. My conclusion in this was that God, having created our soul, placed the inner quality as a seed of goodness within our being. If this is true, then our fundamental moral imperative is to take that God-given goodness and do something positive with it. In doing so, we reflect our highest character to the best of our ability at any given moment.

As explained more fully in the next chapter on inner quality ethics, we can use our higher mind to perceive and rationally define a set of ethical principles and moral standards to guide most moral decisions in life. Although individually determined, these standards are similar to those espoused by great spiritual teachers throughout the ages – evidence that moral truth is always there for anyone to see at any time at any place to improve their character and become a better person.

How we use free will in expressing our best character is, morally speaking, up to us. What this book attempts to show is that using free will to express the inner quality can result in positive personal growth and social benefit – which are the goals of virtually every ethical and moral system devised by mankind.

Social Values and Government Policy

Whatever one's station in life, all of us are equal in terms of having an inner quality. Indeed, the inner quality can be viewed as a human birthright. It logically follows that, if the inner quality does exist in everyone, then everyone has a natural right to discover and express that inner quality. Some people may have a stronger sense of morality and natural goodness than others, but we all have the potential of realizing our inner quality, expressing our best character, and becoming more of our true self.

The fact that the inner quality exists in everyone means that all people have dignity and value. This dignity and value within each individual should be respected and protected by all societies and all governments, regardless of their ideology or institutions. If a society or government cannot do this, then that society or government is fundamentally flawed because it is not in harmony with the nature of man.

It follows that, as a basic social goal, all governments and all societies should strive to bring out the best in all of their citizens and their various communities. In keeping with this basic goal, no government or society should seek by force or manipulation to compel the people to serve the interests of a small minority at the expense of the majority. Such manipulation ignores and degrades the dignity and value of everyone in society, who are equally endowed with an inner quality and possessed of a natural right to freely express their best character.

The existence of the inner quality implies that each individual has a unique value to contribute to the collective whole of society and indeed to life itself. Because of this unique and natural value, no society, no institution, no government, no other individual has a right to prevent or interfere with another person's pursuit of becoming their true self. The right to become one's true self is

not granted by another person and cannot be taken away by anyone. It is a birthright given to each person by God and by nature.

Society can benefit enormously from the contributions of individuals who have discovered and are expressing their inner qualities. Artistic and intellectual creativity, technological breakthroughs and scientific insight, a keen sense of social responsibility, and goodwill towards all are characteristics of individuals recognizing their inner worth and who are working to become their true self.

Society has a right to protect itself, and social institutions have an obligation to preserve social order. However, society and its institutions have an equally important obligation to allow their members to improve their lives. If the collective will of the people is to recognize and respect the value of the individual, and to insist on justice and fairness for everyone, then the society which supports and pursues this choice through public policy will prosper enormously from the creative energies released by the members of that society. Conversely, if society or its institutions seek to thwart the will of the people in their natural desire to improve their personal character and the quality of their life, then the seeds of disorder are sown and social resilience can rapidly give way to conflagration.

Principles of Governance

Since everyone has an inner quality and the right to discover and express their best character, government can best serve the interests of society and the people by working to ensure that individuals have an environment that is safe, filled with opportunity to excel, and supportive of freedom to pursue self-initiative. The form of government a society adopts is less important than its policies. Whatever the form of government, however, its policies ought not to place

impediments in the path of citizens seeking to express their inner quality and become their true selves.

A government which supports citizen desire for self-improvement and creates opportunities for individuals to contribute their best to society is in harmony with nature and moves humanity in a positive evolutionary direction. A government which denies its citizens opportunity for self-improvement and restricts their contributions to the good of society is not in harmony with nature and pushes mankind in a negative evolutionary direction.

No government, no ruling party, no leader, no political institution has the right to govern or rule without the support of the people. This is particularly true when the people – individually and collectively – are intent on becoming their true selves. It is important for government to be organized in such a way as to be responsive to the physical, emotional, intellectual, cultural, and spiritual needs of the people. Public policy should be designed to meet these needs; and government leaders, officials, bureaucrats, and administrators should be held accountable to the people for implementing these policies in an efficient and effective manner.

From the perspective of the inner quality, a sense of universal goodwill should characterize relations between governments, cultures, nation-states, and peoples. Every government should be measured by how it treats its own citizens: man, woman, and child. Aggression and hegemony should not be tolerated by the global community. The use of force, unilaterally or multilaterally, can be justified to prevent atrocities and mass violations of human rights, as well as to punish blatant acts of aggression against other peoples, societies, or cultures.

By their nature, most governments are conservative; they do not like to change. To align political institutions with the principles of the inner quality will likely be a lengthy process, made possible

by leaders and citizens who individually discover their inner quality and begin to improve their personal character. Social and political institutions, as they are led by such individuals, will gradually reflect the higher potential of mankind and thus advance humanity as a whole in a positive direction.

These are a few of the moral, social, and governmental implications of the existence of an inner quality within all mankind. Chapters 2 and 3 will elaborate on these initial observations and refine their theoretical foundations and practical applications. We now turn to a discussion of the enhanced rationality of the mind, what I often call “logos” in this book. This higher-level mental capability enables us to integrate in outer consciousness the multiple dimensions in which we live as human beings.

The Enhanced Rationality of the Higher Mind

Coming into contact with the inner quality awakens a mental capability which I refer to as the “higher mind.” Like the inner quality, the higher mind exists in all human beings, whether the capability be recognized or not, activated or not. What is special about the higher mind is its ability to integrate the paradigms of realism and idealism. The higher mind does this by changing the level of observation. In political science, this is called levels of analysis; and it simply means that your interpretation of what occurs depends greatly on how you look at it – e.g., do you look at a political issue from the point of view of an individual, a country, a bureaucratic institution, the international system, or some ideology?¹¹

The higher mind enables one’s outer consciousness to move between different levels of perception: moving higher enables one to see the larger picture of interrelationships, moving

¹¹ For a classic example of different conclusions based on levels of analysis, see Graham T. Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1971).

lower on a scale of analysis enables one to see the minute details of distinguishing features. In a somewhat similar way, the higher mind enables us to see what exists today (so-called realism), what might exist in the future (so-called idealism), and the continuity between the two states of existence (what is and what can be) – all in a practical and pragmatic way. The higher mind, in other words, is able to view and interpret reality in a broader paradigm: seeing what is possible from the perspective of what exists now and what could exist in the future.

This enhanced ability is important in a practical sense, because it helps us to expand the available set of options to achieve some objective or reach some decision. What occurs with the discovery of the inner quality is that the boundaries within which logic and reason function are dramatically expanded. In this way, the higher mind enables us to solve or manage practical problems in ways that are consistent with the moral imperatives of the inner quality. The higher mind does this by processing information from the various dimensions which form our reality as human beings. The concept of a multidimensional universe in which we live will become clearer when we consider the concept of logos and the surprising ability of the mind to process information from several dimensions beyond the temporal.

The Concept of Logos

Using the higher mind enables us to explore the underlying reason and logic behind existence and the relationship between God, nature, and man. This underlying rationality behind creation is sometimes called “logos.” In literature, logos has many definitions.¹² *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, for example, notes there are at least five philosophical definitions of logos:¹³

¹² For a large collection of references to logos from ancient times to the present, see “logos” in the online *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/search/searcher.py?query=logos>.

¹³ Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd edition (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 518.

1. Rule or principle, especially in the sense of divine order
2. Proposition, account, explanation, thesis, argument
3. Reason, reasoning, the rational faculty, abstract theory, discursive reasoning
4. Measure, relation, proportion, ratio
5. Value, worth

In this book, logos is used in the sense of understanding the spiritual purpose of our soul's embodiment on earth. Logos can help us grasp the logic of creation and the multidimensional structure of the universe, thereby increasing our understanding of the role of humanity in the evolution of life.

The logic of logos is based on the order of the universe. Order is sometimes called the first law of God, and indeed the concept of God's law implies that there is order in His Creation. If God has ordered the universe, and if man has the power of reason, then mankind should have the ability to understand the logic of universal order. The development of science, mathematics, physics, systems of logic, and causal relationships are all the result of mankind using reason to understand the rational order found in the universe. However, as we all know from science and close observation of nature, there also appears to be a certain amount of chaos and unpredictability in life and in the physical universe. There are some things which we cannot explain in terms of cause and effect. This leads us to ask: How can the universe be both orderly and random at the same time?

There are at least two possible explanations for this seeming contradiction in descriptions of reality. One explanation is that the universe truly is chaotic in part. The other explanation is that order exists but the cause of what we perceive as being chaotic is currently beyond our scope of understanding. The first explanation is based on the assumption that some things occur without

cause: i.e., the cause and effect paradigm we normally use in our mental processes is not universally correct. The second explanation is based on the assumption that cause and effect is true everywhere, but that some causes are not known by man. This second explanation is supported by the great complexity of the universe and the significant gaps in human understanding in many critical areas.

Unresolved Areas of Human Understanding

By way of illustration, a few of these complexities and gaps in understanding are mentioned below.

- **Disagreement over Cause and Effect.** For most of mankind's history, the law of cause and effect was considered logical and foundational to understanding the natural order perceived throughout nature. It was not until the 20th century and the introduction of the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle that chance began to occupy mainstream scientific thought. The debate between chance and cause continues today, with no consensus yet emerging.¹⁴ How one views change and causality greatly influences the paradigms of reality used by people when they seek to investigate and describe truth.¹⁵

From observation, it would appear that most people prefer order to chaos in their lives. Mankind in general mentally orders perceived events into meaningful patterns. The human preference for an orderly universe is also reflected in the models of reality which underlie such things as mathematics, logic, and cause and effect sequences which enable

¹⁴ For a strong argument in favor of causality, see, David L. Bergman and Glen C. Collins, "The Law of Cause and Effect: Dominant Principle of Classical Physics,"

http://www.commonssensescience.org/pdf/articles/law_of_cause_and_effect_fos_v7n3_causality.pdf.

¹⁵ For an interesting discussion on causality versus chance, see the exchanges on "Can an event occur without a cause?" *Physics Forums*, <https://www.physicsforums.com/threads/can-an-event-occur-without-a-cause.333180/>.

mankind to function more efficiently in the world of form. Proving something occurs with absolute randomness is very difficult, if not impossible.¹⁶

The fact that the cause vs chance debate has not yet been resolved is indicative of the uncertainties within which we live our lives. The entire structure of moral accountability, for example, rests on there being a cause and effect sequence. On the other hand, having a predisposition toward the universal existence of cause and effect gives human beings tremendous incentives to expand their search for understanding who we are and what kind of universe we live in.

- **Uncertainty of When Time Began.** The age of the universe has been calculated by NASA's Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe (WMAP) and the European Space Agency's Planck spacecraft. In 2012, the WMAP estimated the age of the universe to be 13.772 billion years, with an uncertainty of 59 million years. In 2013, Planck measured the age of the universe at 13.82 billion years.¹⁷ Time itself is said to have begun with the big bang's release of the cosmic microwave background radiation which our instruments use to determine the age of the universe. However, based on the string theory and similar theories which assume dimensions beyond the classic spatial dimensions, cosmologists have postulated that the big bang – described as a sudden release of energy from a singularity such as a massive black hole – may only be the latest in a series of expanding and collapsing universes.

¹⁶ See, for example, a presentation of an experiment “proving” randomness and the long and intensely debated public comment on the procedures and results: “Do physicists really believe in true randomness?” *Ask a Mathematician / Ask a Physicist*, <http://www.askamathematician.com/2009/12/q-do-physicists-really-believe-in-true-randomness/>.

¹⁷ See, “How Old is the Universe?” *Space.com*, June 7, 2017, <https://www.space.com/24054-how-old-is-the-universe.html>.

In other words, even though we seem to be in fair agreement as to when our current universe began with the big bang (roughly 13.7-13.8 billion years ago), there is no consensus as whether the current universe is the only one or when time actually began.

As one cosmologist observed:

“So, when did time begin? Science does not have a conclusive answer yet, but at least two potentially testable theories plausibly hold that the universe – and therefore time – existed well before the big bang. If either scenario is right, the cosmos has always been in existence and, even if it recollapses one day, will never end.”¹⁸

- **Vastness of the Universe and Large Number of Planets outside the Solar System.**

The Milky Way is one of an estimated 100 billion to 200 billion galaxies in the universe, and there are an estimated 100 billion planets in the Milky Way alone.¹⁹ The extraordinarily large number of possible planets in the universe strongly suggests the possibility of advanced life elsewhere in the universe. However, given the unique evolutionary history of the planet earth,²⁰ there is reason to doubt that advanced beings on other systems of worlds would be like us.

The possibility of extraterrestrial life and the implications such a discovery might have on our cultural belief systems should give us concern, if only because our philosophies and

¹⁸ See, Gabriele Veneziano, “The Myth Of The Beginning Of Time,” *Scientific American*, February 1, 2006, <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/the-myth-of-the-beginning-of-time-2006-02/>. The two theories referred to are the string theory and ekpyrotic theory.

¹⁹ See, “100 Billion Alien Planets Fill Our Milky Way Galaxy: Study,” *Science.com*, January 2, 2013, <https://www.space.com/19103-milky-way-100-billion-planets.html>.

²⁰ There have been five mass extinction events on earth, resulting in the extinction of the vast majority of species of life on the planet and giving rise to the opportunity for other species to thrive – e.g., the Cretaceous–Paleogene extinction of 65 million years ago killed off 76% of all life, including the dinosaurs, allowing the evolution of mammals on earth. See, “Timeline Of Mass Extinction Events On Earth,” <http://www.worldatlas.com/articles/the-timeline-of-the-mass-extinction-events-on-earth.html>.

religions appear to be far behind science today in adjusting to these possible new discoveries.

- **Uniqueness and Commonalities of Mankind with Other Parts of Life on Earth.**

According to scientists and animal-behavior researchers, it is difficult to distinguish unique physical or cognitive features between man and other species of mammals.²¹

Mankind and animals share, for example, the crafting and use of tools, imitation, a sense of culture, memory, navigation, a sense of self-awareness, language, a sense of altruism, and understanding that others have knowledge and beliefs different from one's own. In many of these areas, mankind have a much greater degree of perception and mastery; in some cases, animals have more exceptional abilities. What makes mankind perhaps most unique is his power of integration, reason, analysis, creativity, scientific understanding, theoretical conceptualization, and profound sense of spirituality. These qualities, while present in embryonic form in animals and thus seemingly part of the evolution of life in general, are highly developed and integrated in human consciousness.

Of interest from an evolutionary perspective is the fact that the *Homo sapiens* species of modern human beings is only one out of an estimated 8.7 million species (give or take 1.3 million) on the planet today. Approximately 99.9 percent of all species ever to live on the planet are now extinct. Modern humans have been around for approximately 300,000 years.²² According to the Smithsonian Institute, "Due to billions of years of evolution,

²¹ See, Alexandra Horowitz, "Are humans unique?" *Psychology Today*, July 14, 2009, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/minds-animals/200907/are-humans-unique>.

²² See, "How Many Species on Earth? 8.7 Million, Says New Study," *United Nations Environment Programme News Center*, August 24, 2011, <http://www.unep.org/newscentre/default.aspx?DocumentID=2649&ArticleID=8838>; Smithsonian Institute, "Extinction," part of "Foundational Concepts" in *Paleobiology*, http://paleobiology.si.edu/geotime/main/foundation_life4.html; and "300,000 year-old 'early Homo sapiens'

humans share genes with all living organisms.”²³ For example, research conducted by the National Human Genome Research Institute found that “about 60 percent of genes are conserved between fruit flies and humans, meaning that the two organisms appear to share a core set of genes.”²⁴ Other research has determined that about 25 percent of human genes are shared with a grain of rice,²⁵ and bonobos and chimpanzees share 98.9% and 98.5% of their DNA with humans, respectively.²⁶

What we see, therefore, is a great deal of uncertainty about what it is that makes human beings exceptional – i.e., we really do not yet understand ourselves or our role in the chain of life.

- **Explaining Out-of-Body Experiences.** Many people have had out-of-body experiences, where they either travel about or stand and observe themselves.²⁷ While it is impossible to know the validity of most of these experiences, religious teachings worldwide believe there is a connection between those living in a spiritual dimensions and earthly existence. The Catholic Church, for example, stipulates that before an individual can be declared a saint, the person in the afterlife must perform one or more miracles providing intercession in the affairs of man.²⁸ And there are many records of mothers-to-be communicating with

sparks debate over evolution,” *arstechnica*, June 11, 2017, <https://arstechnica.com/science/2017/06/300000-year-old-early-homo-sapiens-sparks-debate-over-evolution/>.

²³ See, “Genetics,” in Human Evolution Evidence, <http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence/genetics>.

²⁴ See, “Comparative Genomics,” National Human Genome Research Institute, November 3, 2015, <https://www.genome.gov/11509542/comparative-genomics-fact-sheet/>.

²⁵ See, “Genes Are Us. And Them,” *National Geographic*, March 2017, <http://ngm.nationalgeographic.com/2013/07/125-explore/shared-genes>.

²⁶ See, “Most genetically similar animal to humans,” <http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/world-records/most-genetically-similar-animal-to-humans/>.

²⁷ For records of thousands of such personal experiences, see the website for the Out of Body Experience Research Foundation, <http://www.oberf.org/>.

²⁸ See, Fr. William Saunders, “The Process of Becoming a Saint,” Catholic Education Resource Center, <http://www.catholiceducation.org/en/culture/catholic-contributions/the-process-of-becoming-a-saint.html>.

their unborn children, sometimes before conceptualization.²⁹ Much of the New Age Movement in the United States and other countries is based on the belief that ascended masters in heaven communicate with people on earth,³⁰ while the Theosophical Society and other organizations have carried the esoteric and mystical traditions of East and West dating back thousands of years.³¹

These beliefs and recorded experiences point to the perceived existence of a spiritual dimension that interacts with the normal consciousness of people in the four dimensional world of time and space. This suggests that people have a sense of spirituality and that their minds have an ability to deal with spiritual phenomena.³² People seem to be “hard wired” to believe a spiritual world exists,³³ making it plausible that humans have a spiritual as well as a material side to themselves.

- **Inability to Define What Is Life.** According to the website *biology online*, life is defined as follows:

“There is no consensus regarding the answer to the question as to when does life begin. Does it begin at the time of fertilization or the time before or after that?

²⁹ See, “Treasury of Resources,” <http://www.light-hearts.com/treasury.htm>.

³⁰ See, for example, The Summit Lighthouse, <https://www.summitlighthouse.org/>.

³¹ Scholars in recent years have been quite interested in the development of esoteric traditions. For an introduction to the subject, see Wouter J. Hanegraaff, “Some Remarks on the Study of Western Esotericism,” <http://www.esoteric.msu.edu/Hanegraaff.html>. On Theosophy specifically, see Olav Hammer and Mikael Rothstein, eds., *Handbook of the Theosophical Current* (Boston: Brill, 2013).

³² A great deal of neuroscientific investigation has been devoted to the issue of how people handle spirituality in their lives. For an overview of some of the work by neuroscientist Andrew Newberg and others, see Lynne Blumberg, “What Happens to the Brain During Spiritual Experiences?” *The Atlantic*, June 5, 2014, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/what-happens-to-brains-during-spiritual-experiences/361882/>.

³³ See, for example, a report on global research on this issue: “Humans ‘predisposed’ to believe in gods and the afterlife,” *Science Daily*, July 14, 2011, <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2011/07/110714103828.htm>.

The origin of life is also contestable. Despite of the irresolute answer for questions about life, the basic characteristics of a living thing are as follows:³⁴

Organization. Living things have an organized structure to perform a specific function. In particular, a living thing is made up of a single cell or a group of cells. A cell is the basic structural and functional unit of any organism.

Homeostasis. A life form would have an ability to keep up its existence, for instance, by regulating its internal environment to keep up a constant or favorable state.

Metabolism. A living thing would be capable of converting energy from chemicals into cellular components through anabolic reactions. It would also be capable of decomposing organic matter through catabolism.

Growth. A living thing grows, i.e. in size or in number.

Response. An organism has an ability to respond to stimuli or to its environment, usually through a series of metabolic reactions.

Reproduction. A living thing has the ability to reproduce, i.e. producing a new of its kind.

Adaptation. A living organism is capable of changing through time to adapt to its environment.

It is important to note that this definition lists the characteristics of “living things,” but does not define “life” itself. However, this seems to be a good working definition here on earth and might be appropriate for lifeforms on other planets. It is not an acceptable

³⁴ “Life” definition, *biology online*, <http://www.biology-online.org/dictionary/Life>. The list which follows is a summary from this article.

definition of “life” for those who believe in spiritual dimensions, because it would exclude God, Jesus, Buddha, saints, bodhisattvas, angels, and other spiritual beings who certainly seem “alive” when encountered by human beings. Nor would it define the “life” of souls yet to be born or the spirit of those who depart in death.

Scientific proof of God or of spiritual existence has not been found, but neither does scientific proof exist of their nonexistence. This leaves the definition of life open to debate. In terms of the inner quality and higher mind, however, there is nothing incompatible with the existence of spiritual life along with material life.

- **The Problem of Explaining Consciousness.** The definition of consciousness is considered by psychologists to be one of the “hard problems” that have yet to be solved.³⁵ Several theories have been advanced. One is that the human brain is simply incapable of understanding itself. Other theories are based on a physicalism or dualism perspective. Physicalism argues that consciousness is entirely physical. One group (the identity theorists) within physicalism believes that consciousness is nothing but an arrangement of atoms in the brain. Another group (the functionalists) hold that consciousness can be explained by the function it plays within the brain, with the brain being viewed as a biological computer.

Dualism is based on the concept that consciousness cannot be entirely explained by what occurs in the physical brain. One group (Cartesian dualists) believes that there are both physical and non-physical substances and that consciousness is a non-physical substance.

³⁵ For a discussion of how psychologists view consciousness, see Kristian Marlow, “What is Consciousness? Philosophy behind the mind,” *Psychology Today*, March 1, 2013, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-superhuman-mind/201303/what-is-consciousness>. Much of the information in this section is taken from this article.

Another group (property dualists) believes that neural activity has both physical and non-physical properties and that non-physical properties include consciousness.

Within property dualism, there are several schools of thought on the source of consciousness. One school (fundamentalism) holds that consciousness is a basic property of the universe, like electromagnetism, which can interact with and influence physical matter but is itself not physical matter. Another school (panpsychism) believes that the universe has consciousness at its base and that, therefore, all aspects of the universe have some element of consciousness associated with it. The school of emergent property dualism considers consciousness to be a property that emerges from particular types of physical arrangements of matter but which acts in ways different from what could be predicted given the arrangements of the matter's physical properties. Yet another school, neutral monist property dualism, argues that physical and conscious properties are both dependent on some more basic level of reality not yet defined or understood.

After comparing the various schools of thought, the author of the cited article concluded:

“So which theory wins? Dualism or physicalism? It depends on who you ask.

Many empirical researchers are hardcore physicalists, but not all are. The answer to this question will require more insight into the fundamental structure of our physical world. It might turn out that a really consistent theory of physics could lead us to understand exactly what consciousness is. But it might not.

Consciousness might forever remain a mystery.”

Since neither life nor consciousness are understood, the connection between life and consciousness cannot be fully understood, either. Where there is uncertainty in our knowledge,

we can only proceed with an open mind using such tools of science, experience, insight, and reasoning as we have available to us. As the next section points out, our brains are actually far more capable of dealing with these multidimensional subjects than most people realize.

The Multidimensional Power of the Human Brain

The processing power of the human brain is truly remarkable. The brain is able to function not only within the four dimensions of length, breadth, width, and time, but also up to eleven dimensions. The recent findings by neuroscientists and research mathematicians were described in a June 2017 article in *Cosmos*:³⁶

“The Blue Brain Project’s principal research tool is a detailed digital model of the neocortex, which was completed in 2015. The neocortex is responsible for the brain’s higher-level activities.

“The project team uses mathematical approaches to interrogate the ways neurons interact in the digital brain tissue – and then experiment on real tissue to test their findings.

“In the latest research mathematicians Kathryn Hess and Ran Levi used a complex approach known as algebraic topology to investigate how neocortical neurons operate when stimulated.

“‘Algebraic topology is like a telescope and microscope at the same time. It can zoom into networks to find hidden structures – the trees in the forest – and see the empty spaces – the clearings – all at the same time,’ explains Hess.

³⁶ Andrew Masterson, “How your brain works in 11 dimensions,” *Cosmos*, June 13, 2017, <https://cosmosmagazine.com/mathematics/how-your-brain-works-in-11-dimensions>. The scientific paper explaining the mathematical model of this may be found here: Michael W. Reimann, et al., “Cliques of Neurons Bound into Cavities Provide a Missing Link between Structure and Function,” *frontiers in Computational Neuroscience*, June 12, 2017, <http://journal.frontiersin.org/article/10.3389/fncom.2017.00048/full>.

“The results were astounding. They revealed that while cells in every other organ in the body work in four dimensions – three spatial, and the fourth being time – the brain works routinely in seven and sometimes up to eleven.”

One question logically follows the discovery of the multidimensional processing power of the brain: if that capability exists, then are there not more dimensions than length, width, depth, and time? Indeed, there is considerable research being done on that specific issue.

Uncertainty over How Many Dimensions Actually Exit

Dimensions are what we perceive to be reality. The three spatial dimensions – length, width, and depth – define the objects we see in our universe. Time is considered to be the fourth dimension because human beings can sense and work with the past, present, and future. Scientists who adhere to the Superstring Theory postulate an additional six dimensions. These ten dimensions have been described by one author as follows:³⁷

- The three dimensions of length, width, and depth of all objects in our universe (the x, y, and z axes, respectively).
- The fourth dimension of time, which governs the properties of all known matter at any given point.
- The fifth dimension would enable us to see a world slightly different from our own that would give us a means of measuring the similarity and differences between our world and other possible ones.

³⁷ See, Matt Williams, “A universe of 10 dimensions,” *Universe Today*, December 11, 2014, <https://phys.org/news/2014-12-universe-dimensions.html>.

- The sixth dimension would enable us to see a plane of possible worlds that start with the big bang. In Superstring Theory, if you could master the fifth and sixth dimensions, you could travel back in time or go to different futures.
- The seventh dimension would give us access to possible worlds that start with different initial conditions than that of the big bang.
- The eighth dimension enables us to see a plane of these various possible universes, each of which begins with different initial conditions and which branch out infinitely.
- The ninth dimension enables us to compare all the possible universe histories, with all the different possible laws of physics and initial conditions.
- The tenth dimension enables us to comprehend everything possible and imaginable.

Yet another theory, Brane Cosmology, speculates that there are 26 dimensions of the universe.³⁸

In addition to these dimensions, various authors speculate on there being at least 13 spiritual dimensions.³⁹ Like their scientific brethren, there is no consensus among the spiritualists on the number of spiritual dimensions, even though there is broad acceptance among this group that spiritual dimensions exist outside of the time space (or space time) continuums with which most people normally identify.

What this debate indicates is that our current level of knowledge does not allow us to define with certitude the number or type of dimensions in which we live. In our practical lives, we mostly perceive the four dimensions of length, depth, width, and time. Yet our brain has the capacity to function in many more dimensions than these four. This capability of the brain to process

³⁸ A useful article attempting to explain the dimensions associated with the various quantum theories, string theories, and brane cosmology is Donavan Mason, "The Physics of Everything: Understanding Superstring Theory," *Futurism*, September 10, 2015, <https://futurism.com/brane-science-complex-notions-of-superstring-theory/>.

³⁹ One effort to define the various spiritual dimensions can be found in the essay, "Understanding the Dimensions," http://www.patrickcrusade.org/UNDERSTANDING_DIMENSIONS.html.

information from multiple dimensions perhaps explains the unusual experiences many have had, such as flying in our dreams, déjà vu, the sense of being watched or hunted, a precognition of danger, the sense of intuition, the feelings of conscience, and spiritual inspirations recorded by mankind throughout history.

If the human brain does have multidimensional processing capabilities, then it would increase the likelihood of humans having both material and spiritual sides of their being – however these sides might be defined by individuals or groups. It would also lend support to the argument that an inner quality exists within all of us and that our higher minds are able to use enhanced rationality to integrate the material and spiritual sides of ourselves. Our brain and mental capability, in other words, is able to expand our understanding of reality as we experience various kinds of phenomena. We should deliberately use this capability to increase our understanding rather than seek to rationalize a restrictive view of reality to fit preconceived notions or ideologies, which may be outdated.

Phenomenology

The study of phenomenology provides insight into how we can use the processing power of the brain to better understand reality. As defined in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*,

“Phenomenology is the study of ‘phenomena’: appearances of things, or things as they appear in our experience, or the ways we experience things, thus the meanings things have in our experience. Phenomenology studies conscious experience as experienced from the subjective or first person point of view.”⁴⁰

⁴⁰ “Phenomenology,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/phenomenology/>.

Phenomenology, then, is the study of structures of consciousness as experienced by an individual. The basic theory of phenomenology is that people tend to perceive and understand things from the point of view of what they intend to perceive. In this theory, pure objectivity is impossible for human beings, an observation disputed by many but accepted as fact by most intelligence services which routinely factor in human cognitive bias in their assessments.⁴¹

Our senses and minds work together to sense and interpret what we are looking for. This is a common experience, as illustrated by those who look for animals in the wild or cleaners who look for dust on the shelves. What one sees is directly related to what one is looking for. Thus, in phenomenology, the central structure of an experience is its intentionality, how it fits into a content or meaning that is important to us as a person. How we structure our experiences and process their meaning, in other words, is the reality which we accept and in which we individually function. In some ways, phenomenology supports the observation of the Buddha that “we are what we think, having become what we thought.”⁴²

We can use this natural tendency of the mind to expand our understanding of reality by simply being open-minded to the possibility of new experiences and new ways of looking at things.⁴³

We close our minds to broader understanding by believing that we already know truth and reality and therefore have nothing further to learn, or else believe that knowledge is only important if it furthers one’s self-interest in an expedient and amoral way. The discovery of the inner quality

⁴¹ For the disagreement among scientists about objectivity – even in artificial intelligence – search “bias and objectivity in science” in Google. For an interesting discussion of cognitive bias as a factor in national intelligence, see Richards J. Heuer, Jr., *Psychology of Intelligence Analysis* (Center for the Study of Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency, 1999), especially Part III.

⁴² *The Dhammapada*, trans. P. Lal (Rexdale, Ontario: Ambassador Books, Ltd., 1967), p. 39.

⁴³ Being open to new experiences and ideas is very similar to the “beginner’s mind” or “childlike mind” taught by many Zen masters, the idea being that a child absorbs knowledge so rapidly because it places no artificial restraints on what it might learn.

can open the mind to new ways of looking at reality, because it comes from a source deep within the human consciousness – in some cases, far removed from outer awareness. Looking at the world from the perspective of one's soul is like pulling back the curtains on the window of the mind: new things are seen and interpreted by the mind in new ways. As observed by the ancient Greeks, finding virtue in oneself brings happiness and self-fulfillment. These feelings of contentment and peace are highly valued by mankind, regardless of culture or the period of history in which one lives. Knowing one's inner quality and seeking to express that character in daily life can help one to find personal happiness and self-fulfillment.

Conclusion

When we combine the theories of phenomenology, the string theories of a multidimensional universe, the concept of there being spiritual dimensions, and the integrative power of the brain's multidimensional processing capability, then it is easy to understand why, when a person experiences the inner quality, he or she realizes that human life encompasses far more than the four dimensional world of time and space.

From a spiritual perspective, the inner quality can be seen as the character of the soul given by God. From a non-spiritual point of view, the inner quality can be seen as a person's best character to help ensure the survival of the human species. In both cases, the inner quality is a positive, altruistic, creative, and constructive aspect of human nature. Whether one views the inner quality as a spiritual gift from God or as an evolutionary development, the conclusion reached is the same: individuals should seek to discover and express their highest character because it is in their personal and society's best interests.

The next chapter demonstrates how the inner quality and higher mind can be used to develop a personal philosophy of ethics and morality.

Chapter 2: The Inner Quality Philosophy of Ethics

There are many definitions of ethics. In general, however, ethics is a branch of philosophy concerned about proper behavior: what ought to be done and what ought not to be done. Proper behavior is important in the inner quality philosophy, because the inner quality is the highest character an individual can be at a given moment. By its very nature, character is demonstrated by how one behaves. In the inner quality system of ethics, proper behavior ought to be accompanied by proper thought, proper feeling, and proper attitude towards other parts of life, as well as the physical environment in which we live. If an individual lives in this way, he or she is acting according to their highest nature as intended by God and by evolution. In living this way, individuals can find material and spiritual balance and happiness in their lives while pursuing the goal of becoming their true self.

As explained in this chapter, one way this goal can be achieved is for individuals to develop a set of ethical and moral standards based on their inner quality. These ethical and moral standards may be used to guide one's behavior, thoughts, and feelings and to measure their appropriateness in various situations. Having these ethical standards in their hearts and minds can greatly assist individuals to make proper moral choices and thereby increase the likelihood of having a happier and more fulfilling life. Living this kind of life has been a common goal in the minds of human beings for as long as we have existed, and most ethical philosophers have embraced this goal in their moral theories.

Inner quality ethics is based on three fundamental assumptions. First, ethics is for living human beings – people like you and me – and for none other. We can act ethically towards other forms of life and the environment, but we cannot expect other forms of life or nature to conform to our ethical beliefs. Ethics is a human invention, although it may be divinely inspired or influenced.

Inner quality ethics are self-determined for use by ourselves; and because everyone has an inner quality, everyone has a responsibility to behave morally.

The second assumption is that proper behavior for the individual can be determined through reason. Ethics can be influenced by other sources such as intuition, conscience, and spirituality; however, reason – especially when utilizing enhanced rationality – enables us to rationally understand why being ethical is important in our own life. Our individual ethics and morality can benefit from but do not require divine inspiration or cultural determination. Our ethical principles and moral standards can be logically arrived at based on our personal experience, observation, and insight into our best character.

Third, to be most effective individually and socially, ethics ought to be based on self-discovery, that is, a deep understanding of the true self. At its core, the true self has as its character the inner quality. The inner quality is the essence of one's sense of self-identify, because it is what distinguishes us as unique individuals in the universe. At the same time, the inner quality has a characteristic of goodness that can benefit nearly everyone around us.

In the inner quality philosophy of ethics, individuals themselves are best positioned to identify their inner qualities and to use that insight to develop ethical principles and moral guidelines most appropriate to their personal and social lives. As a consequence of ethical self-determination, we have the responsibility to use our free will correctly and we must hold ourselves morally accountable for our actions, thoughts, and feelings.

[Ethics, Morals, and Morality](#)

Ethics seeks to answer basic moral questions such as how do we define what is proper behavior, on what basis is this determination made, and what do ethical and moral terms actually mean.

Morals are formal or informal codes of conduct for behaviors and motives. Morality focuses

more specifically on the distinction between what is right and wrong. Morals and morality are often associated with religion and with belief in a Supreme Being or God. Ethics may or may not be based on spiritual beliefs. However, ethics almost always must define what is meant by the nature of man. This kind of metaphysical exploration is necessary for the ethical system to be consistent in its principles.

In this book the terms “ethics,” “morals,” and “morality” will sometimes be used interchangeably, because the concepts of right and wrong; good, bad, and evil; ethical principles; moral guidelines; and codes and standards of behavior – are all frequently used in ethical discussions. Usually, “ethics” in the book will refer to an organized set of principles justifying certain moral guidance, whereas “morals” and “morality” will refer to the specific codes of behavior as to how we ought to act, think, and feel. Ethics can be seen as the science of morals and morality, whereas morals and morality are the implementation of ethics. Morals and morality tell us what to do. Ethics explains why we ought to do it.

Ancient Greek Ethics

One of the best ways to grasp the subject and impact of ethics is to consider briefly the differences in the fundamental ethical views of the ancient Greek philosophers Socrates (469-399 B.C.), Plato (427-347 B.C.), and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.).⁴⁴ Plato was the student of Socrates and Aristotle the student of Plato. Each of these early philosophers thought deeply about the meaning of ethics and morality, and together they set out many of the fundamental ethical and philosophical questions still discussed today. Very little is known about Socrates, other than

⁴⁴ The following brief comparison of the ethical views of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle draws upon “Aristotle vs. Plato,” in *Diffen.com*, http://www.diffen.com/difference/Aristotle_vs_Plato; “Ancient Greek Philosophy,” in *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/greekphi/>; and Richard Kraut, “Socrates and Plato” and Christopher Taylor, “Aristotle,” in John Skorupski, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Ethics* (New York: Routledge, 2010). The views of Plato and Aristotle are further discussed in later sections of this chapter.

through dialogues recorded by Plato. More work has been preserved from Plato and Aristotle, although much has been lost.

Socrates and Plato believed that knowledge is virtue: to know the good is to do the good. Knowing the right thing to do will lead automatically to doing the right thing. To Plato, the cardinal virtues were wisdom, courage, temperance, and justice. Aristotle, on the other hand, believed knowing what was right was not enough: one had to choose to act in the proper manner. To him, virtues were good habits that could control one's emotions. For example, the virtue of courage could help one overcome the vice of fear. Aristotle argued that we should use our reason to find the proper balance between absolute virtues and weaknesses in our character.

In terms of the good life, Socrates believed that happiness could be achieved without virtue, but that this kind of happiness would be inferior to happiness achieved through virtue. Plato argued that virtue in itself was sufficient for happiness. He argued, for example, that justice is so great a good that it is worth any sacrifice. In Plato's view justice and other virtues must be seen from the perspective of the soul, which views virtues from the level of abstract ideals. The worth of our lives as human beings is dependent upon the value of the virtues we dedicate ourselves to.

Aristotle believed that, while virtue was necessary for happiness, virtue needed social support to help a virtuous person lead a good life. His theory of practical ethics emphasized not merely knowing the good but acting upon it in the proper way.

These slight differences meant, over time, that Socrates and Plato would come to be identified as founders of the theoretical or ideal side of ethics, whereas Aristotle would be known as the founder of the practical side of ethics. Even today – and not just in the philosophy of ethics – there are deep divisions between those who approach ethics and morality from an ideal perspective and those who approach these subjects from a more pragmatic point of view. In

essence, these classic philosophers were debating whether ethics should focus on the highest truths and ideals or whether ethics should be concerned with improving the lives of the common man. These differences will appear frequently in this book and, in fact, highlight the uniquely integrative approach of inner quality ethics and governance which aim to be both idealistic as well as pragmatic.

An interesting evolution from these classic Greek ethical philosophies was the school of Neoplatonism, which arose mostly through the philosophy and mysticism of Plotinus (204-269 A.D.). As reflected in the *Enneads*,⁴⁵ he constructed a view of reality which has influenced esoteric thought even today. He postulated the existence of a self-thinking intellect of true being, totally unitary and simple, called the One. The reality of the One was followed by two lesser levels: Intelligence and Soul. Intelligence was non-temporal and held within itself the ideal forms of all things. The Soul was temporal and received the ideal forms from Intelligence as principles of reason. Man resides in a three-dimensional world of matter as a receptacle for the unfolding of the Soul. Thus, Plotinus described a direct linkage between God and man, a model of reality that has appeared in metaphysics around the world.

Uniqueness of Inner Quality Ethics

There is an extraordinarily rich tradition of intellectual thought on ethics, beginning most notably with the ancient Greeks but found in all great civilizations past and present. Many of these ethical philosophies will be mentioned in this book by way of highlighting their main ideas within the context of inner quality ethics.

⁴⁵ The summary of Plotinus view of reality is taken from "Neoplatonism," in Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 604-605.

The unique contribution of inner quality ethics to this rich philosophical tradition is the perspective that the spiritual and material sides of man need to be integrated in an ethical system defined by the individual himself. This system of ethics is somewhat flexible in practice, because it will change over time as the individual reflects upon the meaning of the inner quality and comes to know the potential of his or her true self. The goal of becoming one's true self is fundamental in inner quality ethics, since one's ethical and moral standards ought to address the entire human being: the things we do; our physical body, emotions, and mind; and the close relationship between our material self and our spirit or soul which gives us our unique self-identity.

Alternative Explanations of Inner Quality Ethics

The ethics of the inner quality can be viewed from a spiritual perspective, a secular perspective, or a combined spiritual-secular perspective. The metaphysical or meta-ethical aspects of inner quality ethics are best understood from a spiritual perspective. However, the guidelines of inner quality morality can be applied without reference to metaphysical justification.

From a purely spiritual perspective, the inner quality is the character of the soul, the special quality given by God to an individual human lifestream.⁴⁶ This interpretation is possible, because the inner quality is infinitely good and represents the best character of an individual. If an individual, through free will, expresses his best character of goodness in life, then he or she are in fact fulfilling God's will for their soul in earthly embodiment. Expressing one's inner quality in actions, thoughts, and feelings is to become what God intends for the individual soul on earth.

⁴⁶ Lifestream refers to the soul's continuity from its creation by God to its final merging with God at the completion of the cycle of the soul's existence. When you interact with a person, you are interacting with the current manifestation of their lifestream. Behind the face of the person sitting across from you is a soul with countless prior experiences in and out of embodiment, making the person what he or she is today.

From a purely secular point of view, the inner quality is a product of evolution which helps ensure the survival of the human species. This interpretation is possible since the inner quality, as the source of goodness within a person, gives the individual an emotive incentive to cooperate with others and care for other parts of life. This sense of goodness, or pleasure in helping others, helps to balance the more aggressive human motivations for dominance and survival. Thus, the inner quality (something akin to altruism) is part of the evolutionary instinct of all humans to socially cooperate in order to survive and transcend the challenges we face as individuals and as a species here on earth.⁴⁷

I personally find the spiritual and secular perspectives on inner quality ethics to be equally compelling and logical. Rather than trying to separate the two points of view, it makes sense that they should be combined. Thus, the paradigm of inner quality ethics used in this book is that God is the Initiator of everything, spiritual and material, including the laws of nature and the forces of evolution. In other words, once the Creation began, the expansion of the universe was largely if not completely self-directed by the physical, spiritual, and other dimensional laws governing that particular aspect of the cosmos. For humans, this means that we have a spiritual side connected with our soul and its attributes, and we have a material side connected with our physical body and its attributes. These two sides of ourselves seem to be integrated through life and consciousness. More of this integrated relationship will be discussed later in the chapter.

The combined spiritual-secular perspective on inner quality ethics, while not perfect nor necessarily correct, seems adequate for our purposes here. Using this approach, we can

⁴⁷ For a discussion of the evolutionary development of altruism, see Christopher Bergland, "The Evolutionary Biology of Altruism: Compassion, cooperation, and community are key to our survival," *Psychology Today*, December 25, 2012, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-athletes-way/201212/the-evolutionary-biology-altruism>.

systematically use both spiritual and material references to the inner quality and its system of derived ethics without getting caught up in unanswerable questions of First Causes. The combined perspective on inner quality ethics is also supported by scientific evidence that suggests the human sense of spirituality is hardwired into our consciousness.⁴⁸ There also is polling evidence to suggest that most people consider themselves to be comprised not only of a physical body but some spiritual essence as well.⁴⁹

Modern Spirituality

Spirituality is a sense of connection between oneself and the spiritual dimensions of life.

Spirituality is broader than religion, in that most all mankind can share a sense of spirituality but not necessarily agree on one true religion. Since none of us fully understand God, a universally accepted religion or church is nearly impossible to establish. What we do seem to broadly share, however, is a sense of spirituality.

As the term is used in this book, “modern spirituality” is not based on religious belief or dogma, but rather on the spiritual insights of each individual as they reflect upon the meaning of their life. Modern approaches to spirituality usually take into account scientific and technological progress toward greater understanding of the universe in which we live. In many cases, modern spirituality is based on the conviction that, if spiritual dimensions do exist, then they should eventually be scientifically proven.

⁴⁸ See, for example, René J. Muller, “Neurotheology: Are We Hardwired for God?” *Psychiatric Times*, May 1, 2008, <http://www.psychiatristimes.com/articles/neurotheology-are-we-hardwired-god>.

⁴⁹ The Pew Research Center did an interesting survey on spiritual beliefs in the United States indicating that, while belief in specific religions may be declining, the number of people feeling a spiritual sense is growing. See, the Pew Religion & Public Life webpage, “U.S. Public Becoming Less Religious,” November 3, 2015, <http://www.pewforum.org/2015/11/03/u-s-public-becoming-less-religious/>. According to the Pew Religious Futures project, roughly 85 percent of the world’s population in 2010 were affiliated with a religion. See, http://www.globalreligiousfutures.org/explorer#/?subtopic=15&chartType=bar&year=2010&data_type=percentage&religious_affiliation=all&destination=to&countries=Worldwide&age_group=all&pdfMode=false.

Inner quality ethics and modern spirituality both depend on free will and reason. Without choice, a person cannot act ethically. An individual's freedom to choose is part of the fabric of an advanced society. The freedom to choose, however, carries with it responsibility and accountability, because every choice has intended and unintended consequences. This is where reason comes in. Ethically speaking, the freedom to choose requires that we ought to use reason to weigh the moral costs and benefits of our decisions. This is made all the more important, because some moral decisions cannot avoid causing hurt to someone.

Inner quality ethics in the context of modern spirituality is not just about right and wrong behavior. It also takes into account what is appropriate thought and feeling towards oneself and others. Inner quality ethics also includes behavior and attitudes towards non-humans as well: animals, nature, and the environment. Such inclusiveness of ethics is necessary because we are all linked together in some way. As human beings, we have great power through creative free will. It is important that we use our free will in a manner consistent with our best character, else we increase the risk of making costly mistakes that may inadvertently harm others or even the ecosystem on which we all depend.

Inner quality ethics, combined with a sense of modern spirituality, can play an integrative role in drawing together the various components of ourselves: body, mind, emotions, soul, and interactions with other parts of life. Ethics of the inner quality addresses the whole person, material and spiritual, the complete spectrum of our identity. Inner quality ethics begins with defining who we are, what we have been, and what we hope to become. Our self-identification is then the starting point for determining how we ought to act, think, and feel. The primary goal of inner quality ethics is to align our intentions, motivations, and actions with our best character of goodness.

Inner Quality Ethics and Evolution

There is strong evidence that human evolution is true.⁵⁰ Genes and DNA mutate. No complex living organism seems ever to have been created instantaneously and whole. Many scientists also believe that some species of animals show precursors of empathy and altruism, traits found in almost all people.⁵¹ If humans evolved over millions of years, and empathy and altruism seem fairly common among at least advanced mammals, then an argument could be made that empathy and altruism are precursors to ethics and morality.

Evolution encompasses not only the need for survival but also the need for transcendence. Survival is required for the continued existence of life, whereas transcendence is required for life's ability to overcome challenges – which in turn improves the species' ability to survive. The evolution of empathy and altruism contributes to both survival and transcendence by strengthening social cohesion and cooperation, two key evolutionary strategies adopted by human beings.

Ethics and morality have been developed by mankind, because these codes of behavior improve an individual's sense of wellbeing and strengthen society. We can safely speculate, therefore, that just as the human mind develops increasing sophisticated methods of mathematics to expand self-mastery in physics and other physical dimensions, so does the human mind develop

⁵⁰ See, "Human Evolution Evidence," in the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History webpage on "What does it mean to be human?" <http://humanorigins.si.edu/evidence>.

⁵¹ Altruism is defined in zoology as behavior of an animal that benefits another at its own expense. Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. The expression of compassion in human beings and other advanced species has given rise to the empathy-altruism hypothesis in socio-psychology. See, "Empathy-Altruism Hypothesis," *Psychology*, <https://psychology.iresearchnet.com/social-psychology/prosocial-behavior/empathy-altruism-hypothesis/>. Researchers have identified empathy in many kinds of animals and some attribute this feeling of caring to the hormone oxytocin. See, "Animals also express empathy through comforting," *Utrecht University News*, January 26, 2016, <http://www.uu.nl/en/news/animals-also-express-empathy-through-comforting>. Oxytocin apparently appears in mammals and reptiles, but not in amphibians and fish. See, abstract of "Emotion and phylogeny," <http://www.oxytocin.org/oxy/emotion.html>.

increasingly sophisticated theories of ethics and morals to expand self-mastery in personal and social wellbeing. Scientific theories and ethical theories have much in common in terms of their being developed through the higher cognitive powers of the human brain and mind.

Advanced ethical theories, some of which may be developed through the higher mind and its ability to integrate the material and spiritual dimensions of mankind's existence, may be part of the evolutionary drive toward transcendence of the human race. This would certainly appear to be the case if people began to try to live their lives according to their best character. As recognized by the ancient Greeks and other philosophers, people who try to discover their special virtue and to live according to its standards are believed to be happier and generally more productive members of society. This result from ethical behavior is consistent with belief in God's will and in nature's evolution: mankind ought to express goodness so as to strengthen individuals and society to better secure the survival of the species. There are no contradictions between science, spirituality, and morality in this area of human interest.

Traditional Ethics and the Inner Quality

As one of the main branches of philosophy, ethics is an extremely rich field of intellectual inquiry, with many of history's greatest thinkers wrestling with the question of what men and women ought to do, avoid, and believe in. Like the proverbial descriptions by blind men of an elephant, no single school of ethical thought is completely adequate. Yet, all the theories add something of value to our understanding of what is appropriate in human life.⁵²

⁵² The summaries of ethical theory in this chapter come from many sources, including the works of the individual philosophers as cited in footnotes, compilations of philosophical thought from books like Robert Audi, editor of *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999), and content of university ethics courses posted online. A useful summary of ethical thought can be found in Christopher Panza and Adam Potthast, *Ethics for Dummies* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Publishing, 2010). In addition, many Internet sources have been consulted, including academic histories, reviews, and collections such as found in John Skorupski, ed.,

Ethical theories are often divided into three main areas: meta-ethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Meta-ethics deals with questions such as the origin of ethics and what ethical terms actually mean. Normative ethics defines virtues and prescribes how people should behave and what they should believe in. Applied ethics seeks to apply moral principles and standards to specific issues in everyday life, such as what is proper, ethically speaking, in the fields of medicine or business.

Many ethical theories blend these three areas of thought, and some ethical approaches may fall outside of these areas entirely. Here, we will organize our discussion around the first two areas of ethical thought and consider how ethics of the inner quality might address some of the issues raised by traditional philosophers. In the next chapter, we will apply ethics in the context of government and politics.

Meta-Ethics

Meta-ethics is one of the most abstract fields of philosophy, because it addresses fundamental questions of how we perceive reality. It deals with such basic issues as the origin of ethics and what ethical beliefs actually mean. Subjects include whether ethics are universal truths, the will of God, or the product of human reasoning. The definition and meaning of ethical terms also are key areas of concern: for example, what does justice actually mean? In addition, meta-ethics examines the psychological processes we use to develop moral theories: why do people think about ethics in the first place? In this section, we will examine whether divine command ethics

The Routledge Companion to Ethics, http://www.upscsuccess.com/sites/default/files/documents/The_Routledge_Companion_to_Ethics_@nadal.pdf; *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-ancient/>; *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/anci-mod/>; *The Basics of Philosophy*, http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_ethics.html; *Online Guide to Ethics and Moral Philosophy*, <http://caae.phil.cmu.edu/cavalier/80130/index.html>; and scores of webpages devoted to various aspects of philosophy, religion, and science, as well as definitions of key terms used in the text.

are universally applicable to all mankind, whether ethics are universal truths or the result of human reasoning, and what motivates people to create ethical theories.

Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments are considered a prime example of divine command ethics.⁵³ Divine command ethics hold that ethical and moral standards can be delivered directly from God to man, such the Ten Commandments given to the prophet Moses (1393-1273 B.C.).⁵⁴ Being the Word of God, divine command ethics are normally considered to be universally applicable to all of mankind, although they may be addressed to a certain people.

In the Hebrew tradition, the Ten Commandments are God's directives given to Moses instructing the Jewish people to behave in certain ways. Following the Ten Commandments are said to make a person moral; disobeying the Ten Commandments makes a person immoral. While the Ten Commandments are associated with the Hebrew culture, the Commandments can be applied at least in part to all of humanity, even if viewed through the lens of cultural relativism.⁵⁵

The first three Commandments are directives to the Hebrews to worship the one true God and to follow His rules. The fourth Commandment not to work on the Sabbath is a common guideline found in many societies for people to set aside a day of rest from their labors. The other six

⁵³ Exodus 20 of the *Bible*. Some scholars have pointed to similarities between the biblical Ten Commandments and portions of earlier recorded laws such as found in the Mesopotamian Code of Hammurabi and the Egyptian Book of the Dead. Here, the Ten Commandments are being used as an example of divine command ethics, without regard to their possible historical antecedents.

⁵⁴ Dates as identified in Jewish history. See, "Moses (1393-1273 BCE)," Jewish History, http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/73398/jewish/Moses.htm.

⁵⁵ "Cultural Relativism is the view that moral or ethical systems, which vary from culture to culture, are all equally valid and no one system is really 'better' than any other. This is based on the idea that there is no ultimate standard of good or evil, so every judgment about right and wrong is a product of society. Therefore, any opinion on morality or ethics is subject to the cultural perspective of each person. Ultimately, this means that no moral or ethical system can be considered the 'best,' or 'worst,' and no particular moral or ethical position can actually be considered 'right' or 'wrong.'" Quoted from "Cultural Relativism" in *All About Philosophy*, <http://www.allaboutphilosophy.org/cultural-relativism.htm>.

Commandments also are found in many societies: honor your father and mother, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, and do not covet what is owned by others.

The last seven Commandments have near universal applicability in that they are moral codes and social rules adopted by many religions and societies. These kinds of moral statements are often reflected in social rules deemed necessary for society to function orderly. The first three Commandments are of a different category, however, because they focus on accepting the premise that there is only one true God and that taking His name in vain is prohibited. These three Commandments can be interpreted in either of two ways. The first is literal: the Hebrew God is the only true God for all of mankind. The second interpretation is liberal: God (by whatever name the Supreme Deity may be referred to) must be honored and obeyed by all.

From the point of view of inner quality ethics, the Ten Commandments are best approached somewhat liberally rather than literally. That is, some of the moral guidelines are appropriate and correct for most societies and their citizens. However, some of the guidelines referring to the worship of a specifically defined God may be culturally valid but not necessarily universally valid.⁵⁶

When divine command ethics are liberally interpreted, these religious-based systems can often provide a foundation for ethical philosophies, including inner quality ethics. Individuals developing their own set of ethics based on personal best character may well benefit from reviewing divine command theories and their derived ethical systems.

⁵⁶ As an example, Hebrew esoteric traditions cite some 72 different names of God, each of which has its own divine properties. See, "Esoteric Hebrew Names of God," http://www.hebrew4christians.com/Names_of_God/Esoteric/esoteric.html. Other religions, such as Hinduism, have multiple names for God as well.

Are Ethics Universal Truths or the Result of Human Reasoning?

Plato (427-347 B.C.) thought that moral values were spiritual concepts that were universal and timeless, similar to the universality of mathematical principles.⁵⁷ These moral values were not invented by man, nor can man change them. Many religious philosophers have considered revelations from God to man as being universally true.⁵⁸ On the side of human reasoning have been moral relativists like Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900), who thought the individual should determine his or her own moral code, irrespective of what society or the masses believe.⁵⁹ Cultural relativists, on the other hand, have believed that ethics are determined by the culture in which one lives. In their view, moral concepts of right and wrong will always reflect society's values, and these values invariably differ between cultures.

Inner quality ethics agrees with many of these basic principles of meta-ethics and integrates them into a single paradigm. For instance: the idea that ethics and mathematics are similar, in that they exist before their discovery by the human mind, is valid. Divine command ethics, if viewed liberally rather than literally, can also be universally valid in many cases. And if one believes in God, then as Thomas Aquinas might argue, the possibility of revelation must always be acknowledged. Also, like Nietzsche advocated, inner quality ethics ought to be derived by the individual rather than by society. At the same time, cultural relativists have a valid point when

⁵⁷ **Plato** (427-347 B.C.) Greece. Book *The Republic*. Argued that ethics is not relational. It is about justice and how it is attained. Temperance, wisdom, courage = justice. Those serving these principles must function harmoniously in society. When they do so, the individual and society are just. Live justly, and you will have balance in life.

⁵⁸ See, for example, the writings of **Thomas Aquinas** (1225–1274) on philosophy and scriptural theology, as discussed in “Saint Thomas Aquinas,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/aquinas/>. Aquinas believed that God could give men truth through revelation that philosophers would be unable to prove or disprove.

⁵⁹ **Nietzsche** (1844-1900) Germany. Books *Genealogy of Morals*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*. He felt that traditional morality emphasizes weakness and crowd-pleasing over personal power and individuality. He urged people to turn away from crowds and value true inner strength instead.

noting, in terms of specific behavior, that some moral codes are very much the product of the culture in which one lives – e.g., religious restrictions on food or dress.

Why Do People Create Theories of Ethics?

Another central issue in meta-ethics is why people go to the trouble of defining ethics and morality in the first place. We have reasoning power, certainly, but what is it within human beings that influences us to develop ethical theories and moral standards, some of which may run counter to our natural inclinations to eat, drink, and be merry? Traditional explanations include arguments that people have ethical needs because of individuality, social order, supportive relationships, and kindness towards all life.

The Need for Individuality

People are social creatures, but they are also strong individualists. Two important philosophers who emphasized individuality as the starting point in ethics were Kierkegaard and Nietzsche. However, they reached quite different conclusions as to the individual's relationship to God.

Soren Aabye Kierkegaard (1813-1855) largely avoided abstract meta-ethical issues and instead focused on the individual needing to be the source of personal ethics.⁶⁰ He believed that people are in a natural state of despair and are not born with integrity, but that they could gain integrity by assuming responsibility for their lives and decisions. He argued that mankind's weakness could only be overcome with the help of God. Sometimes, however, like Abraham being asked to sacrifice his son, this dependence on God might require the individual to live beyond the boundaries of good and evil as defined by personal ethics. Doing God's will can at times transcend one's personal ethical beliefs.

⁶⁰ **Kierkegaard** (1813-1855) Denmark. Books *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, *Fear and Trembling*. He argues that ethical belief embedded in social institutions do not always deserve our obedience. Some things, such as obedience to God, on occasion may be the highest mandate for individuals.

Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) also emphasized the importance of pursuing ethics from the point of view of individual integrity.⁶¹ His is an argument for wholeness and completeness of the individual, rather than an argument for universal moral values held by everyone in society. Nietzsche stressed the need to vigorously define oneself and to go through life as a warrior; indeed, to create oneself in the image of one's own choosing. His ethics of individual inner strength focused on the motivation of the person rather than the consequences of the person's actions. By constantly testing one's beliefs and reflecting critically on one's motivations, an individual could with integrity find his or her own way and avoid the death trap of becoming one of the masses.

From the point of view of inner quality ethics, both theories have much validity. In the case of Kierkegaard, it is true that there will be occasions when God's will transcends human will in terms of what is morally right and wrong. However, Kierkegaard seems a bit too pessimistic about the nature of man. Despair is not humanity's normal condition. One's life can improve with self-effort, and one's outlook can improve markedly once the person awakens to the potential of the inner quality. In many cases, the happiness of the outer person comes from the alignment of the outer consciousness with the consciousness of the soul.

Nietzsche, on the other hand, is correct in saying that men and women must take responsibility for defining themselves and to work aggressively toward self-improvement, even in the face of social opposition. The ethics of the inner quality would agree that one's self-image is very important. If one's self-image is the true self, then personal efforts can result in positive

⁶¹ **Nietzsche** (1844-1900). See previous footnote.

improvement in one's life and character. If one's self-image is not the true self, then efforts to create oneself as Nietzsche suggests can bring harm to oneself and others.

Nietzsche also seems to over-emphasize the need to separate the individual from society. The ethics of the inner quality is based on the observation that people are both individuals as well as members of societies. For an ethical theory to be balanced and sound, it must take into account these two aspects of human existence and find some way in which the different perspectives of individuality and social participation can be reconciled in one's mind.

The Need for Social Order

As suggested by Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, one driver for the development of ethical theories is the need for people to be their true selves, which requires a person to express one's individuality. Another driver for ethical theories is the desire of people to live in a harmonious society. This requires social order in which people follow rules of proper conduct. The need for social order has led many philosophers to develop ethical theories based on a social contract. The basic idea behind social contract theory is that ethics exists only when people enter into agreement about how they should interact with each other in a rational way.

Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) argued that, initially, human beings were in a state of nature which was "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."⁶² At that time, a state of anarchy existed in which everybody waged war against everyone else. Being rational, however, people eventually decided the only way to guarantee their personal safety and social stability was to enter into a social contract in which individuals would give up part of their personal freedom to a strong sovereign

⁶² **Hobbes** (1588-1679) England. Book *Leviathan*. His approach was secular appeal to morality and the necessary supremacy of a strong monarch. Man's original state of nature was war between everyone. To escape a life that was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short, people joined together in a social contract under a king and gave many of their personal rights to the sovereign.

who would enforce the law and agreements entered into between people. John Locke (1632-1704) expanded the social contract theory by noting that civil society loans its power to sovereigns or chief executives.⁶³ Civil society gets its power from the individuals comprising that society. In the social contract theories of both Hobbes and Locke, the laws which flow from the purpose of these contracts comprise much of what is ethically permitted or prohibited.

Inner quality ethics holds that ethical statements can be formalized in social contracts, but ethical principles do not always have their origin in such contracts. Certain ethical rules originate in societies and cultures; other ethical rules originate within individuals as they contemplate or as they are inspired. Individuals can devise their own ethical standards, as may occur when they contact their inner quality and seek to become their true self.

One of the most important contributions of social contract theory to ethics is establishing the close connection between social ethics and the societies in which those ethics are practiced. In other words, social contract ethics relate most directly to the duties of individuals in their social and political lives. Social contract theories have been used widely as philosophical justification for modern political systems such as democracy.

Social contract theorists do not deny the role or responsibility of individuals to determine their ethical standards, but the theorists argue that – in order to have a peaceful and stable society – the individual must be careful not to allow his personal moral values to undermine the social good of the state: with the important caveat that the state must stay within its authorized spheres of authority. When applied to politics, inner quality ethics would agree with this balance between

⁶³ **Locke** (1632-1704) England. Books *Essay concerning Human Understanding*, *Second Treatise of Government*. He argued that true knowledge was difficult for humans to acquire and that moral obligation occurs when God commands one to do something, such as the moral code taught by Jesus. He thought that natural law could be deduced by man to determine practical ethical standards and the fundamental principles of government.

individual autonomy and state authority. Maintaining a proper balance, however, is challenging due to the constantly shifting circumstances affecting political, social, and cultural life.

The ethics of John Rawls (1921-2002) is another example of ethical theory applied to politics.⁶⁴

He created a thought experiment establishing an original position from which principles of social justice could be derived. The original position is a scenario in which people come together to form a society. Representing all walks of life, these people are rational and non-biased. But they also are ignorant of their social roles. As they proceed to establish their society, everyone would seek naturally to ensure fairness and justice. The idea that justice equates to fairness thus becomes a standard by which to measure the appropriateness of social and political institutions and public policy. The ideal society created in such a manner would be based on the principle of each person having the maximum amount of freedom and liberty possible, as well as an equitable system of wealth distribution to benefit the least well-off in society.

From the point of view of inner quality ethics, there is much to admire in the ethical theories of Rawls, with some weaknesses in his argument as well. Inner quality ethics would note that positions in society should be competitively open to everyone as a matter of justice and fairness. Fairness also requires that the rich share some of their wealth with the less fortunate. However, inner quality ethics would not agree that fairness equals a welfare state or the equal distribution of assets to all members of society. Emphasis placed on laws mandating the distribution of wealth can very easily upset the moral laws of cause and effect, whereby karma influences the conditions under which one is embodied. Also, too great an emphasis on equal distribution of

⁶⁴ **Rawls** (1921-2002) United States. Book *A Theory of Justice*. From the original position one can construct principles for society resulting in a contract concerning how goods should be ideally distributed. Based on the principle that justice = fairness, the contract presumes both liberty and direct benefits to the poor in society.

wealth can severely weaken society, because it reduces resources available for the creative and hard-working elements of society on which long-term progress and prosperity depend.

Rawls did not intend to weaken society with his difference principle of income distribution, but maintaining the balance between that principle of justice and the principle of basic liberties is extraordinarily difficult. In practice, arguments over maintaining the balance has led to fierce ideological battles such as those played out during the Cold War and in the domestic politics of many nations still today.⁶⁵

The Need for Supportive Relationships

There is an ongoing argument over whether men and women differ in their reasoning abilities and emotions.⁶⁶ The causes of these reported differences are even more controversial. Traditional ethics usually assumes that people are rational and that ethical theories based on rationality are more valid than ethics based on emotional factors. This is not entirely true, of course, because David Hume (1711-1776) argued that feelings, not the mind, determine whether things are good or bad.⁶⁷ Hume believed the mind with its reasoning power merely sorted through the feelings to figure out how to achieve the good.

Historically, most ethical philosophers have been men and most have given rationality the lead role in determining what is morally right or wrong. Carol Gilligan (b. 1936), a well-known feminist ethicist, bases her ethical ideas on there being two moral voices: masculine and

⁶⁵ See, John Kent, "Cold War and the periphery," *The Cold War*, <http://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/cold/articles/kent.html>.

⁶⁶ See, for example, "How Male and Female Brains Differ," <http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/how-male-female-brains-differ>.

⁶⁷ **Hume** (1711-1776) Scotland. Book *A Treatise on Human Nature*. Hume attacked supremacy of reason and noted the importance of feelings in moral judgments. Feelings determine whether things are good or bad, not the mind. Reason sorts through the facts to achieve what the feelings determine is good. He argued that humans are built with altruistic and sympathetic concerns.

feminine.⁶⁸ The masculine voice is logical and individualistic and emphasizes protecting the rights of people and making sure justice is upheld. The feminine voice emphasizes protecting interpersonal relationships and taking care of other people, a care perspective focusing on the needs of the individual as being the basis of ethical decisions. Gilligan argues that integrating the masculine and the feminine perspectives is the best way to realize one's potential as a human being.

From the point of view of inner quality ethics, both the rational mind and the emotions have key roles in defining ethical values. Reason helps clarify the emotions, and feelings help validate the mind's rationality. The inner quality stresses the need for balance between the yin and yang, reflected in the masculine and feminine voices found within each individual. At the same time, however, inner quality ethics emphasizes individual differences, so that the ethical system of one person may be more rational-based while the ethical system of another person may be more relationship-based. Inner quality ethical theories are determined by the individual for the individual – himself or herself – and at times these theories will differ in certain respects.

[The Need to Consider the Interests of Non-Humans](#)

Western ethical theories generally have considered morality only within the context of human society, the rationale being that only humans have reasoning power and that therefore humans are the only species in which duties and rights can be rationally defined. Lesser animals do not have this reasoning power and therefore ethical choice cannot be expected from them. There are implications here that ethics may not necessarily apply to human behavior toward non-humans.

⁶⁸ **Gilligan** (b. 1936) United States. Book *In a Different Voice*. She argues that traditional ethical theories ignore the feminine perspective on life, which emphasizes care and interpersonal relationships. She believes that the best way to realize one's full potential is to integrate the masculine and feminine sides of oneself.

Certain cultural traditions, among them the South Asian cultures of Hinduism and Buddhism, do give rights to animals. Cows are worshipped in India; monkeys are venerated in some Buddhist temples. These cultures believe that all life is interconnected through reincarnation and karma.⁶⁹ The idea of respecting nature and its creatures is also common among American Indians and other ancient cultures, such as the aboriginal people of Australia.⁷⁰

In many Western societies, a strong animal protection movement is emerging which seeks to improve human treatment of animals. One moral philosopher arguing this perspective is Peter Singer (b. 1946), who believes that animals have certain interests.⁷¹ These interests include not suffering, an interest shared by man. Because the interests are the same, Singer believes there is no moral or logical reason not to give animals equal consideration in this area of shared interest.⁷²

From the point of view of inner quality ethics, human beings have special responsibilities to protect other forms of life and to take care of the shared environment. Both inner quality ethics and modern spirituality believe there is unity within life and that all life has inherent value due to their respective roles within the earth's ecosystem. Mankind is capable of perceiving and

⁶⁹ Karma is the moral law of cause and effect. Reincarnation is the belief that the soul embodies over and over again as it seeks to balance its karma and to fulfill its duty (or dharma) to life. For a brief discussion of these terms from the point of view of a school of Hinduism, see "Four Facts of Hinduism," *Basics of Hinduism*, <https://www.himalayanacademy.com/readlearn/basics/four-facts>.

⁷⁰ See, E. Szucs, et al., "Animal Welfare in Different Human Cultures, Traditions and Religious Faiths," *Asian-Australasian Journal of Animal Sciences*, November 2012, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4093044/>.

⁷¹ **Singer** (b. 1946) Australia. Book *Animal Liberation*. He applies utilitarianism to issues of animal rights and global poverty. Singer points to similarities between people and animals and urges people in developed countries to cut back on material goods to help poor countries meet basic needs.

⁷² Some animal rights lawyers argue, for example, that elephants are "legal persons" with a right of bodily liberty. See, "Three elephants in Connecticut just got a lawyer," *Washington Post*, November 14, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/animalia/wp/2017/11/14/three-elephants-in-connecticut-just-got-a-lawyer/?utm_term=.003406c1c7f9.

understanding this interdependence. We only strengthen ourselves when we ensure that the ecosystem on which we all depend is sustained and preserved for future generations.

Normative Ethics

Normative ethics is often divided into three schools of thought: virtue ethics (what people should be), consequential ethics (what people should do), and principle ethics (what principles people should believe in and follow). Most philosophers of normative ethics fall into these categories.

From the perspective of the inner quality, ethics should include all three approaches. People should have certain virtues or values. They should behave in certain ways. They should believe in and follow certain principles. Each of these approaches are valid, because they are interconnected in mankind's consciousness. We ought to believe in things that have value; we ought to value things that are virtuous; we ought to do what we believe in. Some of the major themes from the normative schools of ethics are discussed below.

Virtue Ethics

The focus of virtue ethics is on individual character rather than a person's actions or the rules that he or she should live by. The central question in virtue ethics is what does it take for a person to develop good character? Having good character means having many virtues and few vices. Usually philosophers in this school of thought believe that having excellent character equates to being one's true self and following one's higher nature. Becoming one's true self leads to personal excellence, a good life, and the ability to make positive contributions to society. There is a connection between having a virtuous character and acting properly, but the emphasis within virtue ethics is on developing good character traits rather than mechanically acting in a proper manner.

Over the ages, different philosophers have emphasized different virtues. There are, for example, thinking virtues, feeling virtues, and acting virtues. The virtues identified as being the most important are closely related to what philosophers believe to be the highest good, or what has the greatest value to mankind. For example: Is the highest value living a happy and contented life? Is it to have a harmonious society? Is it to live life according to one's own nature?

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) believed that living an excellent life according to one's own nature was the highest good, resulting in a sense of wellbeing and happiness.⁷³ This, he argued, could be achieved by practical wisdom, that is, knowing what to do in all situations based on one's best character or special virtue. Knowing and expressing this virtue (whether in normal life or life as a philosopher), and being fortunate enough to have the right external environment, would enable one to be happy and satisfied in life. Finding and developing one's special virtue, therefore, was an essential step toward having a sense of wellbeing. Aristotle believed that one's virtue could be found by rational thought. Reason can and should be used to control one's appetites and behavior. When one's moral and intellectual virtues complement each other, the person can live the good life.

From the perspective of inner quality ethics, Aristotle was largely correct in his reasoning. The inner quality is a person's highest character, and happiness in life can best be achieved when one's outer character reflects one's inner quality. When this occurs, the person is becoming the true self. And becoming one's true self enables a person to live a happy and fulfilled life, in whatever station or role he or she may find themselves in or choose.

⁷³ **Aristotle** (384-322 B.C.) Greece. Book *Nicomachean Ethics*. He emphasized virtue as ethical habit. The idea is to cultivate habits to direct oneself to live in accordance with human excellence. Two such habits are courage and generosity. Humans are social creatures and can attain social harmony and happiness through the cultivation of virtue through building good habits.

Inner quality ethics considers the highest virtue to be one's inner quality, and the greatest good is to become one's true self. True happiness is most likely to occur when one is able to live as one's true self in a supportive environment. Like the Stoics, however, inner quality ethics holds that living life according to one's inner quality is more important than having a comfortable environment.⁷⁴

Another important theory of virtue ethics was developed by Confucius (551-471 B.C.).⁷⁵ While Aristotle focused on reason as being the key to finding virtue in oneself, Confucius focused on relationships between people, which ought to be based on a sense of humanity or goodness. The good life, according to Confucius, depended on having proper relationships. Having proper relationships depended on knowing and living in harmony with one's social roles. Thus, one needed to cultivate a deep understanding of the various roles and responsibilities one had in life, such as between father and son, husband and wife, friend and friend, ruler and subject.

The family was the key social unit in which these social responsibilities were learned. One also could learn these proper relationships by studying exemplary people. The goal for the person was to completely absorb the sense and value of social relationships so that the person's behavior was always appropriate and a model for others to follow. Rituals are important in Confucian ethics, but what is of greatest value is understanding the purpose of the ritual, that is, the virtue behind and symbolized by the ritual.

⁷⁴ The **Stoics** believed that whatever is good must benefit its possessor under all circumstances. The Stoic school of philosophy arose during the Hellenistic period in Greece and had many famous followers during the Roman Imperial age. For an explanation of the school's beliefs, see, "Stoicism," in *The Basics of Philosophy*, http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_stoicism.html.

⁷⁵ **Confucius** (551-471 B.C.) China. Book *Analects*. He tried to bring order, harmony, and virtue to society. Confucius placed emphasis on becoming an exemplary person by paying close attention to one's roles in society through the internalization of the meaning behind the rituals required by one's position in society. His ethical teachings were relational, with the goal to cultivate virtue in oneself and others.

Inner quality ethics considers valid the Confucian emphasis on proper social relationships based on a profound sense of humanity. While Aristotle emphasized the cultivation of virtue through reason, Confucius emphasized the cultivation of virtue through mastery of social roles and responsibilities. Both perspectives are correct: development of personal virtue and development of social virtue are interrelated keys to living a good life. Overall, the theories of virtue ethics closely parallel the theories of inner quality ethics, because the key goal is the individual developing his or her best character to become the best person possible.

The ethical theories of the inner quality stress the discovery of one's inner quality. That discovery can come from reason, social relationships, a sense of spirituality, or any combination thereof. After that discovery, the individual needs to cultivate good habits and proper behavior so that one's true self gradually is reflected in one's outer character. As this process of self-refinement continues, the individual comes to know instinctively how to act properly in various circumstances. In other words, like virtue ethics, the ethics of the inner quality seeks to awaken the individual to his or her true self, as the first step toward achieving a good life and benefiting society.

Criticisms of Virtue Ethics

No ethical theory is perfect; all theories can be criticized. Most criticisms of virtue ethics center on two issues: it is hard to know which virtues are correct, and virtues are too subjective and self-centered. These criticisms are evaluated below from the viewpoint of inner quality ethics.

The basis of the first criticism is that, if virtues are to be decided by individuals or perhaps cultures, then how does one know which virtue is the right one?

From the perspective of inner quality ethics, virtues are relative to individuals, cultures, and circumstances. Conditions vary in life. The highest virtue for an individual is the inner quality,

the expression of which leads the person to increasingly become the true self. The inner quality has certain characteristics of universality. For example, there is no limitation on the quality or quantity of love. Like light being refracted by a prism, love can be expressed differently at different times by different people. The virtues of the inner quality are both universal in an abstract sense and applicable in practice. The result of a person properly expressing the inner quality is that he or she acts appropriately under all circumstances.

The second criticism assumes that ethics must be precisely defined and that ethical guidelines should reflect wider considerations than the individual.

From the point of view of inner quality ethics, the criticism of imprecision is based in part on a misunderstanding of what virtue ethics is trying to achieve. Ethics based on individual virtue is intended to improve the person. As the individual expresses and becomes more of his or her inner quality or highest virtue, the individual is better able to determine the appropriate course of action in any situation. Since it is impossible to know the future circumstances of one's life, virtue ethics focuses on preparing the person to be able to do the right thing under any condition.

The criticism that ethics should be based on more than individual consideration is true. However, most ethical theories of virtue have as one of their core objectives the improvement of society.

The approach in virtue ethics is not to focus first on improvement of society but rather to focus first on improvement of the individual, which forms the basis of society. Inner quality ethics supports this approach, since the individual is the fundamental unit of society. Unless the individual citizen be of sound character, no society can function harmoniously and well.

In sum, there is considerable alignment between traditional virtue ethics and the ethics of the inner quality. The essence of inner quality ethics is that the individual must discover his or her

own inner quality (or virtue) and express it in daily life in order to become the true self. As one gradually becomes the true self, the individual is able to act appropriately in all circumstances, whatever the role in society one may have. Society can benefit enormously from individuals expressing their inner qualities and becoming their true selves, because such individuals are doing their best to live an exemplary life, part of which is to perform well their duties to society and their fellowman.

Consequential Ethics

Consequential ethics focuses on the results or consequences of one's action, rather than the motivations behind the action (virtue ethics) or ethical imperatives (principle ethics). In some ways, consequential ethics is reflected in Machiavelli's observation that the moral judgment of one's actions should await the results.⁷⁶ To consequentialists, the source of right and wrong is with the consequence of the action, usually expressed as some kind of benefit or harm. There are various ways to measure the ethical correctness of one's actions: what is most beneficial to other people, what is most beneficial to oneself, what is most beneficial to all of life and the environment.

Utilitarianism

The most popular consequential ethical theory is probably utilitarianism, which argues that one's actions should strive to increase the greatest amount of happiness for the largest number of people. The best known utilitarian philosophers are Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873).

⁷⁶ Machiavelli's moral position is discussed in the applied ethics section later in this chapter.

Bentham introduced the idea of the principle of utility as being the highest good.⁷⁷ The highest good was defined as pleasure and happiness and the absence of pain and suffering. The principle of utility ought to be applied to everyone, not just the individual. In many ways, Bentham's calculations to determine the greatest amount of pleasure and least amount of harm were more usefully applied to public policy and law rather than to individual behavior. Mill refined utilitarianism by identifying higher and lower pleasures, and a direct and indirect way to calculate what actions might be expected to best achieve the maximum happiness.⁷⁸ To a utilitarian like Mill, the ethical goal for a person was to become motivated to seek ways to maximize human welfare.

From the perspective of inner quality ethics, the risk of consequentialism is that it can diminish the importance of a person developing virtue in his or her life. There are two risks here. First, by separating the consequences of one's actions from the character of the individual, one can fall into the moral trap of the end justifying the means: in other words, amoral expediency. In inner quality ethics, a person's actions ought to be motivated and guided by one's best character of goodness. Second, individuals can excuse an immoral or amoral lifestyle as being unimportant as long as they seek to do good things in public life. This is not beneficial to the soul or to the person's psychological wellbeing, and such behavior will almost inevitably set a bad example for others to follow. In inner quality ethics, personal and professional lifestyles should both reflect

⁷⁷ **Bentham** (1748-1832) England. Book *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*. His fundamental axiom of ethical philosophy was "it is the greatest happiness of the greatest number that is the measure of right and wrong."

⁷⁸ **Mill** (1806-1873) England. Books *On Liberty*, *Utilitarianism*. Mill defends the need for individual liberty. He also argues for the need to maximize the greatest good for the greatest number of people. Some pleasures – associated with reason, deliberation, or socially valuable emotions – are worth more than hedonistic pleasures.

one's highest character. Because of these two risks, the theories of consequentialism could weaken society as a whole if not very carefully applied.

Criticisms of Utilitarianism

Several criticisms of utilitarianism have emerged. The major criticism is that the moral responsibility of the individual is diminished. According to this criticism, by focusing on the outcome of one's actions, utilitarianism undervalues the importance of developing one's moral character and personal integrity. On a social level, universal concepts such as justice and rights are too easily set aside in the pursuit of maximum utility (i.e., pleasure and avoidance of pain) for the greatest number of people.

Another criticism of utilitarianism is that calculations of what is the highest utility can be very complicated and not easily followed by most people. Also, since no one knows the full consequences of any action, determining the proper course to take in complex ethical situations is exceptionally problematic for even the most well-meaning consequentialist.

Inner quality ethics largely agrees with these criticisms, because society might become too hedonistic if utilitarian principles are followed without sufficient attention being paid to personal moral virtue. At the same time, however, credit must be given to utilitarian ethics for stressing the idea that government and citizens should be more cognizant of the effects of their policies and behaviors on society as a whole. Utilitarianism also advocates the equality of men and women, a position fully supported by inner quality ethics.

The ethics of the inner quality strongly supports the sense of social responsibility inherent in utilitarianism. However, inner quality ethics believes that the goal of social responsibility is best achieved by individuals first trying to improve themselves. Individuals reflecting their inner qualities or best characters will almost always be responsible citizens in society. That being said,

a persuasive argument can be made that utilitarianism has merit as an ethical philosophy for social leaders. Well-conceived policies designed to benefit the largest number of citizens can strengthen society, especially if these policies are motivated by the leader's inner sense of goodness and selflessness.

Principle Ethics

Ethics of principle is based on the concept that the best way for a person to live morally is to know and abide by certain principles of behavior. Usually, these principles should be determined by the individual, although principles can also be adopted from other sources. Living an ethical life based on principle is different from an ethical life based on personal virtue or an ethical life based on the consequences of one's actions.

Kant's Categorical Imperative

Perhaps the best known philosopher building an ethical theory based on principle is Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).⁷⁹ He believed that intentions were more important than the consequences of one's actions and that intentions could best be followed by an individual who first identifies certain principles to govern his or her behavior. Kant thought that principles could be used to answer most ethical questions. These principles could be determined by individuals using their reason in a free manner. Kant called the most important principle the categorical imperative.

To be ethical, Kant believed a person must act from a sense of moral duty. Moral duty ought to be the motivation in one's life. The sense of doing one's moral duty comes from using practical reason to determine personal principles rather following one's natural inclinations. Kant considered people to be free and autonomous but also rational. It is human rationality that

⁷⁹ **Kant** (1724-1804) Prussia. Books *Groundwork for the Metaphysics of Morals*, *Metaphysics of Morals*, *Critique of Practical Wisdom*. He stressed the need to balance the animal passions with human reason and to personally create a universal ethical system that each person takes upon himself. Kant established a close connection between ethical principles and free will: if you do what is right, that equates to personal freedom.

enables them to act according to higher self-determined principles instead of pursuing their instinctual nature.

Kant's approach included, first, the identification and definition of maxims (or principles) behind one's actions. From this list could be derived certain imperatives which are the principles by which one should live. These principles are the requirements or commands you set for yourself to act morally. These principles and imperatives can be further distilled into a single categorical imperative that one believes all mankind should follow to live ethically.

The categorical imperative of an individual must be universally applicable to rational people, general or wide enough to apply to all human activities, and be determined by individuals themselves. Kant believed there should be only one categorical imperative for each individual, but it can be expressed through different formulas: a universal law of nature, a command to act in ways respecting the goals of all people, or the laws of a sovereign in a hypothetical moral kingdom. Kant did not define what everyone's categorical imperative should be, but only that it ought to be applicable to all human beings. Each person should be free to define their own moral principles, using the categorical imperative formula most appropriate to themselves.

From the perspective of inner quality ethics, Kant's categorical imperative is appropriate as a broad ethical guideline. However, the criteria of universal applicability of Kant's approach does not often fit the human condition. For example, we could say that our imperative is to love all people equally. This is a good ethical standard, but it does not reflect life's circumstances in which love varies between people and changes over time. Trying to modify that ethical standard to fit all circumstances would be difficult. Although Kant's approach is valuable in helping to sort through the motivations behind one's actions and to discipline one's intentions, its complexity and difficulty make its application very challenging in practice.

Still, it is possible to define one's categorical imperative using the higher mind and the inner quality. My personal categorical imperative is: Take what God has given you and do something good with it. That is a very simple statement but also flexible and easy to apply in most daily circumstances.

Criticisms of Principle Ethics

The criticisms of the Kantian ethics of principle include the universality issue noted above, plus concerns that people do not normally act just from reason. Others have criticized his ethics as applying only to human beings, with insufficient concern about moral behavior toward the environment and non-human creatures.

Inner quality ethics would agree that these criticisms have some validity. As noted earlier, ethical principles developed by individuals for themselves are difficult to apply universally to others. In terms of motivation, people clearly act on the basis of emotions as well as pure reason. Mankind not only has rational capabilities but also strong emotions, deep memories, keen instincts, intuition, influential relationships, and spiritual inspiration – all of which can contribute to a practical ethical system.

Also valid is the criticism that Kant's ethics do not give adequate attention to morality as it may apply to animals and other parts of nature. From the point of view of inner quality ethics, people ought to behave morally to other parts of life and care for the environment in which we live. This is morally justified because almost everything is interconnected within earth's ecosystem. The human ability to understand interconnectivity gives us moral responsibility to respect other parts of life and our shared environment.

Applied Ethics

Applied ethics is the third main area of ethics, after meta-ethics and normative ethics.⁸⁰ Many of the traditional ethical theories discussed above were intended and thought to be universally valid. Applied ethics, however, is not comprised of universal guidelines but rather applies various ethical and moral standards to specific issues in daily life. Due to the nature of these issues, applied ethics can be seen as time-sensitive, issue-oriented, and usually controversial. We can argue the respective merits of Aristotelean and Kantian ethics in an intellectually abstract way. It is more difficult, however, to argue unemotionally over the moral correctness of abortion, capital punishment, or assisted suicide.

Applied ethics often addresses very personal issues. Thus, one difficulty with this area of ethics is that only rarely can a single ethical or moral standard satisfactorily resolve all the practical considerations involved in a situation. It is far more common that practical issues are approached from different or multiple ethical points of view, an approach which frequently results in contradictory conclusions. As a consequence, the issue cannot be solved and it remains divisive.

The number of issues to which practical ethics can be applied is huge. To make sense of it all, these issues are often grouped into categories such as business ethics, medical ethics, legal ethics, environmental ethics, sexual ethics, sports ethics, social ethics, political ethics, military ethics, and so on. Within each of these categories are numerous specific issues of varying degrees of moral complexity. In terms of the accounting profession, for example, specific ethical issues might include such things as conflict of interest, independence, standards of objectivity

⁸⁰ A good overview of several issues in applied ethics may be found in Part VI, "Debates in Ethics," in John Skorupski, ed., *The Routledge Companion to Ethics*, http://www.upscsuccess.com/sites/default/files/documents/The_Routledge_Companion_to_Ethics_@nadal.pdf.

and integrity, confidentiality, and credentialing.⁸¹ Later in this chapter we will illustrate applied ethics in the three areas of politics, living under conditions of social instability, and developing a practical set of ethical and moral guidelines. In the next chapter, we will use applied ethics more extensively in the discussion of the inner quality philosophy of government.

Key Questions in Ethics

To further refine the philosophy of inner quality ethics, we will address in this section several critical questions that have been debated by philosophers and scholars over the centuries.

Are Humans Predisposed to Believe in Ethics and Morality?

There is continued debate over whether people are ethical by nature or whether ethics and morality are learned. If one accepts the premise that people have souls and that souls, being creations of God, are naturally good, then it reasonably follows that people are naturally good at the level of their soul consciousness. On the other hand, if people do not have souls, then human beings are simply an advanced species of life on earth, who learn ethics and morality from personal experience or cultural exposure.

Regardless of these alternative choices, there are some common grounds between those who believe in the spiritual nature of mankind and those who do not. One area of agreement is the acknowledged necessity for human life to have a structured social existence: individuals are better able to survive and prosper in a social group than they are in solitary existence. Mankind is predisposed to organize socially both because of the need to survive the challenges of life, and because the soul must learn the proper use of free will in a personal and social context. If this is

⁸¹ See, "Supplement: Professional Ethics for Certified Public Accountants," January 1988, part of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, *Professional Ethics for Certified Public Accountants* (Palo Alto, CA: California Society of CPA, 1987).

true, then we can conclude that human beings are predisposed to ethics and morality for both evolutionary and spiritual reasons.

How Does One Be Moral in an Imperfect World?

People need to assume responsibility for their ethical and moral decisions. But how do we know something is good, true, or even real? This is a metaphysical issue discussed for thousands of years. Here are a few thoughts from the perspective of inner quality ethics.

From life's experience, we learn that absolute knowledge is impossible for any human being. This is especially true for ethical issues. Even in the case of the Commandment "thou shalt not kill" there are occasions when God commands His servants to kill other people. The lesson here is that the most clearly stated ethical principle may not be universally valid. Simple ethical principles are intuitively correct and easily remembered; however, simple ethical statements are rarely applicable under all circumstances.

We need to know these basic moral principles and guidelines, because normally we can act within those parameters. Beyond these basic principles, however, there is another level of ethics, which we might call operational or practical ethics. At this level of ethical behavior, we have an intention and commitment to be ethical, yet we have sensitivity to the actual conditions under which we are functioning. This sensitivity enables us to intuit or rationalize a specific ethical decision based on the application of our ethical and moral standards at a specific moment in time and place and circumstance. Utilizing operational or practical ethics is what is meant by doing one's best under all conditions. Perfect, we may not be; being committed to doing our best – this is within our free will capability.

The need and desire to function ethically in a universe of unknowns, inconsistencies, and in the absence of absolutes is why we need to learn to use our higher mind. The higher mind is able to

integrate the moral ideals of the inner quality with considerations based on the situation at hand. The use of the higher mind is available to anyone; it is practical and of great value to everyone trying to do their best in life.

An additional layer of moral assistance is possible if we develop our sense of spirituality. Using our sense of spirituality increases our intuitive power and makes us more sensitive to subtle inspirations that may be applicable to our moral situation. The combined use of common ethical and moral standards, knowledge of the moral ideals of the inner quality, the integrative powers of the higher mind, and one's sense of spirituality can all work together to improve the chances that our ethical and moral decisions will be correct.

Inner quality ethics can be viewed as an integrative approach to incorporate the above capabilities, as well as insights gleaned from other ethical theories, modern scientific discoveries, and a holistic view of the person. The integration of all these factors and insights of understanding results in inner quality ethics: a set of dynamic ethical principles and moral standards enabling us to express increasingly more of the essential goodness of our true self.

One way to view inner quality ethics is to consider the characteristics of color in nature.⁸² We rarely find in nature pure black and white, or any color for that matter. Rather, one sees a blending of colors in tones, tints, hues, and shades to produce a unique color combination for each object. Practical ethical situations are sometimes like that: a blending of many factors but only rarely pure black and white. The power of inner quality ethics is its ability to help the individual to distinguish the differences in ethical situations, while at the same time being true to one's inner quality or best character of goodness. Because perfect conditions on earth are

⁸² A short but fascinating series of slides on the multiple ways colors are produced in nature can be found in Barb Cutler, "Color in Nature," http://people.csail.mit.edu/fredo/Depiction/11_Static/color_in_nature2.pdf.

exceedingly rare, inner quality ethics is dynamic in the sense that one's moral guidelines become increasingly refined as one gains experience and understanding of the infinite potential of the true self. In inner quality ethics, consistency in ethical behavior is the individual's desire and effort to make the right moral choice in every situation, based always on one's best understanding of one's personal inner quality.

[What Is the Relationship between Freedom and Ethics?](#)

One definition of freedom is the ability of the individual to do as he or she wishes. But freedom is never absolute; it is always constrained by the laws of nature and by human limitations. Still, the pursuit of freedom has been a distinguishing characteristic of human beings for a long time. Over the millennia, individuals have tried to remove or weaken constraints on free will choice in many spheres of activity. The desire for freedom is a force in human history and an important motivation for most individuals. The pursuit of freedom cannot for long be suppressed; it must be given opportunity for expression.

From an ethical point of view, freedom is the ability of individuals to decide what moral standards to believe in and act upon. In ethics, this freedom is usually expressed in terms of being able to use reason, emotion, and inspiration to make ethical choices. Often, it matters less that the choice be totally correct than the choice be freely made. Not being able to make moral decisions is harmful to the human soul and, in a secular sense, to human self-esteem.

The ethics of the inner quality requires individuals to be free to learn to become their true selves. They must be free to discover their inner qualities, to express their individuality, to explore their consciousness and spirituality, and to seek to achieve their ideals. No other person can give us our inner quality or the birthright of our true self. However, the price of freedom to choose comes with responsibility for those choices.

Having a culture, society, and political environment supportive of free will is of great benefit to the individual. Inner quality ethics encourages the reduction of constraints on human freedom that would inhibit the discovery and expression of the true self. Inner quality ethics also encourages individuals to improve their free will choices by avoiding harm to others, to themselves, and to society. Inner quality ethics is a tool to help individuals better use their freedom to make decisions. If they so choose, individuals can refine their ethical and moral standards by reflecting upon the meaning of their inner quality and learning to use the higher mind to help make difficult moral choices.

What Is the Highest Value and Greatest Good?

The question of highest value and greatest good are central to ethics, because ethics is not about etiquette or political correctness. Ethics is a rational ordering of ethical and moral standards to achieve something of great value, some ideal good. Philosophers have contemplated the meaning of value and goodness for thousands of years without universal consensus. The ongoing discussion is important, nonetheless, because defining even tentative meanings to these terms form the foundations of cultures, religions, nations, political systems, and social institutions.

In inner quality ethics, the highest value is one's personal inner quality. The greatest good is becoming one's true self, which is achieved by progressively reflecting more and more of one's inner quality in actions, thoughts, and feelings.⁸³ The determination of one's highest value and

⁸³ To Carl Jung, individuation was the achievement of self-actualization through a process of integrating the conscious and the unconscious, the unconscious being comprised of both the personal and the collective unconscious. Becoming the true self in the inner quality paradigm is to integrate the conscious and super-conscious of the individual. For a brief summary of Jung's theory, see "Jung and his Individuation Process," *Journal Psyche*, <http://journalpsyche.org/jung-and-his-individuation-process/>. The existence of a personal and collective super consciousness is very prevalent in teachings on meditation, which often involve techniques to move the mind beyond its conscious and unconscious states.

greatest good in inner quality ethics does not depend on any belief system. It only depends on one's self recognition.

As discussed earlier in this book, for those who don't already know their inner quality or best character, one way to that self-discovery is by meditating on the source of inner goodness in oneself. After that discovery, a practical path to becoming one's true self is to try to express one's inner quality to the best of one's ability in daily life. Using the higher mind enables us to formalize a system of inner quality ethics into a personal moral roadmap based on the ethical standards of our best character.

Is Ethics Purely Rational?

From the perspective of inner quality ethics, one's ethical and moral standards ought to be reasonable to oneself, based on insights originating from deep within one's higher levels of consciousness. Using the integrative powers of the higher mind, we can develop a set of personal ethics through a rational process. This process can be generally described as (1) sensing goodness within oneself; (2) identifying the source of that goodness (the inner quality); (3) gaining insight into what the inner quality means personally and socially; and (4) using the higher mind to develop a logical ethical and moral framework appropriate to one's life.

Reason is a primary and powerful tool of the human species, and – among its many other functions – can and should be used to develop an ethical standard for the individual. That being said, however, emotions are also very important in developing inner quality ethics. The key is to ensure that one's rationality and emotions are properly sourced and balanced in a way most beneficial to the individual. A person will naturally lean towards a reason-based or care-based ethical system. Both approaches are valid, when so determined by the individual reflecting upon his or her best character.

Inner quality ethics incorporates both thinking and feeling, because these two aspects of mankind are closely linked. The discovery and identification of one's inner quality involve thought as well as feeling. These processes are integrated at the level of the higher mind. The systemization and articulation of ethical principles and moral standards that become possible after a person discovers the inner quality always involve the whole person, because reason, emotion, and inspiration all work together to understand the meaning of those inner experiences.

Is Ethics about Behavior or about Attitude and Motivation?

Inner quality ethics involves behavior, attitude, and motivation, because these ought to be integrated within a person's consciousness. The ethics of the inner quality emphasizes, first, the identification and understanding of the best character of the individual, then improvement of the person's decision-making processes, then a clear articulation of a set of ethical standards that can be used by the individual to help him or her improve themselves and contribute more to society, and then the internalization and application of those standards in everyday life.

Inner quality ethics places emphasis on individual character, because the behavior, attitudes, and motivations of the person are of paramount importance. The identification of the best character of goodness within an individual is the cornerstone of inner quality ethics. Self-discovery and self-knowledge are critical, because how people identify themselves is far more important than what other people think or say about them. Working towards becoming the true self by expressing the inner quality leads to a sense of personal value, wellbeing, and self-fulfillment. This strengthens positive attitudes in the individual and motivates them to act in ways that contribute to society and to humanity as a whole.

What Is Truth and Reality?

Absolute truth and reality are beyond current human comprehension, because the universe in all of its dimensions is far too complex. Complicating this picture further is the fact that the universe is constantly evolving. Truth and reality are not static; they are highly dynamic and involve cause and effect sequences that fall outside of our scope of observation and analysis. The truth and reality we experience are in many cases relative to the observer, although some overlap in perceptions and interpretations exist due to similar sensory and mental capabilities such as found in the same species. But even between people, there are vast differences in how truth is understood and reality is perceived. And as we mature, we find our own views of these things changing as well.

Inner quality ethics is based on the assumption that an individual can maximize his or her understanding of truth and reality by first knowing themselves. Knowledge of self is the cornerstone of truth and reality, because we understand and perceive through our own eyes and mind. If our senses and mind are aware of our inner quality or best character, then the atom of our selfhood is goodness. Goodness and its infinite potential thereby become the center around which we view everything. Phenomenology teaches us that. If too much of one's self-identity is disconnected from the inner quality, then one's sense of selfhood will be not be true and one's understanding and perception will likewise be off-center. It is doubtful the Buddha could ever have said he was awake unless he knew his true self.⁸⁴

Is Ethics Subjective or Based on Human Commonalities?

The ethics of the inner quality is both subjective as well as based on human commonalities. It is subjective in the sense that ethical guidelines are determined by and for the individual. It is based

⁸⁴ For the story of Buddha's famous saying, see "I am Awake," *Teachings of the Buddha*, https://teachingsofthebuddha.com/i_am_aware.htm

on commonalities in the sense that we are all human beings and therefore share many things in common.⁸⁵ Among these commonalities are a character of inner goodness. Finding that center of goodness within oneself is the starting point of determining what is ethical and moral for oneself.

The commonality of having an inner quality generates the near universal sense that we ought to be able to live together on this planet in a spirit of harmony for the greater good of all. Everyone has a degree of selfishness as a basic survival instinct. However, extreme selfishness is an identified psychological disorder and is not a dominant characteristic of man.⁸⁶

The inner quality gives us a heightened sensitivity to the needs and rights of others. Inner quality ethics strengthens an individual's respect for other people, regardless of their race, sex, age, religion, politics, culture, economic level, or other distinguishing characteristics. In this way, even though the development of inner quality ethics begins with the individual, the application of its ethical and moral standards benefits other people.

Is there a Relationship between Inner Quality Ethics and Right Mindfulness?

Right mindfulness is a concept in Buddhism, referring to a state of consciousness in which an individual by inclination always does the correct thing.⁸⁷ Right mindfulness is not a check-box

⁸⁵ The Department of Art & Design at Iowa State University has tried to define human commonalities in the context of art. See, http://www.design.iastate.edu/NAB/about/thinkingskills/human_context/humancommonalities.html. One of the most quoted descriptions of human commonalities was presented by Ernest J. Boyer in *A Quest for Common Learning*. He explained his ideas in "The Educated Person," 1995 *Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Yearbook*, as reprinted in <http://www.ibmidatlantic.org/Educated-Person.pdf>. See especially the section on "Human Commonalities," of which he identified eight.

⁸⁶ For example, individuals with the narcissistic personality disorder exhibit a lack of ability to empathize with others and an inflated sense of self-importance. See, "Narcissistic Personality Disorder," *Psychology Today*, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/conditions/narcissistic-personality-disorder>.

⁸⁷ Right mindfulness is one of the steps of the Eightfold Path of the Buddha. In essence, it is knowing the truth of things by seeing them as they truly are. For an explanation, see "Right Mindfulness on The Eightfold Path of Buddhism," <http://www.hinduwebsite.com/buddhism/eightfoldpath7.asp>. A different description is the Zen concept of the beginner's mind, looking at all things as if they were a new experience. See, Shunryu Suzuki, "Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind," *On The Way: The Daily Zen Journal*, February 12, 2015, <https://www.dailyzen.com/journal/zen-mind-beginners-mind>.

approach to proper behavior. It is a state of mind in which one intuitively knows – and naturally does – what is appropriate at the moment. Right mindfulness is a way of looking at the world and acting without much thought, but always acting in the right way. Right mindfulness increasingly becomes part of our mental processes as we begin to formulate and express in actions, thoughts, and feelings the ethical principles of the inner quality.

What Is Good?

The term “good” is one of the most frequently used words in the English language, but what good actually means in the moral sense is something that has been debated for thousands of years. From the perspective of inner quality ethics, good in a personal moral sense is some action, thought, or feeling in harmony and congruent with one’s inner quality. Since individual inner qualities are different in their types of goodness, there will be shades of difference between the meanings of good among different people. On the other hand, many similarities of what is good can be found between individuals expressing their inner qualities. This is because the inner quality is by definition the best character of everyone, and we are all connected at a deep level to what is the common good for the human species, both spiritually in the sense of the soul and materially in the sense of mankind’s survival.

Why Should People Be Good?

Philosophers have long argued that one of the major reasons for being good is that it gives us a deep sense of pleasure: being good is naturally pleasing to us, so it must be the proper thing to do. And indeed, modern science has identified certain physiological reasons to be good. Being good triggers hormones that give us pleasurable sensations. For example, studies in neuroscience have shown that when people behave altruistically, their brains become active in regions that

signal pleasure and reward.⁸⁸ This is not surprising, given the role altruism and empathy play in the social harmony necessary for the survival of the human species.

Being good also has spiritual benefits, not only in aligning man's will with the will of God, but also in aligning one's soul consciousness with one's outer consciousness. Goodness is a common ground for God, the soul, and the embodied person. When all three levels of consciousness are aligned with the characteristic of goodness found in an individual's inner quality, there is harmony within the person and he or she has a deep sense of being correctly anchored in their lives. By contrast, being out of alignment with universal goodness for long periods of time can very often result in anxiety, depression, or excessive dependence on ego gratification – all of which tend to increase the sense of separation between the individual and the true self.

If We Are Naturally Good, Why Do We Sometimes Behave Badly?

This question gets at the root of human moral behavior. In inner quality ethics, there is simultaneous acknowledgement that man is both naturally good by virtue of his soul being created by God, as well as often morally bad in his current state of existence here on earth. One common spiritual explanation is that the souls of mankind are learning how to use free will in the dimensions of time and space. During this learning process, mankind – being imperfect in early dimensions – do always know what is morally correct or incorrect. However, this explanation does not account for the fact that some people, even if they know what is morally correct, sometimes choose to act incorrectly.

⁸⁸ For an intriguing discussion of the many benefits of altruism, see "What Is Altruism," in the *Greater Good* webpage of the University of California at Berkeley, <http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/topic/altruism/definition>. See also Priya Advani, "How Random Acts of Kindness Can Benefit Your Health," in the Blog of *The Huffington Post*, August 11, 2013, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/priya-advani/random-acts-of-kindness_b_3412718.html.

If you are a materialist or cultural relativist, then morality is not divinely inspired but rather the product of social necessity or cultural determinism. From this point of view, even random acts of kindness are the result of evolutionary altruism found in most advanced species of life on earth. Spirituality – if it exists at all – has nothing whatsoever to do with determinations of appropriate behavior.

In the inner quality philosophy of ethics, the formulation of moral codes has its origin in the mind of man. Whether inspired by divine intervention or moved by evolutionary impulses, there is a spring of good behavior, thought, and feeling that resides somewhere in the human mind and heart. Coming into contact with that spring is how one discovers the inner quality within oneself.

Knowing intellectually principles of ethical behavior or being culturally biased in certain modes of personal and social activity do not in themselves always have sufficient influence over one's free will decisions to act properly. Determining always to express one's best character comes from somewhere deeper in the consciousness of an individual. The inner quality exists at that level of consciousness, and other sources of strong determination to what is right exist as well.

The key to always doing one's best is remaining in constant contact with the source of inner determination to do what is right and avoid what is inappropriate. Having that determination, in turn, strongly influences the individual to make the right moral choice in all circumstances.

Having decided to act, think, and feel in the appropriate way enables the person to be more ethical and moral than if that self-determination did not exist in the individual.

Spiritually speaking, gaining this self-determination is easier if one can let go of the lesser self and embrace the reality of the higher or true self. If individuals see themselves as souls, then acting properly is fundamentally important because there is a sense of personal moral

responsibility. By contrast, if individuals see themselves without a soul, then ethical and moral standards can be adopted or rejected as a matter of personal preference or convenience.

Whether one believes in the soul or not, if an individual wants to act ethically in his or her life, the development of an inner quality set of ethical and moral standards results in a very useful tool in helping one gain control over behavior, thought, and feelings. This occurs, because searching and finding one's inner quality puts one into contact with one's best character of goodness. This discovery activates a higher level of analysis and rationality in which the character of the inner quality becomes the standard by which one measures what is appropriate or not in one's life. The determination of what is appropriate for the individual then becomes the basis for the articulation of ethical principles and moral guidelines.

There is thus a direct linkage between inner quality ethics and what individual desire themselves to be. The power of inner quality ethics is its self-determination: it is determined by the individual, for the individual – always based on the best character individuals perceive within themselves. Using inner quality ethics in one's life tremendously expands the goodness one can do and significantly reduces intentional harm – in addition to the feelings of wellbeing and self-fulfillment that philosophers through the ages have identified as being associated with personal virtue.

[Morality in Self and Society](#)

This section discusses how certain moral terms are defined in inner quality ethics, identifies key principles of the ethical theory, and further examines how inner quality ethics might be viewed from a purely secular perspective.

Good, Bad, and Evil in Inner Quality Ethics

Ethical principles and moral guidelines should assist people to become better individuals. To become better individuals requires that people strive to become more “good” in their behavior, thoughts, and feelings, as well as to become less “bad” and certainly to avoid “evil.” How, then, should the moral terms of good, bad, and evil be defined in the context of inner quality ethics? There are both personal and social answers to this question.

The personal dimension of inner quality morality is fairly easy to define. Behavior, thoughts, and feelings which are “good” are those in harmony or consistent with our own inner quality. Those which are “bad” run counter to the standards of our inner quality. Those which are “evil” include behaviors, thoughts, and feelings deliberately intended to harm the goodness inherent in our inner quality.

The social dimensions of inner quality morality require these definitions to be refined somewhat, depending upon whether we believe the origin of morals is spiritual, a product of nature’s evolution, or some combination thereof. These different paradigms also influence our view of justice.

If Morals Have Spiritual Origins

If morals have their origin in God, then good relates in some way to the fulfillment of God’s will. Under this explanation, good is the pursuit of expressing the characteristic of one’s soul. Not-so-good or bad within this paradigm would be behavior, thoughts, and feelings out of alignment with, or contradictory to, the characteristics of one’s soul. Evil in this paradigm is a deliberate action, thought, or feeling chosen specifically by one’s free will to counter or undermine God’s goodness as it is reflected in our soul or other aspects of God’s creation. Evil is a free will choice

to thwart God's intentions.⁸⁹ If we believe morals have their origin in God, these views would comprise the lens through which we tend to view the morality of our own actions and those of others.

In terms of justice, if God is the origin of morals, then judgment of what is good, bad, and evil would have not only a human dimension but also a spiritual dimension. As humans, our domain is human justice. We cannot fully administer God's justice, because we do not always understand what God's perspective on justice is. Nonetheless, under this paradigm, people would be inclined to construct their moral and legal systems on what they perceived God's standards of justice to be. The beliefs of various religions and spiritual traditions would have a strong influence on personal and social systems of justice.

If Morals Have Evolutionary Origins

If we assume that life's evolution is the origin of morals – for example, being based in part on the sense of empathy found in many species – our definitions of good, bad, and evil are different from definitions based on morality's spiritual origins. In the evolutionary perspective, good might be defined as those behaviors, thoughts, and feelings that are in harmony with or advance mankind's evolution. Bad or not-good behavior would be those that are harmful to the positive evolution of mankind. Evil is extremely negative behavior that deliberately intends to harm the human species, its evolution, or its environmental home: an almost suicidal or pathological action aimed towards the destruction of large segments of society or culture – genocide, for example. Our view of morality, both in a personal sense and towards others, would reflect this human-based paradigm.

⁸⁹ For a view of evil from the perspective of a trained psychiatrist and psychoanalyst, see Richard Gallagher, "As a psychiatrist, I diagnose mental illness. Also, I help spot demonic possession." *Washington Post Outlook*, July 3, 2016, p. B1.

In this view of reality, justice would be entirely a human affair, with no spiritual consideration whatsoever. We would give our best and reasoned judgment on the effects of people's actions, thoughts, and feelings on mankind individually and as a whole in order to determine what is just. Cultural and secular values would have a predominant influence on our systems of justice.

If both God and Evolution Are the Origins of Morals

The combined perspective of the origins of morals is based on the assumption that God is the Creator of both nature and the soul and that morals reflect both spiritual and secular characteristics. In this paradigm, good would include actions, thoughts, and feelings that further mankind's positive evolution (such as a harmonious society and protected environment) and that are aligned with God's will for the soul (such as expression of the inner quality and upholding universal values such as equality and freedom). That which is not-good or bad would run counter to the positive direction of mankind and would not be aligned with God's will. Evil would be defined as that which deliberately tries to destroy mankind's higher potential and which seeks to undermine God's goodness wherever it might be found. Under the combined theory of the origin of morals, justice would be defined in terms of both human conditions (reflecting both practical and ideal considerations) as well as our best interpretations of God's intent for mankind.

Similarities and Differences

In terms of practical moral guidelines within the ethics of the inner quality, it does not make much difference whether we prefer one or another of the three explanations for the origin of morals. The terms good, bad, evil, right, wrong, moral, and immoral can be used fairly consistently in any discussion of inner quality ethics and morality. This reflects not only the

spiritual and material sides of humanity, but also the many common values and standards held across the world's cultures.⁹⁰

There are some differences between the three theories in terms of the claimed authoritativeness of judicial systems, however. In systems incorporating a view of the spiritual origin of morality, societies often try to empower and justify their judicial systems by using absolutist language reflecting their understanding of God's will and intentions. This can make judicial challenge difficult. In cultures envisioning an evolutionary or secular origin of morality, people tend to look to themselves or their leaders as final arbiters of what is just. These judicial systems are not considered to be based on God's will but rather human beliefs and therefore subject to change over time.

In judicial systems which combine secular and spiritual origins for morality, laws and judicial administration are intended to reflect both religions and secular traditions. General principles of fairness and equal justice are considered to be time honored standards. Systems of justice are generally viewed as human inventions, but are considered to be strongly influenced by spiritual values and perhaps even divinely inspired in part. Change in the judicial system is possible, albeit through processes of careful deliberation rather than human fiat. The ethics of the inner quality as discussed in this book assumes both evolutionary and spiritual origins of human morality and judicial systems.

⁹⁰ Most modern studies tend to focus on explaining the differences in moral value systems. However, some work has been done on defining universal values. For example, see Richard T. Kinnier, et al., "A Short List of Universal Values," especially pp. 9-10 and pp. 12-16, *Counseling and Values*, Vol. 45, October 2000, <http://personal.tcu.edu/pwitt/universal%20values.pdf>.

Basic Principles of Inner Quality Morality

From our discussion thus far, we can deduce certain principles of morality that provide a framework for individual ethical and moral standards based on the inner quality. These moral principles include the following: maximizing good, avoiding bad things, trusting in oneself, never giving up, being socially responsible, and protecting the environment on which we all depend. Each of these principles are briefly explained below.

Principle of Maximizing the Good

Since few people are perfect, our behaviors, thoughts, and feelings are not always as they ought to be. Nonetheless, some of our choices are clearly better than others. In order to prioritize steps to self-improvement, we can develop methods of weighing the quantitative and qualitative impact of our moral decisions. This is the utilitarian side of inner quality ethics. The methodologies we devise can help us determine where we should concentrate our efforts for maximum benefit to ourselves and others. Being the best person you can be in the here and now is an example of applying the moral principle of maximizing the good in yourself.

Principle of Avoiding Bad Things

The opposite of doing good things is to avoid doing bad things. In the early stages of becoming one's true self, a deliberate free will choice is often involved in moral decisions. When in this situation, it is better to avoid what appears to be the morally inappropriate choice and choose instead a good one. A good choice would be consistent with one's current understanding of the characteristics of one's own inner quality.

A certain amount of heightened awareness may be required when facing difficult moral choices. This is where the higher mind comes in. One can use the higher mind to think through the complexities and moral implications of decisions that must be made. Using the higher mind also makes a person more sensitive to intuition. Over time, the use of the higher mind becomes

automatic and knowing what to do becomes easier as good habits are formed and one's conscience and intuition move ever closer to the surface of outer or conscious awareness.

Principle of Trusting in Oneself

Another moral principle is to trust yourself to do what is appropriate. We are not talking about perfection here. We are referring to improving moral choices by strengthening confidence in our moral decision making. Part of that confidence-building is making a personal commitment to be one's best character whenever possible. When you commit to always doing your best and strive to do so, you gain trust in yourself as you strengthen self-discipline to act, think, and feel in ways congruent with your inner quality. Instead of needing to consciously decide to act in this way or that, you begin to increasingly move naturally in the proper direction. Expressing the inner quality becomes a habit, and the character of your inner quality becomes your outer character.

Principle of Never Giving Up

Because the process of becoming one's true self takes time, it is important to never give up on the effort. This is particularly true in the beginning, when old habits tend to draw one back into the routines of the old self. At this point, it is useful to consider what one most values: remaining comfortable with the lesser self, or striving to become the improved self? Once this decision is made, consistency in moving forward is a key factor in gradually refining one's moral choices and one's moral character.

Principle of Social Responsibility

If a common moral principle could be accepted among all humanity, it would probably be to expand goodness in the world. As we seek to become our true self, we can exert a positive influence on those whom we love and on our communities. In our social life, we ought to strive to be a good example. If we have a position of authority, we ought to take the responsibility of being a good example very seriously indeed. Whatever our role in life, we ought to adhere to

moral and ethical standards, based on an understanding of our best character, to guide us in our personal and social responsibilities.

Principle of Protecting the Planetary Ecosystem

Ethically speaking, every form of life ought to be respected because every form of life has some role to play in the planetary ecosystem. As humans, we can destroy life, preserve life, manipulate life, exploit life, create life, and pretty much do what we want with life. This human power over life, although not absolute, carries with it a grave responsibility not to destroy the very platform of our existence. This moral responsibility is given to us by nature and by God through the very forces governing the evolution of our body and soul. Whether we attribute our inner qualities to God or to nature, our actions here on earth ought to be the same: do the best we can – in a practical yet morally responsible way – to protect, sustain, and advance life. Following this guideline is the essence of inner quality ethics and the foundation of its morality.

A Secular Perspective on Inner Quality Ethics

Secularism is often defined as the separation of church and state in political affairs. However, secularism has a broader definition referring to human activities without spiritual influence. As we have seen, the inner quality and its ethics and morality can be considered from the points of view of spirituality, secularism, or a combination of both. Personally, I believe the best perspective is the combined view, but in this section I would like to argue the case that secularism and inner quality ethics are compatible and even mutually supportive.

Inner quality ethics is based on the principle that people ought to act, think, and feel in ways congruent with their best character. Doing so, strengthens the individual and helps to harmonize society, both positive directions in the evolution of humanity. What is unique in inner quality ethics is the definition of one's best character as being the inner quality of the person. The inner

quality, however, is not goodness in the sense of one's outer personality. The inner quality is the innermost character of goodness within the individual.

The inner quality resides within the bedrock of human consciousness. It is found at such a deep level because it is closely related to the evolution of the human species. The inner quality is good because, when expressed by the person, it helps the individual transcend personal limitations and build stronger social networks. In other words, the inner quality appears to be a product of nature's evolution as the core characteristic of each individual. It is part of the deeper recesses of the human consciousness that cause us to act in certain ways in order to survive as a species.

Knowledge of the inner quality is accessible. Anyone can experience and know their inner quality. This can be done simply by taking the time to reflect on the source of goodness within oneself. The ethics of the inner quality is based on the theory that, if a person can know their best character, he or she can develop a set of moral standards which will improve the individual and society. If people do this, then much more of the human potential comes within reach.

Modern Spirituality and Inner Quality Ethics

People have always embraced spirituality, as shown by the many religions in the world.⁹¹

Spirituality is a state of being reflected in a quest for deeper understanding of the meaning of life.

Millions of people have expressed their spirituality through established religions; millions more have expressed their spirituality through various cultural traditions and spiritual communities.

Remarkably, the threads and currents of recorded spiritual thought have had a strong continuity over the millennium, with gods named and renamed, concepts expressed and rephrased over and

⁹¹ "There is no culture recorded in human history which has not practiced some form of religion." So concludes Joshua J. Mark, "Religion in the Ancient World," *Ancient History Encyclopedia*, <http://www.ancient.eu/religion/>.

over again.⁹² To me, this continuity in spiritual thought can best be explained by a tendency toward spiritual belief in all mankind, with people everywhere perceiving a spiritual dimension of their lives. A vast amount of scholarship on spirituality is available in libraries and on the internet.⁹³ This section focuses more narrowly on modern spirituality as it relates to inner quality ethics.

Modern Spirituality Defined

Modern spirituality is the desire and activities of people in today's world to define and pursue their own spiritual path. Whether through an established church, New Age movement, or personal effort, modern spirituality is all about an individual trying to understand the spiritual aspects of himself, with the ultimate goal to become the true self. This individual spiritual search seems to be part of a modern global trend of people everywhere to have more freedom of choice in their lives. Inner quality ethics strongly encourages the exploration of personal spirituality, because the ethical theory is based on the assumption that everyone has a personal best character that can be discovered and expressed through free will. Knowing this best character enables the individual to develop a personal set of ethical and moral principles, which we have called inner quality ethics.

Understanding Human Spirituality

We normally think of five human senses: smell, taste, hearing, touch, and sight. However, we all have several other senses enabling us to interact with the world. One sense alerts us to hidden danger; another helps us to read a person's character; another enables us to intuit right and

⁹² See, for example, Wouter J. Hanegraaff, ed., *Dictionary of Gnosis & Western Esotericism* (Leiden, The Netherlands: Koninklijke Brill NV, 2006); and Wouter J. Hanegraaff, *Esotericism and the Academy: Rejected Knowledge in Western Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

⁹³ A strong academic movement has emerged in recent years to try to understand the influence of spirituality on cultures around the world. See, for example, G. William Bernard and Jeffrey J. Kripal, eds., *Crossing Boundaries: Essays on the Ethical Status of Mysticism* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2002); and Basarab Nicolescu, *From Modernity to Cosmodernity: Science, Culture, and Spirituality* (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2014).

wrong; another prompts us that someone needs our assistance. The sense of spirituality is the instrument through which we perceive spiritual things – as when we feel the Holy Spirit flowing through our body in moments of prayer or communion with the saints.

Our sense of spirituality helps us to experience the interconnectedness of all things in life; we are, after all, part of the universe. Our sense of spirituality enables us to perceive and appreciate the commonalities we all share. In this spiritual view of reality, God's Spirit is what binds us together. Our sense of spirituality provides a means for us as individuals to interact with that universal Spirit.

There are many scientific efforts underway to measure spirituality, especially in the field of medicine.⁹⁴ There also are scores of teachings around the world which describe various kinds of spiritual senses. Many spiritual organizations with links on the internet offer instruction on how to activate these senses through various techniques. In the inner quality philosophy, one's sensitivity to spiritual things increases gradually as one becomes more of the true self, because the true self is the integration of both the material and spiritual aspects of a person.

God, Spirit, Life, and Consciousness

There is no consensus on the definitions of God, spirit, life, or consciousness. Yet these things are intimately connected when inner quality ethics is examined from the perspective of spirituality. In inner quality ethics, these terms can be understood as meaning the following:

⁹⁴ For a review of some of these efforts, see Stefanie Monod, et al., "Instruments Measuring Spirituality in Clinical Research: A Systematic Review," *J Gen Intern Med*, 2011 Nov; 26(11): 1345–1357, <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3208480/>. See also, Lynne Blumberg, "What Happens to the Brain during Spiritual Experiences?" *theatlantic.com*, June 5, 2014, <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2014/06/what-happens-to-brains-during-spiritual-experiences/361882/>.

God. No one comprehends the totality of God. However, in inner quality ethics, God is the Initiator of all things. Human beings are part of the universe which God started, and this universe has evolved over billions of years. Inner quality ethics assumes that the universe has several dimensions, including dimensions associated with spirit, matter, life, consciousness, time, and space.⁹⁵

Being part of the universal creation, people can consider themselves as sons and daughters of God. There is nothing blasphemous about that declaration of true selfhood. Being part of the universe also means that people likely have a connection within themselves to at least some of the many dimensions of the universe. In inner quality ethics, human beings are considered to have both spiritual and material aspects of selfhood.

Spirit. Spirit and the spiritual world (or spiritual dimension) are assumed in inner quality ethics to be universally present. The human soul is considered to be spirit individualized in a single human lifestream.⁹⁶ Other species appear also to have unique spirits, such as dogs, dolphins, and panda bears. Another example of the interconnection between mankind and spirit is the temporal presence of the Holy Spirit, which people have experienced throughout the ages as a sudden and wonderful presence and spiritual power than enables them to do things not normally associated with human activities.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ For a discussion of dimensions of reality, see Paul Halpern, "How Many Dimensions Does the Universe Really Have?" *NOVA: The Nature of Reality*, April 3, 2014, <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/blogs/physics/2014/04/how-many-dimensions-does-the-universe-really-have/>.

⁹⁶ Many scientists are showing a renewed interest in understanding what "soul" actually is. See, for example, Robert Lanza, "Does the Soul Exist? Evidence Says 'Yes': New scientific theory recognizes life's spiritual dimension," *Psychology Today*, December 21, 2011, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/biocentrism/201112/does-the-soul-exist-evidence-says-yes>.

⁹⁷ Usually, the Holy Spirit is associated with Christianity. However, the Catholic Church has recognized that the Holy Spirit can visit any individual, whatever their religion or status in life. This suggests that the Holy Spirit is an aspect of God available to all of His sons and daughters. See, Giovanni Cereti, "Presence and Action of the Holy Spirit in

While the moral guidelines of inner quality ethics do not require the existence of God or a spiritual dimension, the ethical theory as a whole is made stronger and more complete when God and the spiritual aspect of man are considered. The spiritual dimension of mankind, for instance, helps to explain some of the attributes of the inner quality such as its timelessness and universal value. Presuming spiritual dimensions also helps in defining the nature of man and thus supports the metaphysical and meta-ethical aspects of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government.

Life. Scientists have not yet been able to definitively explain the conditions under which life can exist.⁹⁸ The required conditions are being constantly revised as we explore earth and space.⁹⁹ Inner quality ethics assumes an expansive definition of life, which includes the possibility of life in spiritual dimensions as well as in time and space. For example, if we accept the premise that God exists and that God is spirit, are we going to say that God is not alive because He is not physical? The same can be asked of the many saints to whom we pray, as well as our own souls, which, if they exist at all, certainly must have life and consciousness in some spiritual sense.

Consciousness. Consciousness is another of those terms that defy adequate definition.¹⁰⁰ All forms of life on earth seem to have consciousness, if that term is defined broadly enough.¹⁰¹ In

the World and in Other Religions," The Vatican: Commission for Interreligious Dialogue, http://www.vatican.va/jubilee_2000/magazine/documents/ju_mag_01091997_p-56_en.html.

⁹⁸ For an interesting discussion of how life might be defined, see "Life's Working Definition: Does It Work?" NASA, http://www.nasa.gov/vision/universe/starsgalaxies/life's_working_definition.html.

⁹⁹ There is recently discovered evidence that life on earth may have originated in the sunless depths of the ocean rather than shallow seas some 3.77 billion years ago, based on tube-like fossils similar to structures found at hydrothermal vents. See, Carolyn Gramling, "3.77-billion-year-old fossils stake new claim to oldest evidence of life," *Science*, May 1, 2017, <http://www.sciencemag.org/news/2017/03/377-billion-year-old-fossils-stake-new-claim-oldest-evidence-life>.

¹⁰⁰ The Center for Consciousness Studies at the University of Arizona in Tucson is an academic center examining the science behind consciousness. The Center's website contains resources on theories and explanations of consciousness, sense of self, and related subjects. See, <http://consciousness.arizona.edu/>.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, the interview with Lynn Margulis in "Bacterial Intelligence," *Astrobiology Magazine*, October 12, 2006, <http://www.astrobio.net/interview/bacterial-intelligence/>. See also the fascinating article describing the

inner quality ethics, consciousness is associated with life. Where there is life, there is assumed to be consciousness. If life is found in spiritual dimensions, then consciousness must be found in spiritual dimensions as well.

Human beings have many levels of consciousness (think of awakened awareness and dreaming). The mind is able with practice to perceive and use many of these levels of consciousness at will, as reported in various out-of-the-body experiences. In inner quality ethics, consciousness can be used by people to perceive and interact with different dimensions. It is the multidimensional capabilities of our consciousness that make it possible for us to perceive the inner quality, to glimpse the true self, and to use the higher mind – all of which contribute to developing inner quality ethical and moral standards. In turn, these standards enable us to make difficult moral choices with a high degree of confidence and to act deliberately in ways we believe to be congruent with our highest and innermost character.

The Science of Consciousness

The debate over consciousness has redoubled in recent years with the emergence of quantum physics, which studies very small components of existence such as atoms and photons. This branch of physics has generated theories (for instance, orchestrated objective reduction activity) that suggest consciousness may be a fundamental part of the universe.¹⁰² The diversity and variety of life, and hence types and levels of consciousness, on earth are astounding, with

behavioral choices of microbes by Jon Lieff, "Mind with No Brain -The Microbe 'Brain' – Sensory, Neuronal, Attributes of Microbes," in *Searching for the Mind*, January 7, 2012, <http://jonlieffmd.com/blog/microbes/a-mind-with-no-brain>.

¹⁰² Stuart Hameroff and Roger Penrose, "Consciousness in the universe: A review of the 'Orch OR' theory," *Physics of Life Reviews*, Vol. 11, Issue 1, March 2014, <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1571064513001188>. They concluded: "The Orch OR proposal suggests conscious experience is intrinsically connected to the fine-scale structure of space-time geometry, and that consciousness could be deeply related to the operation of the laws of the universe."

perhaps one trillion species now living on the planet.¹⁰³ In all cases of which I am aware, where there is life, there is consciousness, so that these two dimensions of the universe are probably intimately connected in some way like time and space.¹⁰⁴ In inner quality ethics, consciousness is not considered a product of the brain; however, the brain is a sensory organ that can perceive and use consciousness.¹⁰⁵ The exact distinction between brain, mind, and consciousness is something that has not been resolved satisfactorily by science at this point.¹⁰⁶

What we do know is that, as a species, human beings have advanced mental capabilities. We are distinguished on this planet by our ability to think abstractly, look for ways to change reality, create religion and culture, record and write history, and other traits.¹⁰⁷ It is our mind that gives us the power to control our behavior and determine our future to some extent. We have used our minds to design alternative paths and images for ourselves. Some of these alternative realities are constructive; some are harmful to ourselves and others.

The great challenge for inner quality ethics is how to use the higher mind's power of reason to realign individual consciousness with the intentions of one's soul and thereby bring to outer

¹⁰³ A 2016 study using statistical measurements places the figure of existing species (both microbial and non-microbial) on the planet at around 1 trillion. See, "There Might Be 1 Trillion Species on Earth," *Livescience*, May 5, 2016, <http://www.livescience.com/54660-1-trillion-species-on-earth.html>.

¹⁰⁴ See, "What is the relationship between space and time?" in <https://einstein.stanford.edu/content/relativity/a10743.html>.

¹⁰⁵ For an argument that the brain is the creator of consciousness, see, "How Does the Brain Create Consciousness?" in *Medical Daily*, May 6, 2016, <http://www.medicaldaily.com/human-brain-consciousness-episodic-memory-personal-narrative-social-structure-384757>. For an argument that consciousness is not created by the brain, see Steve Taylor, "The Puzzle of Consciousness: Consciousness may be more than just brain activity," *Psychology Today*, November 4, 2014, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/out-the-darkness/201411/the-puzzle-consciousness>.

¹⁰⁶ See, for example, the *Quora* dialogue on "What is the difference between consciousness and mind?" <https://www.quora.com/What-is-the-difference-between-consciousness-and-mind>.

¹⁰⁷ For an informal but useful list of uniquely human characteristics, see http://hrsbstaff.ednet.ns.ca/waymac/Sociology/A%20Term%201/1.%20Infant%20Development/Meaning_of_being_human.htm. For an interesting discussion of how the human brain is largely responsible for our uniqueness, see Melissa Hogenboom, "The traits that make human beings unique," *BBC Future*, July 6, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20150706-the-small-list-of-things-that-make-humans-unique>.

awareness the existence of one's best character and true self. This requires a deep understanding of the relationship between soul and outer awareness. Knowledge of the inner quality broadens one's ability to use consciousness as a bridge between the material and spiritual sides of one's being, and thus helps to align the will of the person in embodiment with the intentions of his or her soul in spiritual realms.

In inner quality ethics, there is a certain sanctity of spirit, life, and consciousness, wherever it may be found.¹⁰⁸ Inner quality ethics is based on the belief that mankind's sense of spirituality encompasses not only how we live as human beings but also how we interact with other parts of life and even the environment. Inner quality ethics is not a steady-state set of principles or moral imperatives. It is based on our current understanding of life and all of its interdependencies. As we learn more, our understanding of ethics and morality will evolve as well. Inner quality ethics supports the contention that science and spirituality can co-exist and in fact can complement each other in the evolution of humanity.¹⁰⁹ This is logical, since man is both material and spiritual in nature; therefore, the science of matter and the understanding of spirituality ought to merge at some level of mankind's consciousness.

Reconciling God's Will and Man's Will through Inner Quality Ethics

One of the most elusive of ethical goals is the alignment of man's free will with the will of God.

That alignment is sometimes difficult for human beings, because our self-determination is influenced by all kinds of personal and social factors; also, very few people truly know what God wants in a particular situation. To address this challenge, inner quality ethics assumes that, if

¹⁰⁸ At what point the soul connects with the body of a child has always been a controversial subject. For a beautiful story of a mother-to-be sensing the soul of her unborn child, see Elisabeth Hallett, "Pre-Birth Communication," *The Natural Child Project*, http://www.naturalchild.org/guest/elisabeth_hallett3.html.

¹⁰⁹ "Science and religion: Reconcilable differences," *Berkeley Project on Understanding Science*, http://undsci.berkeley.edu/article/science_religion.

God is the Initiator of the cosmos, then God must have some plan in mind. The possible existence of such a divine plan would seem to imply logic and reason, capabilities mankind shares at least partially with God. If such a plan does exist and it is rational, then we ought to be able to model what that plan might be – at least from the perspective of the human mind.

Possible Models for God's Plan

Assuming a relationship between cause and effect, we can speculate that there are at least two ways to develop a universal plan. One way would be for God to determine every aspect of the universe and its development. Another way would be for God to create a basic framework for the universe which would allow its various components to evolve and develop according to their own properties, laws, and principles. We can call these alternative plans the deterministic model and the framework model.

Deterministic Model

If God has determined everything beforehand, then all events in the universe would be pre-determined. Nothing would be outside of God's direct involvement. This description of God's plan, however, does not seem to match what we perceive as reality. I can walk here, or I can walk there. I can eat this, or I can eat that. The deterministic model of the universe does not adequately account for the degrees of freedom that we observe in almost all lifeforms.¹¹⁰

One could argue in this model that God does not have to predetermine all events. God could just intervene when He chooses, and this would still determine the outcome of things. But, again, God's routine intervention in this way is not observable – although some instances of it have been recorded (e.g., the stories found in Exodus of the *Bible*). Moreover, this explanation does

¹¹⁰ See the interesting article by Josh Adler, "The Proof For Free Will In All Living Beings: Quantum physicists argue that organisms from trees to bugs make choices," *Primemind.com*, <https://primemind.com/the-proof-for-free-will-in-all-living-beings-44b502597518#.1cs1a110o>.

not seem plausible given the infinite number of events, big and small, that occur constantly. For these reasons, there does not appear to be a pre-determined plan that God has made for the universe – at least not that we can commonly perceive and understand.

Framework Model

In this hypothetical description of God's plan for the universe, God creates a basic architecture comprising multiple dimensions and objects such as time and space, matter and energy, spirit, life, and consciousness, and so on. In this model, God does not determine all events in the universe. Rather, God has created a universe of various components, each of which is governed by its own laws and possessing its own nature. For example, matter functions within the laws of physics, such as gravity, magnetism, and chemistry; energy has its laws, such as those associated with light and electricity; life has its laws, such as evolution and levels of consciousness; spirit has its laws, as reflected in the processes of the soul's maturation.

From the perspective of human observation and experience, the framework model of God's plan for the universe makes more sense than the deterministic model. Based on this reasoning, inner quality ethics assumes that God's plan for the universe is a framework in which its various components evolve in accordance with their own natural properties, laws, and principles. God does not appear to predetermine everything, although we cannot discount divine intervention if God chooses to do so.

The Possibility of Divine Intervention

There is, in fact, a substantial amount of circumstantial evidence that God or His Representatives do intervene periodically in human affairs. Why else would people in virtually all cultures, for as long as we have records, pray for divine assistance? Somewhere in our collective memory we have learned to accept such a possibility. Faith in the existence of God is almost always accompanied by belief that God could and sometimes does intervene in our lives. Throughout

history, there have been stories of God, angels, saints, masters, and other Divine Representatives assisting people. This is so well established that the canonization process for sainthood in the Catholic Church requires documented evidence of miracles.

Interconnectivity and Integration

By interconnectivity, I mean the linkages between the various components of self, as well as between the self and other parts of life.¹¹¹ Interconnectivity with other parts of life is one of the attributes of the inner quality. This sense of interconnectivity is often associated with mysticism, but actually such interaction is neither unusual nor difficult to experience.¹¹²

The sense of interconnectivity depends heavily on trust and integration. Trust is important because it clears the biases in one's consciousness and facilitates the natural flow of spiritual energy between all living things. Distrust, on the other hand, acts as a barrier to this natural flow. If you don't trust yourself, how can you trust God? If you don't trust God, how can you trust yourself?

Integration is one of the key concepts in inner quality ethics. Integration in this context means the merging in one's consciousness of the spiritual and material sides of ourselves. A person can use the higher mind and his or her set of inner quality ethics to better align the consciousness of the embodied self with the soul's spiritual aspirations. This state of alignment between the outer material self and the inner spiritual self is sometimes called "integrated consciousness."

¹¹¹ For one scholar's discussion of this, see Christopher Uhl, "Research Shows Humans' Interconnectivity," http://personal.psu.edu/cfu1/CUhlpersonalwebsite/essays/chrisuhl-Research_Shows_Humans'_Interconnectivity.pdf.

¹¹² The near universality of mysticism is one of the observations from the book edited by G. William Bernard and Jeffrey J. Kripal, *Crossing Boundaries: Essays on the Ethical Status of Mysticism* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2002).

Partnership between God and Man

When you think about it, God really does not need us to worship Him. God most likely wants us to enter into a partnership with Him to expand goodness on our planetary home. This can best be accomplished when we understand our full potential as human beings and begin to use our physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual capabilities to serve the purposes of that partnership. The inner quality is a bridge between God's will and human will. The ethics of the inner quality helps the consciousness of the individual to cross that bridge and bring to human life the full benefits of striving always to do one's best to advance goodwill among mankind.

In the inner quality philosophy of ethics, the purpose of life for human beings is to learn how to properly use their free will. The proper use of free will is to act in ways reflecting our best character of goodness: our inner quality. For me, that means to act, think, and feel in ways consistent with honor and integrity. For others, the proper use of free will is to act, think, and feel in ways consistent with their own inner qualities. The expressions of God's goodness are infinite, and there are an infinite number of personal inner qualities which align with God's will. That is why each person's inner quality is both unique and valuable as a part of the overall goodness existing as potential within the human species.

Examples of Applied Ethics

By way of example, this section demonstrates how to apply inner quality ethics to three challenging areas: being ethical in the world of politics, living morally under conditions of social instability, and developing a personal set of ethical and moral guidelines. Since inner quality ethics are determined individually, the conclusions reached here are not meant to be definitive for everyone but only reflect the application of my ethical thought.

Ethics in Politics

For centuries, there have been two contending perspectives on how men should be governed.

One view is that politics should be the art of the practical and that those who follow its profession should be guided by the simple principle of determining what works best in the world of men – in other words, politics ought to be guided by expediency. Another view is that politics should be an instrument for improving the quality of life for individuals and society, and that government should strive to serve the higher principles of mankind, even at the cost of expediency at times. These two approaches are frequently referred to as realism and idealism in political theory. In practice, the two approaches are often blended in politics, but analytically differentiating between the two theories is useful.

Machiavellian Theory of Expediency

Niccolo Machiavelli is most famous for writing *The Prince*, a short manuscript completed in 1513 as a way of introducing himself for possible employment to the Medici family, rulers of Florence.¹¹³ Under the previous administration, he had been a diplomat in several European courts. Falsely accused of plotting against the Medici, he was arrested and tortured before being released. But his political career was ruined and he was forced into early retirement.

Gifted with a powerful mind and astute observation, highly ambitious and desperately wanting to serve his city and state, Machiavelli turned to writing as an outlet for his creative energies. Much of his writing was based on imaginary conversations between himself and scholars, historians, philosophers, and statesmen of the past, as they would gather in the privacy of his library to discuss the great political issues of the ages.

¹¹³ This section on Machiavelli's life is based on Peter Bondanella and Mark Musa, *The Portable Machiavelli* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982).

The Prince is a classic argument for realism in politics, as it describes how a ruthless and cunning leader might seize the moment and unify all of Italy under his rule. The argument centered on the premise that a successful ruler must always do what is necessary because, in the political affairs of men, the final result is the arbiter of whether the action was justified. Much as Sun Tzu's great treatise on the *Art of War* has contributed to military strategy through the centuries,¹¹⁴ so *The Prince* has become recognized as a near perfect paradigm for expediency in politics.

The irony of Machiavelli's contributions to political science is that *The Prince* was hurriedly written in search of a job, whereas his much larger but incomplete work – *The Discourses* – has been mostly overlooked. In *The Discourses*, Machiavelli argues in favor of a democratic and republican form of government, describing a political model that did not take permanent hold in Europe until the late 18th century.

In Machiavelli – as often in ourselves – we see the tension between doing whatever is necessary to achieve our personal goals and doing what is right to serve moral ends. Had Machiavelli been aware of his inner quality and used his higher mind, his advice to the Medici might have been different. At minimum, he might have cautioned against always using expediency and self-interest as a standard, and instead argued for at least considering the use of good means to achieve the desired result of improving the lives of citizens.

From the perspective of inner quality ethics, human beings are not always vile, lazy, and prone to anger, as described by Machiavelli. People also have an innate sense of fairness, nobility, honor, and integrity. A political leader, whether an autocrat or elected official, should use the higher

¹¹⁴ There are many translations of Sun Tzu's classic from about 500 B.C. For example, see, Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, translated by Samuel B. Griffith (London: Oxford University Press, 1963).

mind to differentiate between available options, and almost always choose the pathway least damaging to the interests of those for whom the leader is responsible. Very often, that pathway is both morally sound as well as effective in implementation.

Pragmatism and Virtue in Politics

By its very nature, politics is the art of the possible rather than the art of the ideal. Determining what is possible, however, is highly subjective. The vision of a leader using his or her inner quality and higher mind can be considerably more expansive than that of a leader with a narrower view of what is possible. Simply said, the range of pragmatic options from the perspective of the inner quality and higher mind is generally much wider than the range of options from more limited views.

Why is this? The reason the higher mind offers a broader vision and more options is because the higher mind expands the boundaries of perceptions and understanding, so that one is able to draw upon a wider range of experience and knowledge. The higher mind improves one's insights, and the higher mind uses these insights – in a combined rational and intuitive way in conjunction with the inner quality – to explore more thoroughly the choices available in given circumstances.

Drawing upon the inner quality and using the higher mind provide a leader with more options to choose from, and more options usually increase the probability of being able to make wiser decisions. The higher mind brings greater clarity and integrates more completely the different dimensions of political choice. Perfection is almost never a realistic goal in politics, but better decision making ought always to be pursued.

Personal values play a critical role in political decision making. All people have values, and values often determine the criteria by which options are weighed. An individual's values can come from many sources: family, culture, church, friends, peers, profession, and experience. But

a person's highest values and standards ought to come from within oneself. These are the foundational beliefs each person uses to guide his or her way through life.

The inner quality is the best character of goodness within an individual. One's best character is the strongest foundation on which to build personal values. Values built on the inner quality are rock-solid in that they reflect a person's assessment of their true worth as an individual. Mistakes will be made, but an individual who bases his decisions on the standards of his or her inner quality will always be able to say that they did their very best in the circumstances in which they found themselves.

A leader who is able to combine the ethical standards of the inner quality with a developed higher mind is a leader far more likely to make decisions beneficial to society than a leader who either lacks such strong personal values or who is unable to draw upon the powerful capabilities of the higher mind. Where citizens have a voice in choosing their leaders, the people should look for evidence of both strong moral values and clarity of mind in the candidates for office from whom they must choose.

[Ethics under Conditions of Social Stress](#)

One of the problems in ethical theory is how should one live in a dysfunctional and chaotic society. For example, how is it possible to live ethically in a society in which an absolute dictator seeks to control everyone to serve his or her purposes? How is possible to be moral in times of revolution and war, when law and order have collapsed and everyone is looking out for themselves as a matter of survival? Here we look at a few of these situations from the point of view of inner quality ethics – again, with no definitive answers applicable to everyone.

Being Ethical under Tyranny

In conditions where voicing opposition to or demonstrating opinions different from the tyrant are dangerous, an ethical person has the choice either to be outspoken and thus suffer probable persecution, or to live privately within one's heart and mind. Both paths are legitimate. To choose to live privately brings no shame, because to do otherwise would likely invite harm to oneself and one's loved ones, with little hope of changing the system during one's lifetime. Changing a system of tyranny often requires a revolution or war, and a very bloody one if history is any guide. Being ethical during a revolution or war are separate topics discussed below.

Under tyranny, there is often inner tension in the person who is ethical but unable to fully express his morality, even to family and friends. It seems inevitable, however, that the goodness of one's character will emerge at times through a sympathetic smile or perhaps a small gesture of kindness to someone in distress. The ethical person must be aware that, in addition to looking for signs of opposition, authoritarian societies might perceive spontaneous gestures of kindness as possible evidence of independent and hence dangerous thought.

A person who is ethical under conditions of tyranny must spend a great deal of time exploring the inner quality and true self in the quiet confines of heart and mind. Fortunately, the consciousness of mankind is very deep and such quiet contemplation is possible. In fact, when one considers the many thousands of monks, nuns, and priests who have lived in isolation in order to develop their spiritual understanding, such a life can be rewarding in a spiritual sense.

Prayer and meditation, self-development and discipline – all these things can result in a gradual refinement of the individual. Adversity in outer conditions can increase the pace of becoming one's true self, as witnessed in the lives of the saints. Unless a person feels a calling otherwise, there is nothing unethical about keeping one's head down in times of trouble. For those who

must speak the truth or act from moral outrage no matter the consequences, then greater be their praise, for their sacrifices have sometimes brought far-reaching benefits to others.

From the point of view of inner quality ethics, tyrants rarely have any legitimacy and can be replaced when conditions are favorable. A person of honor and integrity can, if they so choose, play a role in the emergence of a new society. However, great moral care must still be exercised in revolution or war.

Being Ethical in Revolution and War

During a revolution, many factions typically compete for influence and power. The various factions opposing the government can usually agree on the need to overthrow the existing authorities and to reestablish society. But little else. Very few authoritarian or corrupt governments willingly give up their power; and since threatened leaders often have few moral scruples, they are likely to use all available means to put down any revolutionary movement. Given the increased destructive power of modern weapons, this translates into widespread death, destruction, and hardship. If the opposition remains firm, the struggle will most likely be prolonged and civil society will be brought to the brink of collapse.

Under these conditions, people become hardened and insensitive – too much suffering has been witnessed and experienced. What becomes important is safety and somehow managing to find enough food to eat and a safe place to rest at night. Survival is paramount. Ideals of transcendence easily fade, except perhaps as a vision of a better tomorrow held as a last hope.

For an ethical person, there would be joy that a tyranny is at last ending, but sadness that the cost of freeing the people has been so high. An ethical person would be justified to support or actively participate in the revolution, since the alternative of tolerating an unjust government may seem unpalatable. An ethical person may well play a leading role in the revolution, because they are

seen as being mostly interested in the wellbeing of the people and hence can be trusted over those whose motivations seem to be more selfish.

If the ethical person is a leader in the revolution, then the moral dilemmas faced by that person are profound. In revolution lives are lost, property is destroyed, and injustice is found everywhere. The ethical person must be able to accept imperfection in others – and perhaps in himself – if progress is to be made in fighting the tyrant. This can be difficult, because someone in contact with the higher mind knows what is proper, and yet also is aware of what may be required. And what is proper and what is necessary do not always coincide during periods of extreme violence such as revolution.

The ethical person must use the higher mind as much as possible to walk through the moral dilemmas and provide sound and clear guidance to those who may look to him or her for leadership. In the end, however, the highest immediate good is overthrowing the tyrant and freeing the people. When that goal is achieved, the ethical person can work to establish a more honorable and just society.

In the case of war, there are just wars and unjust wars. Just wars are in defense of one's society, when that society is a decent one being subject to threat or attack. Unjust wars are those started for false reasons, especially wars begun by leaders seeking personal gain from the loss of life and treasure of those for whom they are responsible.

In a modern society with a high level of information publicly available, an ethical person can usually determine when a war is justified and when it is not. But defending one's country is a time-honored obligation. Sometimes, opposition to an unjust war is not considered sufficient reason not to support the war – especially from the point of view of government. Depending on

the circumstances and the law in question, opposing even an unjust war can lead to punishment of some sort. Therefore, an ethical person must weigh the costs to himself and loved ones if he should openly oppose the unjust war, or if he should defend the country if called upon. On the other hand, if the war is just, an ethical person will almost certainly support the government and try to assist in ensuring victory for his nation.

There may be instances, however, when an ethical person both acknowledges the justification of the war, yet believes it is morally wrong to kill others, even one's enemy. Under these circumstances, it is proper for an ethical person to declare himself unwilling to fight as a soldier but willing to do other things to support the effort, such as medical, logistical, manufacturing, or other non-lethal activities. Very often, these contributions are of great value and are accepted in lieu of service as a soldier.

If the ethical person is not a conscientious objector and the war is just, then the individual is morally justified in taking up arms in defense of his country. Such people often become exemplary soldiers, because they are willing to lay down their lives for the good of others.

Ethics and Law Enforcement

Society must have order if citizens are to enjoy safety and freedom of movement and expression. Since some people are intent on doing harm to others, however, law enforcement is necessary in even a stable society. Nonetheless, law enforcement can also be an instrument of oppression and injustice. To ensure this does not happen, it is very important that high ethical standards be upheld within the law enforcement community, backed up by oversight and accountability for the use of power and force.

An ethical person in a society having corrupt law enforcement is in many ways as much of a victim of the system as if he or she were a citizen living under a tyrant. The tyrant may have

more power over society as a whole, but a corrupt police force, or even a bullying individual officer of the law, can have a devastatingly negative impact on people with whom they directly interact.

While an ethical person in a tyranny may have to postpone confrontation until an opportune moment, an ethical person facing corrupt law enforcement can often seek immediate redress by turning to higher-level government officials. This does carry some risk in highly corrupt communities, so caution must be exercised to minimize the possibility of retribution against oneself or one's family. But it is usually possible to figure out how to convey to higher officials the immediacy of the problem and the need for corrective action. Often, this can be done through the media, because most government officials are sensitive to what is publically said about them or their areas of responsibility.

If law enforcement is well-managed and respects citizens, then an ethical person would certainly support law enforcement agencies and cooperate with them in all legal ways.

Ethics in Everyday Life

Ethical principles are fairly easily to comprehend at higher levels of abstraction, such as the responsibility to help preserve life on earth. At the highest level, the ethics of the inner quality can be summarized in simple statements such as: *Do unto others what you would have them do unto you*, and *Take what God has given you and do something good with it*. Striving always to do one's best will inevitably draw a person to his or her inner quality and result in an individual becoming more and more of the true self.

It is important to remember that inner quality ethics and its moral guidelines are not static systems of belief. Ethical and moral standards need to be revisited from time-to-time, because

our self-awareness continuously evolves and our circumstances in life constantly change. To be relevant, ethics and especially morals must be practical.

When we speak of practical ethics, we enter the realm of what is called “applied ethics”. The applied ethics of the inner quality are developed by each individual as the person faces specific opportunities, challenges, and responsibilities in their life. The moral guidelines followed in various situations may be somewhat inconsistent with each other. What is consistent, however, is the deliberate application of one’s inner quality to the situation at hand. For instance, my inner quality is honor and integrity. I try to apply honor and integrity in major decisions in my life. Whether I do action A or action B in similar situations, however, is strongly influenced by the specific issue and its circumstances.

Over the years, I have developed a few ethical principles that I try to apply when making practical moral decisions. These principles including maximizing the good, avoiding bad things, trusting in God and oneself, never giving up, being socially responsible, and protecting the environment. Other moral guides I use include:

- Doing the best I can every day
- Meditating on what my inner quality means and how it can be reflected in my decisions
- Approaching life as a partnership with God
- Identifying the barriers in my consciousness which prevent me from becoming more of my inner quality
- Strengthening my self-discipline and self-control
- Trying to communicate with others at the level of the soul

- Keeping up-to-date in my areas of professional interest, so I may be able to contribute to the common good.
- Being grateful to God for life, opportunity, and the inner quality – the key things I need to assume personal responsibility for my life and to fulfill my duty.

None of these guidelines are exceptional or meant for others to follow. They are only useful to me in my efforts to improve myself. The guidelines are meant to illustrate that inner quality ethics are both spiritual and practical, and easily applied to one's circumstances in life.

Conclusion

Becoming one's true self has been one of the primary goals of ethics for thousands of years; it seems to be human nature to try to discover and become one's true self. The true self has several meanings, however. One meaning is the perfected soul; another meaning is the perfected person. In both cases, what is being perfected is the expression of the individual's unique and best character of goodness, which we have called the inner quality.

A person's inner quality has both spiritual and material dimensions. Spiritually, inner qualities are the unique characters given human souls by God. Materially, inner qualities are the characteristics of human goodness our species has evolved through eons of development on this planet. From both perspectives, the inner quality is what gives us individuality, personal goodness, self-worth, moral courage, and value as a person.

The goal of inner quality ethics is to assist the individual to know and become his or her true self. Using our higher mind to analyze our inner quality and unique circumstances in life, we can develop the ideal and practical elements of our own system of ethics and morals. These ethical

principles and moral guidelines, in turn, enable us to better express our inner quality, or best character.

For individuals seeking to contact their inner quality, one of the easiest ways is to meditate on the source of goodness within themselves. From my experience, this type of meditation leads one to a point of light within that radiates a certain characteristic of goodness. That characteristic is the inner quality. Reflecting the inner quality in one's behavior, thought, and feeling brings into alignment one's outer personality with one's soul. This alignment of the material and spiritual sides of ourselves gradually results in our becoming our true self. When we function as our true self, we naturally want to do what is right in life. And that sense of right desire and right mindfulness draws us together with God in a partnership to advance His plan for our souls and for all of humanity. The alignment of God's will and man's will is greatly facilitated by pursuing the processes outlined in the inner quality philosophy of ethics.

Chapter 3: The Inner Quality Philosophy of Government

The previous chapter described how the inner quality and higher mind could be used to develop a personal system of ethics based on one's best character. Chapter 3 explains the close relationship between the character of individual citizens and their social and governing institutions.

In the inner quality philosophy of government, people are key to the proper functioning of government. The quality of governance is influenced not only by leaders and officials, but also by citizens who have the social responsibility to hold government accountable – especially in the sense of being efficient, enacting appropriate laws and regulations, pursuing justice and fairness, and providing security for all.

The character of individuals is a critical determinant of good government, because institutions, policies, and style of politics all flow from people. In government, almost everything is personal: people make political decisions and people's lives are affected by those decisions. Efforts to improve government by streamlining institutions or implementing new policies and programs will always have limited success as long as people themselves also do not change for the better.

In its goal to improve government, the inner quality philosophy seeks first to improve the moral quality of man and then to improve the political system itself. Although government can and should play a significant role in encouraging individual citizens to improve their character, it is the character of people which inclines them to hold government accountable to limit the abuse of power. The people themselves constitute the strongest foundation for government excellence.

The Role of Ethics in Governance

The inner quality philosophy of government is closely related to theories of ethics. Based on the discussion found above in Chapter 2, some of the more important traditional ethical insights can be summarized as follows:

Among others, the ancient Greek philosophers were very interested in the relationship between ethics and government. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle all believed that individual virtue in citizens (what we term the inner quality, or character of the soul) is critical to the functioning of good government. And like the Neoplatonists, the inner quality philosophy of governance views individual virtue as providing a direct link between God and man – e.g., as man expresses his best character he is in fact aligning his free will with the will of God.

The concepts in the Ten Commandments and other inspired ethical systems contain moral codes commonly reflected in laws and rules found in cultures around the world. In addition to spiritual guidance, peoples everywhere have developed ethical and political theories to meet human needs such as: the need for individuality (Kierkegaard and Nietzsche), the need for social order (Hobbes and Locke), the need for social fairness (Rawls), the need for supportive relationships (Gilligan), and the need to respect all of life (Singer).

These and other philosophers turned to ethics as a way to address and balance many of the tensions endemic to human society and government. There will always be, for example, a certain amount of tension between advocates of policies supporting free will as the highest good and those supporting social justice as the highest good. Both goals are correct; however, for society to be stable, a certain balance must be found which is suitable at a given stage of social development. Another example of tension is maintaining a proper balance between individual autonomy and state authority, a balance that is constantly shifting due to changing political, social, economic, and cultural conditions. Other areas of persistent tension exist between those who believe in the right to enjoy the fruit of one's labor and those who believe in distribution of wealth to benefit the needy.

The inner quality philosophy of government attempts to balance these various perspectives by placing them within a single integrated paradigm focused on improving the individual first and then addressing his social and political institutions. This holistic approach is reflected in how the three principal schools of normative ethics – virtue ethics, consequential ethics, and principle ethics – are adopted in the inner quality political philosophy.

The focus of virtue ethics is on individual character, the expression of which helps one to becoming the true self. Becoming the true self leads to personal excellence, a good life, and the ability to make positive contributions to society. While Aristotle focused on reason as being the key to finding virtue in oneself, Confucius focused on properly understanding relationships between people.

The focus of consequential ethics is on the results of one's actions. According to utilitarian's like Bentham and Mill, government policy should seek to produce the greatest amount of happiness for the largest number of people. That standard of utility should be the measure of appropriate social, economic, cultural, and political policy.

The focus of principle ethics is on defining ethical principles by which to guide one's life. As represented by Kant, an individual's duty to self and society ought to be governed by a set of self-defined moral principles. The most important of these self-defined principles is the categorical imperative, which is a moral standard applicable to all people at all times.

The inner quality philosophy of government integrates the three main schools of normative ethics. In the philosophy, individuals should identify and express in personal, social, and political life their virtue or inner quality. Individuals and governments alike ought to take into account the needs and interests of the greatest number of people possible in their contemplated actions. And

citizens owe it to themselves and to society to always dutifully follow their highest ethical principles in personal, social, and political life. In the inner quality philosophy of government, these currents of normative thought complement each other and should be integrated in one's consciousness and in political theory.

Applied ethics is the third main area of ethics, along with meta-ethics and normative ethics.

Applied ethics is not comprised of a single school of thought; rather, applied ethics seeks to identify a variety of ethical and moral approaches to address specific issues in daily life. In terms of the inner quality philosophy of government, much of its focus is on how ethics may be applied practically to the many issues surrounding the political life of citizens and society as a whole.

The integrative nature of the inner quality philosophy of government will become more apparent in the next section, which develops in greater detail the various components of the philosophy.

[The Inner Quality Philosophy of Government](#)

The ethical principles and moral standards derived from one's discovery and contemplation of the inner quality do not require a belief in a Supreme Being or a spiritual dimension in life. It is good to have this belief and it provides a strong foundation for one's ethics, but individuals can be ethical whether or not they believe in God. Inner quality ethics is primarily based on an integration of spiritual and evolutionary interpretations of reality, because the integration of these paradigms best explains the complex nature of mankind.

A philosophy of government requires the assumption of a certain paradigm of reality. This is necessary because from assumptions of reality flow interpretations of mankind's nature, and from those interpretations flow assessments of the political needs of mankind. Once those needs are identified, then the ideal government's purpose, form, institutions, and policies flow logically. There ought to be in political philosophy a reasoned connection between how one

views reality and how one theorizes mankind should be governed. The inner quality philosophy of government adopts the integrated ethical approach of man being both material and spiritual, and builds upon that paradigm a theory of governance.

Certain key issues are traditionally addressed in political philosophy. Formulated as questions, these issues include: What is reality? What is the nature of man? What is the purpose of government? What is the proper balance between idealism and pragmatism in politics? And what is the ideal form of government? In the sections below, the inner quality philosophy of government will address these issues. A brief summary of the main elements of the political philosophy will be found at the end of the chapter.

What Is Reality?

Defining how one views reality is important in a philosophy of government, because perceptions of reality comprise the conceptual topography which greatly influences the framework of the governance system itself. In defining reality, certain assumptions need to be made. We have discussed some of these in the meta-ethical section in the previous chapter. Here we will briefly restate our fundamental assumptions about reality, how one knows truth, and what is the presumed relationship between God and man.

Knowing Reality

In the inner quality philosophy of government, the fundamental assumptions of reality include:

- The only absolute reality is God, the Initiator of all things in all dimensions. As human beings, we are a small part of the universe and therefore understand only a portion of God's reality. What mankind perceives as reality is subject to change because of the material and spiritual evolutionary processes occurring constantly in our domain of existence.

- The soul of man is a creation of God, and therefore human beings are both material and spiritual in nature. The fullest potential of mankind can only be realized when individuals, societies, and cultures work to integrate the spiritual and material sides of humanity.
- Because evolutionary change is inevitable in time and space, the permanent perfection of man in physical form is impossible. Nor can human institutions ever be perfected. Absolutely perfect political systems are only ideals; however, ideals play a useful role in human affairs by setting forth goals which can lead to significant improvements in the affairs of men.
- Since human beings have both a material and spiritual side, men and women can greatly improve their personal and social conditions if they seek to align their free will with their understanding of the will of God. The will of God may be impossible for man to know in its entirety; however, individuals, societies, and governments can and should work with God to the best of their ability in order to improve conditions of life on earth.
- This partnership between man and God can be strengthened as individuals come to know and express their inner quality and strive to become their true selves. This partnership is both possible and natural, because the soul of man is created by God and God has placed within each soul a portion of His own character of goodness. Seeking to express his best character is a major portion of man's fulfillment of God's will. When mankind thus strives to fulfill God's will by pursuing the goals of individual virtue and global goodwill, his actions can create spiritual and material conditions on earth favorable to a significant improvement in society and government.

As I mentioned earlier, one of the things I find most remarkable about the inner quality is that it can be explained in both spiritual and material terms. In this chapter and throughout most of the book, I routinely use the spiritual paradigm because of its elegant description of reality; however, almost all of the practical applications of inner quality ethics and government can be described and applied within a completely material paradigm. This is because the inner quality is not only the character of the soul but also the best character of the individual human being in embodiment.

By virtue of its evolutionary roots, mankind contains within its consciousness a high degree of altruism, since caring for others strengthens the community and thereby increases its chances for survival and prosperity. Systems of government which reflect high degrees of altruism contribute to the survivability of the species. Good government, therefore, is not only an ideal aspiration of philosophers but also an imperative for humanity as a whole. This strengthens the basic assumption in this book that human beings have both a material and spiritual side of their being which ought to be taken into consideration in all systems of government. It also strengthens the argument that goodwill, kindness, and cooperation are mutually beneficial to people and thus should serve – where possible – as guiding principles for government policy and strategy.

The Intrinsic Worth of Individuals

One of the principles of the inner quality philosophy of government is that every individual has great worth by virtue of being a son or daughter of God. The value of the human soul is based on the fact that God has given each individual a divine spark of goodness, as well as the free will and opportunity to express that goodness for the benefit of all. As the souls of men do this while in embodiment, the will of God is fulfilled on earth and His plans for life's evolution on this planetary home are drawn closer to realization. The recognition of this partnership between God

and man is what makes improved systems of governance both possible and sustainable in the longer term.

In the inner quality philosophy of governance, the role of government is not to perpetuate the power of a particular person, office, interest group, institution, ideology, or economic system. The role of government is to protect individuals and support their proper use of free will. In so doing, government helps the soul in embodiment achieve its purpose in learning how to become the true self in the world of form.

Because of the inherent worth of the individual, all governments should respect the people within their jurisdictions – whether man, woman, or child – and provide the best possible environment for them to improve themselves and contribute to the improvement of society. Governments which oppress the people, unnecessarily restrict their freedom, abuse political power, systemically mismanage resources, or grossly fail in their other responsibilities to society can be legitimately replaced with a better government whenever it is possible to do so.

[What Is the Nature of Man?](#)

Defining the nature of man is important in governance, because government is by and for human beings. In their quest to identify how government might work more efficiently and effectively, philosophers have had to consider the distinguishing characteristics of man. Doing so is necessary in order to identify the goals, objectives, and priorities toward which government ought to strive.

In the inner quality philosophy of government, man's nature is complex and multidimensional because human beings have both a material and spiritual side, as well as great variation in their karma, dharma, culture, experiences, circumstances in life, and level of soul maturity. Among the most important elements to understand about the nature of man are his relationships with

God and government, how he defines his true self, and the roles of materiality and spirituality in his life.

The Relationship between God, Man, and Government

The essential connection between man and God is that God is the Creator of the souls of mankind. If this basic assumption is true, then human beings ought to see themselves as sons and daughters of God. There is nothing blasphemous in this concept and it in no way detracts from Jesus being considered the Son of God in Christianity.

The essential connection between man and government is that government is a necessary institution in human affairs. People need government in order to have security and stability in their daily lives. They also need government in order for their souls to evolve successfully within spiritual and material dimensions here on earth.

A secure and predictable social and political environment greatly facilitate mankind's urge to become the true self. Such an environment makes easier the discovery and expression of one's inner quality of goodness, thereby releasing one's creative potential to maximally achieve noble goals in life.

The functions of government ought to align with the will of God for the soul's evolution on earth as well as the positive evolution of mankind as a community and as a species. The function of government is not to preserve the power of the few over the many. When government functions properly, it protects and sustains in a practical way the creative partnership between God and man for the expansion of goodwill through individuals, society, and communities large and small.

The concept of there being a covenant between God and man in establishing jurisdictions and sovereignties is fundamental in the inner quality philosophy of government. Human beings are

responsible for developing their own forms of governance. However so organized, governments in their policies and actions ought to reflect and serve the purposes of God in creating the soul of man in the first place. Policies enabling the expansion of goodwill help the human species evolve in a positive direction and, in a practical sense, empower man to more successfully address global problems.

Man has free will and thus can go his own way, but there is a karmic cost in deviating too much from God's will. That cost is the gradual separation in mankind's consciousness from God's guidance and assistance. Over time, this separation results in the dulling of the human mind, making it difficult for many people to distinguish between what is morally right and what is morally wrong. With no discernible inward moral markers, the individual turns to his human intellect or baser instincts to guide activities, thoughts, and feelings. Being thus disconnected from the intuitive moral knowledge of the soul, people tend to generate ever greater amounts of negative karma. Mankind's social and political conditions become more flawed and corrupted. In this environment, it can be difficult for embodied souls to know, appreciate, and express the full potential of their natural goodness.

The way out of this karmic maze is for individuals to become reacquainted with their true selves and remember their covenant with God. Once this connection is reestablished, then the embodied soul can again focus on learning the proper use of free will in creatively expressing his or her best character. Doing so, strengthens the connection between man and God and makes spiritual and material progress for the embodied soul both easier and more balanced. All of this contributes to the positive evolution of mankind.

The role of government in this process is especially important, because government can either help or hinder the embodied soul in reconnecting its partnership with God. The form a

government takes is much less important than the intention and action of government in using its power to serve the material and spiritual needs of the people.

The True Self

How the true self is defined also helps to determine the role of government and the purpose of its institutions. From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy of governance, there are several functional definitions of the true self. At the highest level, the true self is a personification of the mature soul held as an image or vision of perfection in the mind of God. The work of the soul through its countless embodiments is to make this image as much of a tangible reality as possible.

At the level of the embodied person, life in physical form is by its very nature imperfect, because physical conditions change all the time. In the planes of material existence, it is the person's striving towards the perfection of the soul that mostly counts. In the planes of spirit, the true self of the soul can be realized. In the planes of matter, an embodied person reflects their true self by consciously trying to become his or her best character. This kind of person is the citizen of an ideal society as envisioned by the inner quality philosophy of government.

Yet another definition of the true self is the individual who exemplifies the mastery of Jesus or the wisdom of the Buddha. These relatively few people reflect their souls on earth and are pinnacles of human perfection. However, it is difficult to conceive of a system of governance appropriate for a society comprised of this type of person. In the inner quality philosophy, the functional purpose of government is to design systems of governance appropriate for those striving to become their true selves.

Role of Materiality and Spirituality in Human Affairs

By nature, man has both material and spiritual sides to his identity. While on earth, it is necessary for people to live an earthly life, for this is where karma and dharma have placed the soul at a given time. However, even while on earth, it is important for man to be aware of his spiritual side, because his soul is embodied not only for earthly toil and pleasure but also for a spiritual purpose: to learn the proper use of free will in alignment with the will of God. The inner quality philosophy of government considers the whole of man – material and spiritual – and seeks to integrate these two sides of mankind through improved systems of governance.

The inner quality philosophy of government aims to help people understand their true self and to fulfill their God-given nature. This objective in no way diminishes the importance of the common responsibilities of government. These responsibilities include, but are not limited to,

- The physical protection of society and its people
- The establishment of standards and regulations to facilitate the growth of commerce and ensure infrastructure efficiency
- Provisions to help the needy and to ensure high standards of health and wellbeing for all citizens
- Institutionalization of the fairest possible systems of justice and rule of law
- Implementation of fair tax systems to sustain governmental services yet not overburden the people
- Putting into place mechanisms to allow fair, free, and public participation in government
- Support for basic education for all while encouraging student excellence
- Protection of the environment to ensure a wholesome lifestyle for the people

- Support and protection for basic rights of the people, including freedom of religion, speech, assembly, movement, and other such rights as deemed appropriate by the culture and society served by the government.

It is important to note that, in the inner quality philosophy of governance, there is no inherent contradiction between the roles of government in supporting the material and spiritual needs of its citizens. This mostly is a matter of how the affairs of church and state are balanced and maintained – a subject returned to later in this chapter.

What Is the Purpose of Government?

Essentially, government administers the state, while the state is the geographic entity within which government functions. Government and state are dependent upon each other: government does not exist without the state; the state cannot function without government. In the inner quality philosophy of governance, both the state and the government have a spiritual as well as a material purpose.

The state is comprised of one or several mandalas (communities) of souls linked through karma and dharma. Government has the responsibility to maintain social order within the state and its communities and to provide – within its capabilities – supportive services to these groups of souls so they may work towards balancing their individual and collective karma and achieving their personal and group missions in life.

It is a challenging task for government to define and maintain the proper balance in society between the material and spiritual needs of the individual and the collective whole. Noteworthy progress towards achieving this balance distinguishes better forms of government, because such governments can significantly contribute to a better life for most citizens. For government to

work towards achieving this balance is in harmony with God's will, since these efforts assist souls to realize their full potential in the spheres of human activity.

Government Defined

The term "government" has several meanings. Two of the most common are (1) the administration of a particular political leadership (e.g., the government of the existing Prime Minister of Great Britain), and (2) the theory and institutions of a particular type of political system (e.g., the constitutional federal republic of the United States). In the broadest sense, the term "government" and "governance" are interchangeable when referring philosophically to how man ought to be governed.

Government can be seen as the political architecture and political framework of society; it is almost like a topographical feature of the human environment. Government should never exist for its own sake or for the sake of its leadership; rather it exists to serve the interests and needs of individual citizens and society as a whole. The individual is the foundational unit of society, so the interests of individuals must always be given high priority when considering public policy – except temporarily when the overall interests of society are threatened. Great care must be exercised by the citizens, however, to ensure that the temporary suspension of their rights does not become permanent.

As one of its public policy goals, government should be organized and structured to help individuals and their communities pursue and achieve the purposes of goodwill. Goodwill has both material and spiritual benefits. From a material point of view, goodwill helps to solidify community unity, cooperation, and stability. From a spiritual perspective, goodwill anchors the soul more closely to God's intentions for humanity.

Roles of Government

There have been many statements over the centuries encapsulating the essential roles of government. One example is the U.S. Constitution, which states that the American form of government is created to:

- Form a more perfect union
- Establish justice
- Insure domestic tranquility
- Provide for the common defense
- Promote the general welfare
- Secure the blessings of liberty.

From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy of governance, other roles of government would include the defense of life. All governments ought to protect and defend life, especially human life, not only within national boundaries but also everywhere on the planet. This includes proactive steps to promote and protect human rights, oppose genocide, and stop the gross abuse of people in all countries. In the inner quality philosophy of government, no one has the right to systemically abuse others. If necessary, the international norm of noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries should be set aside until the abuse ends. The people's right to protect themselves takes moral precedence over a government's self-proclaimed right to abuse its own citizens or the residents of other states.

Another key role of government is to support education. The goal of an educational system is to promote and enable self-sufficiency, personal responsibility, and personal accountability. This is a practical necessity, because citizens need to be equipped with the tools and skills necessary to build society and maintain its culture. Education helps people to develop their full potential and

thus promotes a culture of excellence. Without a culture of excellence, it would be impossible to create the social and political environment necessary for the establishment of more ideal forms of government.

Principles Governing Key Relationships in Society

In the inner quality philosophy of government, certain basic principles ought to govern relationships in society. Foremost of these fundamental principles is the Golden Rule, which is a near universal standard for harmonious social relationships. If each person treats others as he or she would like to be treated, a framework for a positive social relationship is established. Almost all other relationships in society build upon that principle.

Law Cannot Substitute for Love

Another principle of social relationships in the inner quality philosophy of government is that love is the great unifying force holding communities (from families to nations) together. Love is a feeling in the heart that transcends and is much stronger than human law and regulation. If heart-felt love is not present between people, there is little chance they will be able to sustain a society characterized by honor and mutual respect. Without love between citizens, politics will almost always be acrimonious, stalemated, and manipulative – all of which weaken society and undermine effective government.

Relationship between Individual and Society

Another principle of social relationships in the inner quality philosophy of government is that neither the individual nor society can long survive and prosper without the wellbeing of the other. Individuals form and join communities because groups offer a level of security and opportunity that people cannot easily attain on their own. Communities, in turn, exist only so long as they have cooperative members. In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, an ideal society is one in which social institutions encourage and support individual

citizens to discover and express their best character. Ideal citizens are those who recognize their own self-worth and value the contributions of others in their communities. Under these conditions, society and citizens can work together to improve their communities and governing institutions.

The important role of the individual in creating and sustaining an improved society is one of the reasons why government ought to protect the individual and encourage citizens to develop their best character and highest potential. Excessive government control of society and citizen is self-destructive. Under almost all conditions, the best policy for government is to protect the people's freedom, help citizens remedy their inadequacies whenever possible, and ensure that everyone has opportunity to work towards a prosperous, good, and happy life.

There is also a spiritual dimension to the relationship between society and citizen. Societies are often communities in which most of its members are drawn together for the purpose of balancing group karma and fulfilling group dharma. The characteristic of the mandala is frequently reflected in the predominant culture of society. The souls found in these societies repeatedly embody together to refine their group's special character and to balance any negative karma generated because of their collective misuse of free will. God's plan for humanity includes not only roles for individuals but also roles for groups of souls and for the species as a whole.

[Special Role of the Family](#)

One fundamental principle of the inner quality philosophy of government in terms of relationships is the key role families play in developing individual happiness, character, and wholeness – all of which are vital in ensuring order and peace in society. In properly functioning families, we learn patterns of behavior and attitudes that can bring harmony into our lives and into the lives of our own families and larger communities. From the basic patterns of love, self-

discipline, respect, responsibility, and commitment learned in the family, come the inspiration and ideas that lay the foundation for a properly functioning society and government. It is therefore a critical function of government to do what it can to protect, encourage, and support families in society.

[Complementary Roles of Church and State](#)

One of the contentious issues in political science is the proper relationship between church and state. A principle of relationships within the inner quality philosophy of government is that the roles of church and state are complementary and neither church nor state ought not to try to exclude the other. However, maintaining the proper balance between church and state is not easily sustained until man himself has balanced the material and spiritual sides of his own self-identity. In the inner quality philosophy of governance, the principal function of the church is to nourish the link between God and man. The principal function of the state is to provide a safe and secure environment within which people can live and society can prosper. In these complementary roles, leaders in both church and state play essential parts and it is important that they communicate, understand, and respect each other's contributions to social and individual wellbeing.

[Good Government Evolves through People Who Properly Govern Themselves](#)

Yet another relationship principle in the inner quality philosophy of governance is the dependency of good government on leaders and citizens who properly govern their own lives. Ideal forms of government cannot be imposed on people. Ideal government must be built by people who have attained a certain mastery over their own lives and personal behavior. It ought to be pragmatically recognized, however, that since people improve only gradually, the establishment of ideal government will most likely occur only gradually as well. The focus of the inner quality philosophy of government is less on the institutional aspects of an ideal government

and the timing of its implementation, and more on the need for individuals to reflect within themselves the qualities of character necessary to enable an ideal government to work. In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, the outcome of improving citizens and leaders will almost inevitably be improvements in society, systems of government, and political institutions.

Justice and How It Is to Be Maintained

The definition of justice and how it is to be administered in society have been key issues in political philosophy since the time of the ancient Greeks. In the inner quality philosophy, absolute justice is only found in God, although its operation can be observed through the moral cause and effect sequences of karma. To the extent possible, human systems of justice should try to emulate God's justice; however, this is impossible in a perfect sense because God's understanding of fairness and justice are not always known by man.

Golden Rule as Standard of Fairness

One of the most elegant definitions of fairness is the Golden Rule. In the inner quality philosophy of government, following the Golden Rule is an accurate phrasing of just law, far more so than most other legal systems devised by man. In fact, not following the simple guidance of the Golden Rule has required that men come up with complex written laws and regulations to govern the specifics of their behavior and interactions. One of the goals of the inner quality philosophy of government is to encourage individuals to follow the Golden Rule. Without such a universally applied moral standard, it would be difficult for ideal government to emerge anywhere on the planet, because the seeds of distrust are so widely sown among men.

Honesty of Heart Adjudicates Human Differences

An important precept of the inner quality philosophy is that man's nature is essentially good, because the soul of man was created by God and endowed with a certain quality of God's own

character of goodness (which we call the inner quality of the individual). If men would be their true self, they would be honest in their relationships with other people and social harmony would be more easily maintained. Honesty of heart is a powerful tool which can be used to adjudicate most human differences in a fair and just way.

In the inner quality philosophy of government, just laws are recognized by man in the same way that most people tend to view certain things as being either right or wrong. The universality of goodwill is also reflected in the conscience of mankind, which points individuals to morally correct courses of action in most situations. Altruism, too, as found in many advanced species of life on earth, may be seen as evolutionary evidence of a natural sensitivity to fairness and goodwill.

If theories of universal justice are true, however, then why is so much injustice found in the world? From the perspective of inner quality philosophy of government, the answer lies within man himself and his use of free will. Injustice in the world of man is not the product of God; injustice is the product of man's wrong decisions. Thus, it is mankind's karmic duty both to balance or pay back the damage caused by his decisions as well as to rectify his decision-making processes which resulted in unfairness or injustice. This is possible for man, as demonstrated repeatedly by individuals who have improved the moral quality of their lives.

[People's Demand for Justice Influences Virtue in Government](#)

In the inner quality philosophy, virtue in government and society can become the norm when adequate numbers of people make uncompromising demands for truth, integrity, and justice from their political, social, and cultural leaders. Ultimately, the responsibility for ensuring good government rests with the people, because it is they who must learn the proper use of free will – which, in terms of governance, means upholding the personal and social integrity necessary to

ensure good government. If the people are virtuous, they can rightfully demand virtue in their leaders and political institutions. If the people are corrupt, then corruption will almost always characterize their leaders and social institutions.

What Is the Proper Balance between Idealism and Pragmatism in Politics?

From the point of view of the inner quality philosophy of government, the political affairs of man need to be considered from both idealistic and realistic perspectives. These two perspectives mirror the dual spiritual and material sides of human beings. The two different perspectives can be analyzed separately; however, if too much emphasis is placed on the spiritual and idealistic side of man's political development, then the practical infrastructure necessary for government to function smoothly may never be built. On the other hand, if too much emphasis is placed on the material and expedient side of politics, then society and government may never improve to the point where more ideal forms of governance are possible.

Role of Ideals in Political Theory

Much political theory in recent decades has emphasized empiricism, data collection, and statistical analysis. From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy of governance, however, the identification and pursuit of ideals are equally important because the key to overcoming much of mankind's problems lies in improving his personal character. It is people who decide whether to pursue an unjust war, to exploit the poor, to misuse technology, to mislead citizens, to abuse power, to be corrupt, to harm the many for the benefit of the few, and so on ad infinitum. In the inner quality philosophy, the improvement of personal character is fundamental – and necessary – to the improvement of government.

One of the surest ways to improve personal character is for the individual to recognize his or her special relationship with the Creator. This self-recognition is experienced by an individual; it is not mass produced, purchased online, or delivered via government policy. How this recognition

of true selfhood comes to the individual is heavily influenced by the person's karma. An individual who is pure of heart very often knows intuitively his or her connection to nature and to God. An individual who glorifies the lesser self or whose spiritual vision is clouded by negative karma very often functions at a level of consciousness that does not easily perceive his or her relationship to God.

The pure of heart form the bedrock of an ideal society and government of the future. To act with honor and integrity is natural for them; to do their best in their chosen profession is done instinctively; to embrace a culture of excellence is the obvious thing to do. If these people comprise the majority of society, and if they feel empowered to do so, then social and political institutions can be steadily improved for the good of all. However, these good hearted people sometimes shy away from the hard knocks of politics and machinations of strategy and thus their potential contributions to society are too often ignored.

Those who feel disconnected from God very often have a spark of goodness in their hearts (because they have souls), but their self-identification with the lesser ego frequently leads them to depend almost entirely on intellectualism, pride, deception, and greed to carve out a place for themselves in the world. There is very little room in their paradigm of reality for acknowledgment of their connection to God. An ideal government cannot easily be built on a society comprised of this kind of person, because they tend to ignore the nobler and spiritual side of their potential. Power and influence they may have, but they too often lack the moral rectitude necessary to guide society to a higher level of cultural goodwill.

There is nothing threatening about self-discovery, the expression of one's inner quality, or a person trying to attain his or her fullest potential. This is what the soul is intended to do on earth. Both spiritually and materially, the improvement of one's character is the critical variable in both

conceptualizing the highest ideals and moving in the direction of their materialization.

Government can greatly assist individuals in improving their character through goals and policies that aim to educate citizens to their higher potential both materially and spiritually. In this way, people can work towards ideals in a practical way to improve conditions of life on earth, including systems of governance.

Perfection and Permanence in Human Government

Because the material world is constantly evolving, human beings have to change as part of the species' adaptation strategy. Therefore, perfection in an absolute sense is impossible for mankind while it evolves on earth. In the inner quality philosophy, the closest a person can become to being perfect is for the individual to always make decisions based on his or her understanding of the character of their soul. When a person commits to doing this, the individual has aligned his or her free will with the will of God, and the soul can increase the tempo of its spiritual progress.

If a sufficient number of people make this commitment, then a critical mass will exist for more ideal societies and governments to emerge through the free will of the people. The social and political institutions they create will be subject to change, however, since even good-hearted individuals can have differing opinions as to the best policies to follow on substantive issues.

Although perfect and permanent government on earth seems unattainable to man as he is today, individuals and their communities can make significant improvement to their society and government by striving to reflect their inner qualities and cooperating with one another in pragmatic ways for the common good. The next section considers three possible models of government under these conditions.

What Is the Ideal Form of Government?

In the inner quality philosophy, earth is seen as a schoolroom for the soul to learn mastery of free will and to become trained in the proper use of time, energy, and matter. The societies and

governments that men create are part of this learning experience, not ends in themselves. The state, society, and their institutions are all instruments men have created to organize and govern themselves, as well as to provide certain services such as transportation and other infrastructure, security, and the facilitation of trade and commerce. As man's understanding of selfhood expands, his instruments of governance will change.

Thus, in the inner quality philosophy of government, the focus is on improving the decision-making capabilities of the individual citizen by acquainting the person with his or her own inner quality, or best personal character. When individuals function from the level of their best character and cooperate with one another, they are naturally interested in improving their social and political institutions. From this process of improving governance can emerge forms of government that, while not permanent nor perfect, nonetheless may be considered "ideal" in the pragmatic sense of being functionally able to serve the needs of citizens with an advanced level of consciousness – i.e., aware of and expressing their inner qualities.

Characteristics of an Ideal Government

The inner quality philosophy of government does not advocate a single form of government as being the ideal. There are, however, certain characteristics of an ideal political doctrine that would seem to be fairly universal. These include:

- Recognition of the integrity of individual selfhood and free will
- Justice and security provided for all
- A sense of respect and consideration for all of life
- Social and cultural encouragement to develop goodness of heart

- Educational programs designed to train citizens in various professional skills as well as the techniques of using the higher mind in analysis, creative thinking, and decision making
- Rigorous systems of training and evaluation to ensure that the highest standards of excellence are maintained in all professional fields, including public service
- A fair distribution of wealth, whereby the less fortunate are given relief and opportunity for self-improvement, and the successful are able to enjoy the fruits of their labor
- Immediate government action to assist citizens in distress
- A balance between spirituality and practicality, such that every person can pursue their spiritual development while at the same time functioning successfully in their chosen profession
- A strong sense of the need for order and perfection in all things, with a goal to create a culture of excellence
- Dedication to the principles of goodwill among all mankind
- Support to local and regional communities to enable them to retain their local culture and autonomy to the extent possible and as consistent with national security, cohesiveness, and efficiency
- Nationally disseminated goals to ensure that society is safe, orderly, free, creative, and prosperous.

These general characteristics can provide much of the foundation for the pragmatic policies of an ideal society and government.

In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, everyone has a role to play in an ideal society because everyone contributes to the commonweal in ways reflecting their individual

inner qualities. The bonds of the community are strengthened as each citizen works to the best of his or her ability to serve the common interests of all, even as they pursue their personal goals in life. The same spirit of goodwill that brings people together in communities also helps them to cooperate with other communities to work on global problems, thus contributing to international stability and mutual benefit across borders.

While a sense of goodwill among men is necessary for an ideal society and government, freedom for the individual to pursue his or her own spiritual and material path is another requirement. The free will of citizens need to be engaged in the process of creating social and political goals, policies, and institutions. Every person, therefore, ought to be encouraged to use their free will both to seek a personal relationship with God as well as to express their true self in service to their community and society as a whole. The use of free will in this manner will help to integrate the spiritual and material sides of the individual and thereby benefit society. Ultimately, it is the personal recognition of virtue within the individual that enables society and its communities to build ever more improved systems of government.

Models of Ideal Government

In the inner quality philosophy of governance, there is no single form of government considered appropriate for all mankind at all times. Different stages of historical development, various levels of spiritual and material evolution, and distinctive cultural characteristics – all influence what is a suitable form of government.

Out of a large number of possible political systems, we will briefly consider some of the major characteristics of three government models which might be appropriate under future, more ideal

conditions.¹¹⁵ These models are monarchy, constitutional federal republic, and commonwealth.¹¹⁶ Monarchies and constitutional federal republics will be discussed in the context of nation-states; the commonwealth will be discussed in the context of a possible global governance system. In every case, the success or failure of the government model depends less on its institutions and policies, and more on the consciousness of the citizens and their acceptance or rejection of the form of government. In other words, the interests of the people, as well as the interests of the leadership and the interests of the larger community, must all be served.

Monarchy Model

There are three forms of monarchy functioning in the world today: constitutional monarchies, parliamentary constitutional monarchies, and absolute monarchies. Constitutional and parliamentary constitutional monarchies place certain limitations on the power of the sovereign through a constitution. Absolute monarchies have few if any such limitations. Here we will examine absolute monarchies as an ideal future government in some circumstances.

In ancient times, one of the most common archetypal models for human government was the presumed hierarchical structure of heaven, with God being the Universal Sovereign. This model was frequently duplicated in monarchies, which remained a dominant form of government for centuries across multiple cultures. The primary characteristics of an absolute monarchy are, first,

¹¹⁵ There is a large variety of forms of government. For a listing of current countries and their types of government, see Central Intelligence Agency, *The World Factbook*, "Government Type," <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2128.html>.

¹¹⁶ Each of these systems of government have been extensively analyzed by scholars over the years. This section views these models from a high level of analysis, with the goal to distill what may or may not contribute to the models' feasibility as a future ideal government for citizens expressing their inner qualities. This particular exercise needs to be further developed in future work.

the ruler has complete authority over the government and the lives of the people; and second, no institution in the civil society can check the ruler's power. The ruler dominates all institutions.

In modern times, the principal problems with monarchies are twofold: these systems of governance are usually not very effective in governing large, complex societies, whose populations, territory, institutions, and economies are far larger than the reach or governing capability of any one individual; and second, the modern period of history is seen by many around the world as an age of freedom in which people need and demand a wider range of freedom in their lives. These problems mean that, for most nations and cultures, monarchies are not the current government of choice.

These same weaknesses would also seem to limit this model's appropriateness as an ideal government in the future. However, absolute monarchies might work well under certain conditions. These conditions would include instances where (1) the ruler can be determined through some mechanism to be the ablest citizen of all: wise, loving, kind, powerful, and able to represent the people before God; (2) the tradition of hereditary succession would be replaced by a system of meritocracy; and (3) the people believed in and adhered to a social system akin to a guru-chela relationship, in which the chela (citizen of society) gave complete or near complete obedience to the guru (ruler) in most matters.

If everyone in society supported this kind of monarchical system, there is no reason why it would not be successful – especially if the society was smaller and strongly based on a powerful sense of community. The model does not require that the leader make all decisions. The delegation of power is possible and consistent with a hierarchical system. The model only requires that citizens be willing to obey the leader when he or she makes a decision. For the model to work well, the leader must be a truly exceptional person.

Constitutional Federal Republic Model

In the current period of history, one of the more popular models of government is a constitutional federal republic, whose constitution establishes some form of representative democracy. This form of government is often characterized by separation between the branches of government, a robust system of checks and balances on power, divided sovereignties, and leaders and representatives chosen by citizens in scheduled, fair, and free elections.

Representative democracies can be efficient in governing complex, diverse societies, because power and responsibilities are fairly easily distributed, and because the type of government provides opportunity for people to exercise free will choice in multiple areas of personal, social, economic, cultural, and political life. A particular strength of this system of government is that leaders do not have to be nearly perfect in order for the society to function well. Indeed, a constitutional federal republic is somewhat forgiving of human weaknesses through its regularly held elections for positions of power and the deliberate diffusion of power among many competing stakeholders.

Constitutional federal republics have weaknesses as well. This form of government does not function efficiently or effectively if (1) multiple interest groups focus too exclusively on their narrow agendas at the expense of national agendas; (2) decision-making in the system is hampered due to poorly written laws, unskilled leaders or representatives, or structural deficiencies in the governing constitution; or (3) if the separate branches of government or centers of power are dominated by leaders unable or unwilling to cooperate in the resolution of difficult public policy issues.

In spite these weaknesses, a constitutional federal republic might serve as a model for a future ideal government if most people, leaders, and institutions in society control their selfish impulses

and work together to serve common interests. Also of high importance in the success of this type of model government is economic opportunity for the large majority of the population. Poor democracies or those with highly polarized wealth distribution do not seem to work too well, because loyalty to the system depends heavily on all stakeholders receiving recognizable benefits. Still, this form of government is resilient in the face of challenges, so it could work under most conditions.

Commonwealth Model

If we assume the continuation of trends towards greater interdependencies between nations, then we ought to consider whether any form of government might be appropriate for a global community. Community in this sense does not imply a world government, but rather an association of nations cooperating more closely together with a greater sense of unity than exists at present through, for example, the United Nations.

One possible model for this is a commonwealth, a political entity founded on law and united by a compact of people for some common good.¹¹⁷ The major weaknesses of commonwealths are (1) the legal bonds holding the members together are weak and therefore subject to being broken when members decide to go their own way; and (2) decisions made by the governing authority of the commonwealth generally lack power of enforcement, leaving the members free to decide for themselves whether to support the decisions.

In the context of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, this system might be appropriate under certain conditions. These would include a well thought out and clearly articulated constitution or other governance document detailing the commonwealth's

¹¹⁷ Many of the ideas for an ideal commonwealth of goodwill are taken from El Morya, *Encyclical of World Good Will* (Colorado Springs, CO: The Summit Lighthouse, 1963).

organization, institutions, authorities, responsibilities, membership, and other frameworks to ensure a strong organizational structure based on equality, fairness, and efficiency and effectiveness in operations. Other necessary conditions would include:

- A strong sense of universal brotherhood reflected in people's identification with being part of a global community
- An effective system of selecting legitimate governing authorities at the global level based on consent of the members of the commonwealth, as well as clear accountability of commonwealth leaders and policies to members of the global community
- A binding statement of agreement to respect individual human rights and freedoms, as well as membership commitment to serve mutual interests in a fair and just way
- Political commitment from each of the members of the commonwealth to address global problems from a global perspective, even while protecting the interests of their respective communities
- Member commitment to support the commonwealth with adequate resources to enable its institutions to provide agreed upon services to the global community.

This form of commonwealth is not a world government. As envisioned here, it would be a political entity comprised of representatives of nations within an established framework meeting together to work out solutions to pressing problems facing mankind as a whole. The formula for success of such a commonwealth is a universal sense of goodwill. That sense of goodwill is most likely to come from large numbers of people in all cultures who function from the level of their best character or soul consciousness. Because of the scope of coordination required, the role of leadership would be especially important in such a commonwealth of goodwill.

Ideal Leadership

In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, the role of political leaders is of great interest and consequence, because leaders can influence the lives of thousands and even millions of people. Their decisions are often critical in the development and evolution of their communities and cultures. Leaders are embodied souls like all of mankind. However, the office of political leadership and the possibilities for good that it offers create a special spiritual-material nexus in the affairs of man.

To maximize the good they can do for their communities, leaders should try to improve their personal character, even as they ask God for His assistance and guidance in helping them to fulfill their worldly responsibilities. Working with God in such a partnership can result in a harmonic-like response from others whereby the expression of the leader's inner quality affects his fellow citizens in positive, constructive ways. This is the essence of charisma and a sure sign of effective leadership, especially if the leader is moving his citizens forward in their material and spiritual evolution.

The characteristics of an ideal leader are many and their combination varies from person to person and circumstance to circumstance. From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy, some key leadership characteristics include: love for the people, kindness of heart, determination to protect the people and oppose their enemies, desire to learn and expand one's understanding, love of education and the arts, a sense of equality of all mankind, special concern over the care and wellbeing of children, desire to help the needy, respect for other offices of authority and responsibility, pleasure and pride in the accomplishments of others, commitment to fairness and justice, a sense and need for order in all things, and high standards of material excellence and moral rectitude. Ideal leaders must also have strategic vision, which means being able to

understand reality as it exists and as it ought to be, and having the ability to map out practical paths to get to that improved state in ways congruent with God's will. Further, ideal leaders need to have the communication skills necessary to convince the people to follow correct paths to the future. Ideal leaders should also possess the major hallmarks of effective statesmanship: the ability to develop and maintain good, productive, and mutually beneficial relations with other leaders and their communities.

Conclusion

Government plays an important role in the interlocking spirals of mankind's physical and spiritual evolution. Under most conditions of life, mankind requires peace, stability, prosperity, health, happiness, and opportunity in order to thrive materially and spiritually. Government's goal ought to be to provide an orderly framework within society to support these basic requirements. Properly functioning government helps to maintain a social platform for individuals to work out their personal karma and to learn the proper use of free will in life's varied circumstances.

The inner quality philosophy of governance addresses how government might better serve the spiritual and material evolution of mankind by encouraging individuals to reflect in their lives the characteristics of goodness inherent in sons and daughters of God. There is a powerful synergy between government and individuals seeking to express their inner qualities. Good government gives individuals the freedom and opportunity to gain self-knowledge and to excel in their creative contributions to society. For their part, individuals who know their true self almost always want to work with government and other citizens to improve society, culture, and government. All can benefit when government and citizen work together to achieve great things for the common good.

The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government blends all of these elements into a unified theory of how man ought to know his spiritual and material reality, use free will to establish a creative partnership with God, and work individually and within communities to improve social and political conditions for all of mankind. These goals are achievable because of the soul's connection to God, the soul's fundamental character of goodness, mankind's ability to contact his soul, and man's free will choice in how he will use his time and energy on earth.

The fundamental purpose of government is to provide a political environment enabling individual souls in embodiment to realize their full potential. Government does not exist for its own sake, nor does it exist to perpetuate the power of particular persons, parties, or institutions. Government exists to empower individuals to become their true self and thereby to use their free will and the opportunities given them to build harmonious and productive communities in which families can thrive and excellence can be expressed in daily activities.

The inner quality philosophy does not support a specific form of ideal government. Rather, the inner quality philosophy focuses on improving the individual as a way to improve society and its governing institutions. Different kinds of government are suitable to different kinds of people, as reflected in their history and culture. When individuals within a given society know and express their highest character, then those people are well-equipped and qualified to devise an appropriate government for themselves. In a general sense, these ideal forms of government would likely share a few characteristics, such as:

- Universal acceptance of the Golden Rule as the basis for both interpersonal relationships as well as a standard by which to measure systems of justice and fairness
- A strong commitment to order and the search for excellence and perfection in all things

- A deep sense of brotherhood based on love for the soul, mutual respect, and concern for the wellbeing of others
- A culture of integrity and global goodwill
- A love of freedom and gratitude to God for the opportunities life presents to all.

In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, life for the human soul on earth is similar to a schoolroom in which the primary lesson is to learn to make proper choices. The institutions created by men are test platforms and proving grounds for these choices, not ultimate standards of truth. The institutions men create to govern themselves will evolve as mankind evolves. The ultimate purpose of the inner quality philosophy is to encourage people to turn within to discover and then express their highest and best character. Choosing to do so will have a positive influence on the direction of mankind's spiritual and material evolution – one result of which will be improved systems of governance and the conduct of politics.

Summary and Comparisons

Summary of Philosophy

In the inner quality philosophy, God is the Creator of all things, including the initiation of the processes of evolution in both spiritual and material dimensions of existence. Human life has evolved in these two dimensions, in the form of the human soul and the human physical body with all of their various attributes. Because man has both spiritual and material aspects of his being, people can approach understanding themselves in a holistic way. The discovery of one's inner quality and the use of one's higher mind enable us to better understand and integrate the multidimensional material and spiritual aspects of ourselves.

The inner quality, or one's best character, can be expressed in virtually all of one's activities: physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. In this book, the inner quality has been applied to philosophies of ethics and government. Essentially, the inner quality philosophy of ethics emphasizes the application of one's inner quality and higher mind in the development of a personal set of ethical principles and moral standards. The main purpose in developing such a system of ethics and morals is to help us learn how to properly use free will in life's challenging circumstances.

In a similar way, the inner quality philosophy of government focuses on how the inner quality and higher mind can be applied in social interactions and politics to improve systems of governance. The inner quality philosophy of government does not endorse a particular ideal system of governance; however, it does point to the need to continuously strive for improved forms of government. The book outlines three possible political models that could be implemented for individual, social, and global goodwill under certain circumstances.

It is important to note that the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government can be approached from a spiritual point of view, a material point of view, or a combined view of both paradigms. In general, the book adopts the combined view of reality because it seems best suited to the initial observation that man has both spiritual and material aspects of his being. Regardless of the paradigm used, however, the main ethical and moral guidelines and political conclusions in the philosophy remain pretty much the same: it is in mankind's best interest – individually and collectively – to be his highest character in virtually every aspect of life.

Since expressing one's highest character is a personal decision, all systems of ethics and governance must start with the premise that man has free will. The role of society and government ought to be the encouragement of citizens to make decisions based on their best character, and the most appropriate social and political institutions and policies ought to have as their objective the enabling and empowerment of the individual to make such decisions. Making decisions in this way aligns the free will of man with the will of God to achieve the common goal of increasing goodness in life. Making decisions in this way also utilizes the natural instincts of empathy and altruism to strength social cohesion and thereby further the positive evolution of the human species.

These are not new ideas. In fact, as reflected in the section which follows, many similarities exist between the inner quality philosophy and important ethical and political theories of the past.

[Comparison of Traditional Ethical and Political Theories and the Inner Quality Philosophy](#)

The writers summarized in this section are among the greatest thinkers of all times. The few sentences devoted to each of the 36 authors cannot possibly capture all of the wisdom they have contributed to mankind. The purpose of these brief overviews is to identify a few of their main observations about the political and ethical affairs of man and to compare these insights with the

inner quality philosophy introduced in this book. We begin with Thucydides, not because of his philosophical ideas but because of his timeless lessons drawn from Greek history.¹¹⁸

Thucydides (460-400 B.C.). Greece

Thucydides is primarily known as an historian because of his detailed account of the then ongoing 27-year war between Sparta and Athens. *The War of the Peloponnesians and the Athenians* is remarkable in that it faithfully records the political and military arguments, strategies, policies, and outcomes of Sparta and Athens and their allies in their monumental efforts to establish dominance. Thucydides demonstrated that great events such as major wars occur because of highly complex factors, with results that cannot be known beforehand. In this epic conflict, the precipitating causes included intensely personal factors such as ambition, pride, greed, and honor, as well as strategic factors such as perceptions of balance of power and the supposed intentions of adversaries and allies alike. His description of the interplay of ideals such as justice and freedom are especially poignant when played against the then existing backdrop of self-interest and belief in cultural exceptionalism. The observations of the political character of man as presented by Thucydides still ring true today.

¹¹⁸ In developing this summary of ethical and political theories, many sources have been consulted. These include: Leo Strauss and Joseph Cropsey, *History of Political Philosophy*, 3rd edition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Michael L. Morgan, ed., *Classics of Moral and Political Theory* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1992); Graham Evans and Jeffrey Newnham, *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations* (London: Penguin Books, 1998); Robert E. Goodin and Hans-Dieter Klingemann, eds., *A New Handbook of Political Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996); Iain McLean and Alistair McMillan, *Oxford Concise Dictionary of Politics* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, second edition, 2003); Robert Audi, ed., *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1999); John A. Sterling, "A synopsis of the development of political philosophies that form what is often referred to as 'Democratic Liberalism'," http://lawandliberty.org/pol_phil.htm; "The Basics of Philosophy: Political Philosophy," http://www.philosophybasics.com/branch_political.html; Quentin Taylor, "Major Political Thinkers: Plato to Mill," Online Library of Liberty, <http://oll.libertyfund.org/pages/major-political-thinkers>; *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, <http://www.iep.utm.edu>; lists of political theorists and political philosophers from *Wikipedia*; and many websites discussing the theories of individual philosophers and their major works, as well as internet versions of many of the works themselves.

The experience of the war, and the way it came about, resulted in the phrase “Thucydides trap” to suggest the inevitability of conflict between two great powers, at least one of which fears the other’s expansion of influence. But such struggles are not spawned merely by intersecting spheres of influence. Human emotions also play a key role, such as fear, honor, treachery, selfishness, cultural exceptionalism, and the search for justice and glory – all of which can push the conflict forward even when opportunities exist for the war to be avoided or ended through mediation.

Comparison: The value of reading Thucydides in the context of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government is that it reminds us that human beings are very limited in their ability to predict the future, no matter how justified, honorable, or well thought out their original intentions. We are captives of our biases and experiences, personal and cultural. Therefore, even though we may try to be objective and to address issues from our highest levels of consciousness, we need to remain alert to the possibility of mistakes on our part and to always consider the opinions of others before making weighty strategic, moral, and political choices. By its very nature, the affairs of mankind are subject to complex interdependencies and subjective interpretations of reality, fact, and motive. That is why, in all the centuries of political and ethical thought reviewed below, no single work has been definitive and no single philosophy or theory has been adequate to explain all. The lessons of history require us to be humble in our opinions and to constantly try to expand our horizons of understanding.

[King Hammurabi \(1792–1750 B.C.\). Babylon](#)

Drafted earlier than the Biblical laws, the *Hammurabi Code* is one of the most important legal documents of the ancient Near East. The *Code* is not a philosophical statement, but rather describes in a pragmatic way some three hundred laws and legal decisions governing daily life in

Babylon. Using everyday language, the king wanted it to be understood by everyone. The legal decisions are all constructed in a similar manner: Should an individual do such and such a thing, then such and such a thing will happen to him or her. The issues addressed cover criminal and civil laws. The principal subjects are family, professional, commercial, agricultural, and administrative law. Economic law sets prices and salaries. The longest chapter concerns the family, which formed the basis of Babylonian society. It deals with engagement, marriage, children, adoption, inheritance, and household duties. Every aspect of each duty is addressed. The *Code* is one of the earliest compendiums of legal precedents from which the ruler or judge may choose as the most appropriate action to fit a given situation.

Comparison: This is one of the first recorded legal codes, defining for society what is proper behavior based on experience, judicial precedent, and current cultural and religious beliefs. The *Code* is a milestone in human systems of justice, because it clearly defines what is appropriate in individual and social interaction and prescribes a clear set of corresponding rewards and punishments. The *Code* has played a historically important role in advancing mankind's social and political evolution, because it is an early attempt to link human law and moral justice. The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government strongly supports the idea of formalizing legal systems of justice for society, because having a clear, just, and comprehensive set of laws – based in part on principles such as the Golden Rule and divinely inspired moral guidance such as the Ten Commandments – unifies society both culturally and politically. By providing a firm framework within which society can function, these codes of justice have been invaluable for the advancement of mankind.

The Bible (written in parts from about 1,400 B.C. and finally compiled in its present form in the mid-4th century A.D.)

The 39 books of the Old Testament form the *Bible of Judaism*, while the *Christian Bible* includes these books plus the 27 books of the New Testament. There are many references to government and politics in the *Bible*, and the *Bible's* influence on Western legal systems is immense. For example, the biblical idea of covenant and the political principles and processes which flow from it are foundational to many Christian and Jewish legal traditions. The Ten Commandments contain several key religious as well as ethical and political tenets. What the *Bible* conveys most consistently in the Old Testament is that God plays a central role in determining the form of mankind's government. God is also instrumental in articulating the laws that are to be followed and in judging the ruler and the people in their adherence to those laws. In the *Bible*, there is close interaction between church and state, with political leaders often being anointed by God and given responsibility to be a liaison between God and the people. In the New Testament, God plays a less active role in selecting rulers and instead instructs the people on how they should live their lives. There also appears to be more of a separation between the secular aspects of government and the spiritual side of man – as evidenced by Jesus saying, “Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's.” Many Christians believe the *Bible* gives guidance on how the faithful should view politics. Two of the most common beliefs are that God ordained government as part of His plan to promote justice, peace, and order in society; and that there is no such thing as total separation of church and state.

Comparison: There is considerable overlap between biblical teachings and the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government. Examples are the existence of a covenant between God and man, the ethics enumerated in the Ten Commandments and elsewhere, the spiritual connection between church and state, and the concept that one of the most important functions of

government is to ensure justice in society. While the inner quality philosophy supports much of the *Bible's* teachings on governance, there is also recognition that many of the teachings are primarily addressed to a specific culture.

Confucius (551-479 B.C.). China

Confucius focused on self-improvement, which has an important impact on the way politics ought to be carried out. He argued that knowledge was incomplete without action; that knowledge unrelated to value was vain; that self-fulfillment could only occur through participation in public affairs; that only trained scholars can understand the rise and fall of states; and that only a state governed by consent can survive. Confucius believed scholars should serve as the state's ministers. He thought human nature could be perfected through virtues such as reciprocity, whereby each person treats another with the respect, loyalty, obedience, and responsibility required in the particular relationship. The greatest and most fundamental of virtues is filial piety, which governs all family relationships. Confucius viewed society as the family on a larger scale. His political philosophy was highly secular and, while his students were advised to participate in religious rituals, no particular religious belief was expected of them. His teachings are mostly collected in the *Analects*.

Comparison: Even though the social and political views of Confucius were secular, with an emphasis on bringing stability and peace to a chaotic and dangerous world, his philosophy of governance parallels in many respects the inner quality's approach to political theory. In particular, similarities can be found on the need to refine the individual ethically before society can be refined, the perfectibility of man through training and self-discipline, and the fundamental basis of society being the family and its loving and respectful relationships. The inner quality philosophy of government places much more emphasis on spiritual and secular interaction in the

political sphere than did Confucius, however. From an historical perspective, the unifying influence of Confucius on Chinese culture is foundational.

Lao Tzu (6th century B.C.). China

Lao Tzu is the assumed author of the *Tao Te Ching*, a collection of sayings that are both mystical and realistic. The main theme of Lao Tzu's teachings is that the best way to live one's life and govern the state is to follow the Tao, or the way the universe works. Lao Tzu advised that people discover their true selves and reflect deeply on what that means, never relying upon ideologies to guide one's life. The goal is to live life naturally. The Taoist ideal of how to lead the state is through *wu wei*, or non-action – that is, to act according to the nature of things without undue interference. In this way, the leader will help all members of society find their place and – in harmony with nature – direct them in ways beneficial to all. Taoism, along with Confucianism and Legalism (see Han Fei below), are three of the main currents of Chinese traditional political thought.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy supports Lao Tzu's view that man must come into contact with his true self and then act naturally in accordance with that true self. The Tao is a concept similar to the force of God's will moving through nature. The Tao and the force of nature are impersonal yet also fair in the larger scheme of things. Lao Tzu believed that the best way to lead society is to leave it alone so it may evolve and balance itself naturally. The inner quality of philosophy of ethics and government is more proactive in defining leadership responsibilities and suggesting governmental policies than is Lao Tzu. An interesting observation is that Taoist thought seems to have influenced the strategic theories of Sun Tzu (544-496 B.C.), whose *Art of War* has been studied by military, political, and business leaders for hundreds of

years. Sun Tzu's strategy emphasized using the Tao and forces of nature to achieve one's objectives, often through indirect as opposed to direct action.

Socrates (469-399 B.C.). Greece

Socrates considered politics to be an art, requiring knowledge of the good. Political art is not easy to come by, however, and requires deep intellectual effort to master. Each citizen is required to owe allegiance to his state, because the state provides opportunity for the citizen's upbringing. Also, when one freely remains in the state, a citizen implicitly makes a contract with the state to obey its laws. To disobey the state's laws would undermine the authority of law per se. Socrates was concerned with the quality of life and living ethically. Happiness was believed to be the ultimate purpose in life. To Socrates, the greatest happiness was the ethical knowledge of how people are supposed to act. To him, to know the good is to be the good. Government was the expression of the common good of all citizens, not just the triumph of the individual. He believed justice to be a primary virtue, and that justice and fairness were intimately connected. Almost all of Socrates' views are known through the accounts of classical writers, especially those of his student Plato.

Comparison: Socrates, along with Plato and Aristotle, form much of the foundation of Western political thought, especially as it relates to ethics: the kinds of proper behavior required in society to ensure happiness and a good life. These classic Greek social goals are similar to those identified by the inner quality philosophy of ethics and governance, and many aspects of their theories closely parallel each other. Socrates' belief that citizens owe allegiance to the state in return for proper laws and security is a fundamental tenet of the contract theory behind democracy and other modern forms of government. His views of justice as being fairness also

are reflected in current political philosophies such as that of John Rawls. The teachings of Socrates and the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government have much in common.

Plato (427-347 B.C.). Greece

Plato is considered the first political philosopher of the Western world. His most famous book, *The Republic*, argued that a successful society needs to be divided into groups or classes (artisans, craftsmen, statesmen, etc.) based on their skills. Individuals ought to do their best with the skills they possess. Justice for most citizens consists of fulfilling their class function. Justice in a higher sense was the primary virtue, achieved by a balance between wisdom, courage, and temperance. Only philosophers, however, could achieve this balance, so only philosophers ought to be kings in an ideal society, motivated by their sense of duty. Plato believed that pure happiness could only be achieved through pure logic. His view of reality is conveyed in the allegory of the cave dwellers, who saw their world as only a shadow or illusion of the ideals causing the shadows. Thus, to Plato only the ideal was real, but only philosophers would be able to grasp this truth. Plato argued that, even if an ideal society could be created, it would fail because of human weaknesses, as demonstrated by people's pursuit of passion rather than commitment to virtue. To Plato, the origin of the state is economic need. In the *Statesman*, Plato placed emphasis on the adherence to law as a standard by which to evaluate good and bad forms of government. The characteristics of the state following laws were detailed in *Laws*, which provided for private property and permitted citizens to have a voice in government.

Comparison: Like Socrates, Plato was concerned about how the good life could be attained by individuals in society. Even though Plato's political ideas seem antiquated in emphasizing city-states and philosopher-kings, he explored in great detail many of the fundamental issues of governance that are still being debated today. The importance of economic prosperity, law and

order, private property, citizen involvement in politics were all identified as legitimate political concerns. His metaphysical view of the reality of ideals is similar in some ways to that of the inner quality philosophy, which considers the ideals held in the mind of God as the ultimate reality which man, society, and government ought to strive to express in the world of form.

Aristotle (384-322 B.C.). Greece

Aristotle believed political science was imperfect by nature because it was developed by imperfect human beings. Aristotle sought to improve politics without demanding perfection from people. He did not ignore human or material realities in his political theories. To Aristotle, the purpose of government was to promote virtue through practice and habit. The state exists to promote happiness and free choice for its citizens, not merely to give them the good life. Politics is seen as the highest form of human expression, and the state is the highest form of politics. The state is what distinguishes man from animal. Aristotle identified six types of government. The three good types (in order of preference) are monarchy (rule by one), aristocracy (rule by a few), and polity (rule by many). The least desirable forms of government are tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy – perversions of the respective three good types. Because of his concern for the necessity of plurality in politics, he is considered by some to be the beginning of Western traditional political philosophy. His books *Politics* and the *Nicomachean Ethics* contain most of his political and ethical theories, comprising what is usually referred to as practical philosophy. The *Ethics*, for example, was written not to define virtue but to promote good in society. In Aristotle's view, one becomes good by deliberately choosing to be good, not simply by knowing what good is. Aristotle believed that living an excellent life according to one's own nature is the highest good, resulting in a sense of well-being and happiness. A person's decisions ought to be based on a calculation of how best to achieve one's virtuous goals. Aristotle assumed that people

naturally know what is right and wrong in a moral sense, although individuals vary greatly in their ability to control their passions and do the correct thing.

Comparison: The political and ethical views of Aristotle are more pragmatic than idealistic. He sought to define those conditions in life that would lead – in a practical and rationale way – to the greatest happiness for people, including the best types of government, the proper social environment, and the rightful pursuit of individuals to discover and reflect their highest virtue.

The inner quality philosophy mirrors Aristotle's pragmatic approach, but adds to it the current of idealism found in Socrates and Plato. This balance reflects the spiritual and material aspects of mankind. People need to work with and improve both sides of themselves in order to become the true self and to build greatly improved societies and governments.

[Chanakya \(350-283 B.C.\). India](#)

Also known as Kautilya. The *Arthashastra* of Chanakya is a comprehensive manual on how a kingdom is to be ruled, systematically covering all aspects of administration. According to Chanakya, the holy king is self-disciplined and concerned with the welfare of his subjects, wisely using his ministers and others under his direct command to properly understand situations and effectively solve problems which might arise or be brought to his attention by any of his subjects during frequent open courts. The king leads not only by command but also by example, and thus the rituals and schedules of the king are to be followed very exactly. Chanakya describes these ritual and schedules, as well as duties, crimes, and appropriate punishments, in great detail in one of the most elaborate administrative manuals ever written.

Comparison: In general, Chanakya's approach to political guidance paralleled that of King Hammurabi in detailing how to administer a properly functioning kingdom. Chanakya paid close attention to the leader's self-discipline, behavior, and attitude towards the people, a theme

echoed in the inner quality philosophy of governance. Like Confucius, the great Indian ruler emphasized rituals as a means of normalizing society. Rituals in the inner quality philosophy of government are given less attention than that given to ethical guidelines for leaders and citizens. Chanakya has had considerable influence over India's style of governance and administration.

Han Fei (280-233 B.C.). China

Han Fei is one of the most influential thinkers in the Chinese legalist school of philosophy. His views are collected in the *Hanfeizi*. Han rejected the Confucian idea that morality and virtue should guide the state. He was a relativist, believing that political institutions must change with prevailing circumstances and be adaptable to patterns of human behavior. Han Fei thought that this behavior was determined not by moral sentiments but by economic and political conditions. The ruler, he wrote, should not try to make men good but only to restrain them from doing evil. Nor should he try to win the hearts of the people, because men are selfish and do not know their true interests. The ruler should demand satisfactory performance from officials and punish anyone who is derelict of duty or oversteps his power. He also advised the ruler to trust no one and to use wile to unearth plots against the throne. In many ways, his prescriptions on how to rule successfully were close to those suggested by Machiavelli in *The Prince*.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government holds that people have a material and spiritual side, which is reflected in the human tendency to be both realistic and idealistic. Han Fei chose to describe the material and realistic side of humanity, and thus emphasized a pragmatic and legalistic approach to government. This approach does have some validity when people exhibit mostly selfish interests. Under these conditions, government should be concerned not just with moral admonitions but also with strict laws to ensure compliance with basic moral standards. Han Fei's belief that political institutions ought to change over time to

reflect current conditions also is valid but must be balanced by Edmund Burke's advice not to change political institutions too quickly. The inner quality philosophy places much more emphasis on changing mankind to reflect his better side, and it prescribes far more ethical and spiritual guidelines in politics than Han Fei.

Marcus Tullius Cicero (106-43 B.C.). Rome

Cicero wrote the *Republic* and the *Laws*, only portions of which survive. In these works he defended the idea of a ruling elite rather than a popular democracy. He favored a Senate comprised of life-tenured ex-magistrates who had the training and experience to govern. In many ways, Cicero's political philosophy is similar to Plato's. He believed strongly in government run by laws, because perfect wisdom and perfect justice – while perhaps knowable to a few – could not be understood in their perfection by the majority of citizens. In his view, the rule of law provided the best practical opportunity to pursue justice, as it is obedience to the law that prevents the three Aristotelian forms of good government from being perverted (e.g., monarchs becoming tyrants). Civil law is the mechanism which guides statesmen in the pursuit of truth and justice. To Cicero, law is an extension of morality, and law's natural justice should flow to all citizens. He believed that governors should abide by the same laws as those they govern.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of government supports the view that civil law is essential to a well-functioning government. Cicero's concept of the role of law and order is more humane than that of the legalistic scholar Han Fei, and thus it is more closely aligned with inner quality theories. In the inner quality philosophy, law is in many cases an extension of morality and it should be the instrument of the flow of justice to the people. The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government would agree with Cicero that the law should apply to all members of society, leaders and citizens alike. Law is meant to be the servant of all the people, not just the

governing elite of a nation. The inner quality philosophy would also agree that politics is a practical art and what is sometimes practical in a given stage of human development is not necessarily perfect, an ideal echoed by Machiavelli and others. The role of the statesman is to try to emulate the ideal to the greatest extent possible. The danger always, however, is that the statesman may lose sight of the ideal in his or her pursuit of practical necessity. This tendency is best ameliorated by the statesman being guided by the inner quality and higher mind, because this guidance is closely connected with the soul of the individual.

[St Augustine \(354-430\). Catholic theologian](#)

St Augustine addressed the fundamental issue of how to reconcile rational philosophy with Christian scripture and divine revelation. His main work, *The City of God*, argued that man was naturally evil and that he could only overcome his baser nature through devotion to God. Since a life of repentance and salvation is impossible for everyone, the political processes of the world must serve those who are devoted to God as well as those who are driven by their baser nature. For this reason, the aim of civil government is social order. Augustine considered government authority to come from God and, hence, obedience is required by all. The state evolved in the affairs of men because of original sin, which made men worldly by nature. It was the duty of the church to imbue the state with the attributes of love of God and love of one's fellowman; however, the church had no right to interfere in secular affairs of the state. The church and state have separate roles to play in the lives of people. The key role of philosophers was to attempt to bridge and explain to the masses this dual role of governance at spiritual and material levels. In this effort, he was similar to the Islamic scholars, Al Farabi and Ibn Rushd, who sought to define the role of philosophers in the context of Muhammad's teachings.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government does not include the doctrine of original sin and thus views politics somewhat differently than St Augustine. The inner quality philosophy assumes that man is innocent and pure as a soul created by God, and that government should reflect the degree to which man realizes, accepts, and acts upon that natural oneness with God. The inner quality philosophy of government parallels the view of St Augustine in certain areas, such as the idea that government must serve the needs of both the material and spiritual sides of man, the importance of civil order and obedience to government except under exceptional circumstances such as systemic abuse of power or severe corruption, and the complementary roles played in society by church and state. In the inner quality philosophy of governance, it is the higher mind's logos, or enhanced logic and reasoning, which enables one to integrate the material and spiritual aspects of the individual, society, and government.

[Ibn Muhammad Al Farabi \(870-950\). Kazakhstan or perhaps Afghanistan](#)

Al Farabi was one of the most famous of the Arabic philosophers, widely considered second only to Aristotle in terms of knowledge. In *Al-Madina al-Fadila*, he theorized an ideal state as did Plato, although he believed the ideal state should be ruled by a prophet-imam instead of a philosopher-king. Al Farabi saw religion as a symbolic rendering of truth, and he viewed philosophy as both a theoretical and practical discipline. Like Confucius, he believed the duty of the learned man or philosopher was to provide guidance to the state. The ideal philosopher must master the necessary arts of rhetoric and poetics to communicate abstract truths to ordinary people, as well as achieving enlightenment himself. The ideal society is directed towards the realization of true happiness, or philosophical enlightenment. The philosopher's duty is to establish a virtuous society by healing the souls of the people, establishing justice, and guiding them towards true happiness.

Comparison: As with many Islamic scholars, Al Farabi's philosophy mirrored in large measure the philosophies of the ancient Greeks, whose books were being rediscovered and translated into Arabic. Al Farabi was concerned about the characteristics of an ideal state and ideal society, and the role of philosophers in these ideal institutions. His ideas parallel many of those found in the inner quality philosophy of ethics and governance, especially the concept that the goal of an ideal society ought to be the true happiness of its citizens, a goal which requires religious and secular scholars to teach the people how to achieve justice and attain true happiness.

[Ibn Rushd \(1126-1198\). Islamic Spain](#)

Also known as Averroes. For Ibn Rushd, the *Nicomachean Ethics* of Aristotle provided the theoretical substructure for the practical sciences, while Plato's *Republic* provided the practical blueprint for the best political order. Within this framework, Ibn Rushd argued for an active role for the philosopher in the political arena. In the *Fasl al-maqal*, he underscored the view that philosophy has political implications by grounding the study of philosophy in truth as revealed by the Prophet Muhammad. This law is divine law, given to insure the wellbeing of the entire community; therefore, the philosopher is obliged by duty to employ his wisdom for the benefit of all. Inasmuch as only the philosopher has insight into the truth by way of reason, only he can interpret the law in an appropriate manner. To do this effectively requires a practical political philosophy which explores the foundations and guiding principles of the law.

Comparison: Like Al Farabi, the scholar Ibn Rushd tried to define the role of philosophers in an Islamic state. Ibn Rushd did this by linking politics with law, the law with God and the Prophet, and God and the Prophet with philosophers who could discern what the divine intent was. This creates a direct relationship between God and man in the sphere of government, a proposition in alignment with the inner quality philosophy of government. To the Islamic philosophers, there is

separation between church and state in terms of roles. However, in Islam all aspects of life are united – state, religion, and way of life. The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government would agree that all aspects of life are united but would recommend for practical reasons that church and state should be separate in an institutional sense. Combining these two social roles in government would in most cases result in the power of the state approving and supporting one among many religions. Because there are many paths to God, freedom of religion and belief would seem more appropriate to mankind's condition than a state-sponsored religion.

[St Thomas Aquinas \(1225-1274\). Catholic theologian](#)

Like Aristotle, St Thomas Aquinas believed state authority was rooted in natural law and that man's written law should reflect justice. He argued that communal existence would lead to people's happiness. In contrast to St Augustine, St Thomas Aquinas thought that politics was not incompatible with Christianity and that a citizen's political activities could be consistent with his spirituality. He provides a schema in which Eternal law, Natural law, and civil law are all levels of Divine Revelation. He believed that government was natural because, without it, people would destroy one another. St Thomas Aquinas felt that government (albeit a gift from God) comes through the people and therefore must reflect the wishes of the governed. The church and state ought to be separate, because each has its own roles to play. Government holds power in trust – first, on behalf of God and, second, on behalf of the governed. The people have a right to dispose of a tyrant who attempts to force them to obey laws contrary to divine or moral law. St Thomas Aquinas is best known for the *Summa Theologiae* and the *Summa contra Gentiles*.

Comparison: There are many similarities between the inner quality philosophy of government and the political ideas of St Thomas Aquinas. Most prominent of these are the separate but linked roles of church and state, the concept that a person can be both a citizen as well as devoted

follower of a religion, the relationship of human law and divine law, and the responsibility of the state to fulfill its role as a custodian of power for the people and to be responsible to the people. The inner quality philosophy also agrees in principle that the people have a right to overthrow the government if it abandons its God-ordained responsibility to uphold divine law or is exceedingly corrupt, but the inner quality philosophy – like Burke – urges caution in pursuing revolution to solve political problems because of the high cost to the people when established governments are overthrown.

[Ibn Khaldun \(1332-1406\). North African Arab](#)

Known for the massive and comprehensive *Al-Muqaddimah*, Ibn Khaldun was interested in the rise and fall of political dynasties. In his theory, the process begins with group feeling (group consciousness or group solidarity), such as found in a clan or tribe where people have common descent. The group with the strongest sense of solidarity will be able to become a ruling dynasty. A dynasty occurs only where there is civilization. Luxury then develops and social surplus is produced. Services, crafts, arts, sciences, and trade thrive. However, almost inevitably, this luxury leads to the decay and disintegration of the dynasty as the leaders become corrupt and lazy, thus undermining the strength of their group feeling. If the dynasty collapses, the state collapses. Because of his method of analysis, Ibn Khaldun often is considered the founder of political economics.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of government acknowledges the close relationship between the economy of a society and its political system. Like many other scholars, Ibn Khaldun is a realist in terms of political philosophy. His focus is on politics as it exists rather than how it ought to be. The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government accepts the need

for pragmatism and realism in politics, but also emphasizes the vital role of idealism to inspire people to pursue ever higher goals of excellence and transcendence.

[Niccolo Machiavelli \(1469-1527\). Italy](#)

Machiavelli is considered the first political realist in Western political philosophy. In *The Prince* he presented an argument for applying realism to the study of politics – that is, describing how rulers have used practical politics to achieve their political goals and drawing conclusions from this historical evidence. This short work established Machiavelli's reputation as the first political scientist because it was based on fact rather than ideals. In *The Discourses on Livy*, Machiavelli argued in favor of a representative form of government. *The Discourses* is considered one of the founding documents of modern republicanism, which made its appearance centuries later in Europe and America. The difference between the two approaches of Machiavelli has primarily to do with whether one is addressing the pragmatic needs of seizing and maintaining power in a time of crisis or whether one is contemplating the ideal form of government under more normal conditions. His realist argument centers on the premise that a successful ruler must always do what is necessary because, in the political affairs of men, the final result is the arbiter of whether the action was justified. This advice has been shortened by others into the famous dictum that the ends justify the means.

Comparison: Machiavelli had two objectives in mind as he wrote his treatises on politics. One objective was to remove myth from politics and to identify what actually works in the political domain (*The Prince*). The other objective was to free man from superstition and control of ideologues so mankind could use reason to improve his system of governance (*The Discourses*). The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government is realistic, but also argues that the hearts of men ought to be aligned with God and that government's intentions should be to improve the

conditions of the people. The goal of the inner quality philosophy is to bring into proper balance the spiritual and material sides of mankind in their personal, social, and political lives. The inner quality philosophy considers the argument that the end justifies the means to be morally wrong, because the higher mind of every person has the capacity to discern the most appropriate and honorable means to achieve noble ends. The key objective in politics is to educate the people to the reality of their own true selves, not to ensure leaders remain in power.

[Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar \(1542-1605\). India](#)

Best known as a ruler of the Moghul Empire in India, Akbar's vision of his empire was that of an interfaith community in which Muslims, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Jews, and Christians could all live in peace while respecting their different beliefs and cultures. He stressed unity of all beings and a theism that represented the common elements of all religious creeds. He had a great love of knowledge and was a patron of the arts. A gifted administrator, he gained a reputation for justice and for interest in the welfare of ordinary people. He also tried to develop and encourage commerce, and had the land accurately surveyed for the purpose of correctly evaluating taxation. Akbar did not write down his governance philosophy, but Abul Fazl (1551-1602) was the chronicler of Akbar's rule and the author of his biography, *Akbarnama*. The way Akbar administered his empire has been considered a model for how rulers should conduct their affairs.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of government finds many similarities with the policies and style of governing exhibited by Akbar. His vision of unity among all faiths, justice, fairness, and concern with the people's welfare are all elements of inner quality theories of governance. The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government strongly supports the idea that all men at all times have a link through their souls, hearts, and higher minds with the

intentions of God. In the philosophy, one of these intentions is to enable mankind to create a stable, prosperous, and well-run society ruled by just leaders in pursuit of the common good.

[Thomas Hobbes \(1588-1679\). England](#)

Hobbes created a science of power in politics (reflective of his love of geometry), making deductions about human political behavior based on scientific principles and thought experiments breaking issues into component parts. He considered man a rational creature, who established political organizations to fulfill human needs and desires. The establishment of government came about through a legal contract moving the parties from a state of natural conflict to a state of relative social balance and peace. His most famous political work, *Leviathan*, began with a description of man's state of nature as being "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." Men being rational, however, saw it to be in their mutual best interests to establish a social contract to hand limited power over to a third party sovereign with significant authority to enforce the contract. His political theories are based on absolutist principles, not necessarily descriptions of reality, with the goal of getting to the essence of the issues under discussion. Hobbes argued that men have certain natural rights (being free, equal, and autonomous), so that his views are often cited by those advocating limited government.

Comparison: From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy of government, Hobbes is correctly using scientific approaches to address politics. This is difficult to do, however, because so much of politics is about feelings and pre-conceived biases of who or what is right and wrong. Also, there is the issue of precedents and experimentation: political events are unique instances in history, making scientific conclusions about causal relationships nearly impossible to prove with certainty. Aware of these difficulties, Hobbes tried to create a model of how government evolved through contract in which man's natural rights were protected at the same time security

and order were brought to society through a strong government. Hobbes is a humanist who looked to nature and science for clues as to how men should be governed. That approach is valid, although it places too much emphasis on the rational side of man and too little on the need to spiritually align with God's will and thus be open to inspiration and intuition, which can sometimes outpace reason.

[John Locke \(1632-1704\). England](#)

Locke is considered the father of classic liberalism in politics, a perspective that is supportive of a democratic system of government in which citizens actively participate in the political process. He believed in man's ability to reason, the full use of which requires freedom of speech. Unlike Hobbes, Locke viewed nature as being in a state of equilibrium rather than chaos. The natural rights of man – including the right of property and the right to rule – were given by God to man and flow from this state of nature. To avoid the misuse of power, both a social contract and a political contract ought to be established with the full consent of the people. Government under this contract is a trustee acting on behalf of the people. If government should abuse its contracted authorities, then the people were justified in revolting against that government. Locke also believed that every man possessed a near absolute right to property, including the product of his own labor. It was government's duty to protect that right. He argued for both limited government as well as a separation of powers. His most important political work is contained in *Two Treatises of Government*; his empirical (i.e., experience-based) philosophy is found in *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*.

Comparison: Both Hobbes and Locke made important contributions to the philosophical foundations of the American political experiment. Both used reason to deduct certain principles on which a legitimate government should be founded and held accountable to the people. Locke

envisioned a more harmonious state of nature than did Hobbes, and therefore many of his ideas resonate a bit more closely with those of the inner quality philosophy of governance. Locke's views on the rights of man flowing from God, freedom of speech and the right to property, government based on contract with the people, limited government, and separation of powers are all parallel to those supported by the inner quality philosophy.

[Baruch \(Benedict\) Spinoza \(1632-1697\). The Netherlands](#)

Primarily known for his philosophical and theological views, Spinoza advocated freedom of thought and especially freedom of religious thought in his writings, most famously explored in his *Theological-Political Treatise*. He believed that people give up some of their rights to the state for the protection it can provide. However, since individuals can never give up the right to pursue their own interests, the state can never have absolute power. Spinoza recommends a limited, constitutional state that protects freedom of expression and religious toleration. This form of government, he believes, best preserves the state while providing the highest degree of stability and benefit to citizens.

Comparison: Spinoza adds to the contract theories of Hobbes and Locke by articulating the need for limited government defined by a constitution. Many of Spinoza's views, especially his emphasis on freedom of religion and thought, are parallel to those found in the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government.

[Charles-Louis de Secondat de Montesquieu \(1689-1755\). France](#)

Montesquieu is considered one of the founders of sociology because of his detailed exploration of the historical relationships between law, liberty, and government. In *The Spirit of the Laws*, he considers these and other relationships in the context of climate, commerce, religion, and the family. Montesquieu is perhaps best known for his defense of the English constitution, which he

considered the model for a free modern government. (Britain does not have a written constitution like the United States, but an unwritten one informed by the Acts of Parliament, court judgments, conventions, and the Magna Carta.) Montesquieu thought English liberty was the result of a balanced constitution, reflected in separation of legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. He argued there could be no security in civil liberty without the separation of the three powers, each holding the others in check.

Comparison: Montesquieu further developed the political ideas which found their way into the American *Constitution* and representative form of government. Many of his views are congruent with those of the inner quality philosophy of governance, especially the need for separation of powers in modern government. It is worth noting that Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, Montesquieu, and many other philosophers of this period were laying the foundation for a new form of government: a representative democracy founded on a constitution approved by the people. The inner quality philosophy supports this form of government as being suitable for the current period of mankind's political evolution. This form of government is not ideal, but it is a good form of government in which men and women can learn to properly use free will in a social, economic, and political setting. The evolution of thought eventually finding its way into the American form of government is an example of how governance is a "living" philosophy, with many insights progressively building upon one another to create a system of government as a political experiment. This experiment, in turn, forms a foundation on which future analysis and speculation can be built. The inner quality philosophy of government accepts this progression of political thought and views it as the evolutionary mechanism by which increasingly more "ideal" or "perfect" forms of government are conceptualized and then established. It is nearly impossible beforehand, however, to predict the exact architecture of these more ideal and perfect forms of

government because of the many threads of thought that finally produce new types of governance systems.

David Hume (1711-1776). Scotland

Hume's works, which include *Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* and *A Treatise of Human Nature*, are famous in the fields of epistemology (theory of knowledge) and ethics. His political views are scattered throughout numerous essays. Hume's most important contributions to political thought include insistence that utility and interest are the sources of government and community. He thought that knowledge of human nature and experience were the primary ways to know anything, and that the function of reason was to understand and rationalize one's passions or feelings. From this approach came many discussions of themes related to politics such as property, obligation, liberty, forms of government, money, taxes, and commerce. Notably, Hume believed the balancing of opposed political interests was essential to a well-functioning government.

Comparison: Hume identified utility and interest as being primary motivations for political activity, and he observed that these sources of activity are closely tied to an individual's perception of reality. Because these are subjective issues, Hume concluded that balancing political interests was essential in political institutions, because no single point of view would be all encompassing or always correct. These observations are mostly valid in the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, which deals with man as he currently is as well as what he can become. What is perhaps missing in Hume's political philosophy is a proper assessment of mankind's spiritual nature and its implications. From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy, this side of humanity needs also to be taken into consideration in the analysis of mankind's moral, social, and political behavior. Otherwise, envisioned systems of ideal

government will not address the needs of the whole person but rather only part of what comprises a human being.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778). Switzerland

Rousseau believed that the noble savage was superior to civilized human beings. He thought the general will of the people could best be addressed through a direct democracy rather than through a representative form of democracy. However, since men are imperfect, Rousseau acknowledged that a direct democracy is unlikely to be successful. In the *Social Contract*, he tried to identify the best form of government possible. He argued that sovereignty ought always to remain with the collective body of man. It cannot be transferred nor delegated to government. In Rousseau's ideal republic, the people would be trained in virtue and be equal in most circumstances. This would allow true self-government and would enable every man to be free. Rousseau's views on liberty, equality, democracy, and order were highly influential, even if his idea of small city-states has seemed impractical in more modern society.

Comparison: Rousseau contributed greatly to theories of liberty, equality, and social contracts – all important thoughts reflected in American democracy and similar systems of government. Rousseau focused on the value of the person, individually and collectively. The value of the person is also reflected in the inner quality principle of the individual being the basis of society and government. The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government would also agree with Rousseau that people ought to be trained in virtue; however, the philosophy places greater emphasis on discovery of the character of one's soul as being the source of that virtue, value, and self-worth.

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Germany

Of Kant's many works, perhaps the most influential was the *Critique of Pure Reason* in which he attempted to explain the relationship between reason and human experience. In his view, the human mind shapes and structures experience so that all human experience shares such structural features as time and space and cause and effect. One of Kant's greatest contributions to political philosophy is his theory of duty. To Kant, the combination of duty, law, and freedom derive from a consideration of man being a rational, autonomous agent. Kant envisioned the gradual decline of the nation-state as the universal authority of a League of Nations became established. In *Perpetual Peace*, Kant argued in favor of the League to enforce natural, rational international law. These laws can be derived as part of the application of rational processes to determine individual categorical imperatives. Categorical imperatives are precepts people ought to follow because we consider them to be universal laws. Kant believed that people should follow these universally valid precepts because of duty, regardless of the consequences of their action.

Comparison: The categorical imperative of Kant is defined as being the single most important ethical principle by which an individual should live his or her life. In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, the categorical imperative of an individual can be derived from knowledge of the soul's character, given uniquely to every soul by God. Kant's use of formalized reason to deduce principles of law, freedom, and duty based on an individual's categorical imperative is an approach supported in the inner quality philosophy. However, the inner quality philosophy would add intuition and a sense of spirituality to the means by which a person can come into contact with his innermost best character and begin to express his true self. Knowing the inner quality gives one the ability to intuitively grasp the essence of one's categorical imperative, which can then be rationalized and codified in words through the use of

the higher mind. Nearly everyone can define his or her categorical imperative by reflecting on the essence of their best character.

Edmund Burke (1729-1797). England

Burke is considered one of the leading proponents of modern conservatism. Conservatism in this sense means being suspicious of radical change and instead basing political and social decisions on cautious pragmatism and rationality. As argued in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke believed that political change should proceed slowly, because established political institutions generally are the result of a prolonged period of development. Except in extraordinary cases, government should not be overthrown on the basis of even well-meaning or high-sounding ideals. It is best to reform gradually with the support of the people, rather than precipitating change through violent revolution. Burke, who was a Member of Parliament, believed that official judgments ought to reflect the interests of the nation as a whole instead of the more limited interests of individual constituencies.

Comparison: Both Locke and Burke are considered to be pillars of modern politics. Locke is called the father of classic liberalism, which is based on the idea that citizens should actively participate in the democratic political process. Burke is thought to be the father of modern conservatism, which holds that political change should proceed slowly because established institutions are the result of long and tested experience. Depending on the circumstances, both views are valid in the inner quality philosophy of government. Liberalism and conservatism are examples of the yin and yang in politics which must be kept in balance for society to progress smoothly while meeting the needs and expectations of different groups. Balance in this case does not mean the liberal-conservative continuum is locked in the middle, but rather that the two polarities tend to balance each other over time so that no single point of view is forever

dominant. The inner quality philosophy of government would agree with Burke that national interests must take precedence over local interests whenever governmental decisions impact the whole of society.

Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826). United States

Jefferson drafted the *U.S. Declaration of Independence*. The *Declaration*, along with the *Federalist* papers written by Alexander Hamilton (1757-1804), James Madison (1751-1836), and John Jay (1745-1829), were instrumental in the eventual adoption of the American *Constitution*. Together, these documents set forth the fundamental principles on which the American system of government is founded. The political philosophy behind these documents was summarized by Jefferson as “hostility against every form of tyranny over the mind of man.” In its justification for separating from Great Britain, the *Declaration* states various assumptions about governance. These assumptions comprise the basics of the Founding Fathers’ political beliefs: the laws of God and nature are intertwined with human political institutions; God created all men to be equal; God gave man certain unalienable rights, including life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; the purpose of government is to secure these rights; government derives its just powers from the consent of the governed; if government becomes destructive of these ends, the people have the right to abolish the government and establish a new one in whatever fashion they believe most likely to provide safety and happiness. The *Federalist* papers explained and defended many of the institutional mechanisms of the constitutional federal republic recommended to become the U.S. form of government. These mechanisms include federalism (power shared between various levels of government), separation of powers (between legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government), systems of checks and balances, pluralism, popular consent, majority rule, equality under the law, personal liberty, individual freedoms, right to private property, constitutional authority, judicial review, and rule of law. As we have

seen, many of these ideas were expressed by several generations of political thinkers prior to the establishment of the United States.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of governance considers the U.S. political system to be one model for good government during the present stage of mankind's evolution. While imperfect, the U.S. system is an acceptable model because of the opportunity the American system can provide – when it functions properly – to all citizens to learn the proper use of free will through participation in the political process.

Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832). England

Bentham was an early proponent of utilitarianism, based on the concept of “the greatest good of the greatest number,” which meant each person would count as one and no more than one. He favored representative democracy and open government, as well as a welfare state in which legislation would seek to ensure subsistence, security, abundance, equality, and other social benefits extending to the largest number of citizens possible. He also was deeply concerned with reforming the criminal justice system of his day. In Bentham's view, pleasure is the only good and pain the only evil. He believed that government action ought to be taken if and only if it tends to increase the happiness of everyone affected by the action. To determine which action ought to be taken, he devised a calculation based on the pleasure and pain such action would cause. His most famous work is *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*.

Comparison: Bentham stressed the need for social welfare in society and advocated government policy designed to benefit the greatest number of people. In his view, every person was equal to every other person in terms of calculating the effects of policy. In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, there is recognition of the need for social welfare and equality. However, Bentham's concept of utilitarianism tended towards a kind of social hedonism, in that pleasure

and pain were the most important criteria for judging right and wrong policy. That particular calculation is not one supported by the inner quality philosophy in most cases, because karmic factors play an important role in the natural distribution of resources, talent, and circumstances in life. The goal of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government is to achieve excellence in society, which can only be obtained if everyone is striving to do their best rather than striving to equalize all of society.

[John Stuart Mill \(1806-1873\). England](#)

Mill is the most famous of the utilitarian philosophers. He believed that government's promotion of public education could lift the moral and intellectual levels of society so that the negative aspects of democracy could be overcome. Mill's *On Liberty* argued that man's inward passions must be mastered before social progress can be made. In this, he ran counter to Jeremy Bentham's indifference to personal character in the original theories of utilitarianism. Mill did much to fill in the gaps of those early utilitarian beliefs, and he made utilitarian philosophy far more sympathetic to human nature. His many works included studies on moral principles, political economy, logic, and metaphysics. In the area of social and political thought, Mill argued that even religions ought to be subject to the fundamental standard of utility: do they contribute to human welfare? He supported the free market economy and liberty as social institutions. He also was a leading proponent of women's rights. A major concern of Mill was how to safeguard the autonomous space of the individual from domination by the majority.

Comparison: Mill's conception of utilitarianism is more compatible than Bentham's to the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government. Areas of congruence include promotion of improved education, development of personal character, concern with human welfare, equality of men and women, and protection of individualism in democracies. Mill added a more humane

face to utilitarianism and thereby made it more realistic and compassionate, even if his suggested calculations of happiness and pain remained difficult to apply. Another concern is that Mill's utilitarianism emphasizes a religion of humanity rather than a religion of God. Mill largely rejects the existence of God on the grounds that God's existence cannot be proven rationally. From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy, Mill's view on this matter appears to be wrong because human rationality is bounded by experience and logic while God is much more than human experience and logic. Mankind has a spiritual dimension that can be dismissed by the rational mind but which is real to anyone who has recognized his or her soul, come into contact with any of the heavenly hosts, or had a spiritually uplifting experience such as discovering their inner quality or being touched by the Holy Spirit.

Alexis De Tocqueville (1805-1859). France

Tocqueville wrote *Democracy in America* to assess how the American experiment with democracy was progressing at the time. He speaks of the inherent danger of a mistaken belief that political equality exists within the masses. This belief can lead easily into a "tyranny of the majority," with the majority believing that their numbers confirm their points of view while those lesser in number must necessarily be wrong. Tocqueville noted that in the United States there also existed a form of popular sovereignty in which small groups of citizens formed their own civic organizations to promote their own agendas. Power was thus decentralized. For this form of representative government to work, however, there must be common allegiance to cultural values across all of these individual civic units. Without that common allegiance, Tocqueville argued, a democracy can fail due to tendencies toward extreme individualism, mediocrity, and the unpredictability of mass decisions.

Comparison: From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy of government, Tocqueville's insights into the weaknesses of the American political system were largely correct. U.S. policies have frequently veered off course because of popular movements, partisanship, or undue influence of special interests. Policies thus originated have often needed to be adjusted to keep the nation in balance. Other valid weaknesses include tendencies toward decentralization that harm national unity, as well as the unpredictability that can occur when political passions overwhelm reason among the majority of voters. Still, the American system does have many corrective mechanisms, such as regular elections, term limits on office holders, checks and balances woven throughout government, and a cultural tradition of uniting when faced with imminent threat or regional disaster. In the inner quality philosophy of government, the American political system is a pragmatic solution to the problem of governance in an era in which imperfect man must learn how to properly use free will within an environment of individual freedom and within a wide range of creative opportunity.

[Karl Marx \(1818-1883\). Germany](#)

Known mostly as an economic theorist and social philosopher, Marx's political theories are best reflected in *Capital*, in which he uses Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's (1770-1831) method of the dialectic to explain how human labor is the source of economic value and class antagonisms brought naturally about by competition over the control of means of production. Marx viewed philosophy largely in terms of ideology, that is, a system of thought reflective of the material conditions of the society in which the philosophy was produced. He is perhaps most famous for the *Communist Manifesto*, written with his collaborator Friedrich Engels (1820-1895), calling for a revolution by the working class to overthrow all existing social conditions.

Comparison: In the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, there is a close relationship between systems of economics and politics. The inner quality philosophy, however, does not consider class antagonism to be the major driver of social change. Instead, the major driver of mankind's social evolution is believed to be the yearning of the soul to fulfill its potential. The inner quality philosophy strongly disapproves of using widespread revolution as an instrument of change because of its destructive impact on society. In the inner quality philosophy of government, communism is viewed as an economic and social system which largely works to negate the effects of karmic justice, because it seeks to level society and deny basic freedoms and liberty to individuals.

[Mahatma Gandhi \(1869-1948\). India](#)

Gandhi was not a political philosopher per se, but he lived a life that demonstrated a philosophy of politics. Gandhi considered politics as an instrument for the uplifting of man in social, economic, moral, and spiritual spheres. To Gandhi, politics and religion were intertwined. For example, he wanted to provide food and work to the unemployed in India, but that was impossible without being involved in the politics of his time. Gandhi was convinced that Western civilization was hedonistic and selfish. He thought such imported values to be the cause of much of India's moral despair, and he therefore dedicated his life to ending British colonialism in his country. Gandhi's political vision was a transformed society in which individuals could enjoy freedom in a spirit of altruism or selfless concern for the welfare of others. To Gandhi, truth is God and politics should be a search for truth. He believed that politics without religion kills the soul. By spiritualization of politics, Gandhi meant the establishment of a community of persons pursuing self-realization. Probably the best known book written by Gandhi was his autobiography, *The Story of My Experiments with Truth*.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government supports Gandhi and his efforts to rid India of British colonial rule. His political ideas were highly idealistic and suited to India's culture, but they may not necessarily fit as well with the more individualistic and materialistic culture of Western democracies. The Gandhian model of community emphasized the blending of spiritual attunement, service to the poor, and freedom to explore one's spirituality. This vision of ethical behavior and governance contains spiritual insights of lasting value for all mankind, especially when living in smaller communities of like-minded people.

Hannah Arendt (1906-1975). Germany

The Human Condition is perhaps Hannah Arendt's most important political study. She argues that thinking is a form of egoism that isolates humans from one another and from the world. In place of this, she proposes that people move into a mode of political action in which actions are bravely taken but whose consequences cannot be known beforehand. The idea of becoming one's true self, regardless of the outcome, is shared to some extent with the individualism of Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900). To Arendt, the outcome of this process is power, in the sense of mutual empowerment among people to continue to progress to overcome egoism and achieve the positive results of freedom and humanity.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of government is much more deliberate in advocating political change than Arendt, who argues for action over thought. She believed action leads eventually to positive change while thought tends to continue too much of the status quo. Arendt tried to redefine what is meant by a political life, with a goal toward an existence of a humane and democratic society. From the perspective of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government, her views are difficult to implement because they require a readjustment of the processes of human judgment – something that can occur positively through a spiritual

experience or scientific breakthrough, but which can be destructive if undertaken purely by human experimentation.

John Rawls (1921-2002). United States

In *Theory of Justice*, Rawls argues that in a hypothetical situation of equality for everyone and ignorance of individual social positions and preferences, people would all agree on the proposition that justice is fairness. This conception leads to two fundamental principles of justice. The first principle of justice would affirm certain basic liberties equally provided to all, including liberty of conscience, freedom of thought, freedom of association, equal political participation, integrity of the person, and maintenance of the rule of law. The second principle of justice, referred to as the difference principle, would regulate what is permissible in differences between the rights, powers, and privileges of the people. Under this second principle, certain levels of inequality would be permitted; however, the least advantaged classes in society must be made better off than would be possible under any other economic system. Based on the two principles, the ideal government would be organized by a liberal-democratic constitution to protect basic liberties and equalities in political participation, and to support a market-based economic system extensively distributing income and wealth.

Comparison: In the inner quality philosophy of government, there are several similarities with what Rawls is advocating – for example, the protection of basic liberties and freedoms, equal political participation, the rule of law, and the integrity and value of the individual. Also, a liberal-democratic constitutionally based government and market-based economy would be supported in the philosophy, depending on how the government and economy were designed and administered. The inner quality philosophy of government would urge caution, however, because policies seeking to extensively redistribute income and wealth can result in a serious disruption

of the laws of karma. Overall, Rawls' first principle of justice is largely congruent with the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government. His second principle of justice could be problematic, depending on how it was implemented.

Alasdair MacIntyre (b. 1929). Scotland

MacIntyre's *After Virtue* provides an analysis of modern ethical views from the point of view of Aristotelian virtue ethics. He finds that since the period of Enlightenment (17th and 18th centuries), most Western ethical and political theories have misunderstood the essential nature of man. Therefore, modern explanations of morality are inadequate or wrong. MacIntyre believes that Aristotle's ethics of virtue best describes the reality of human nature, in that these virtues are essential moral qualities needed to fulfill the potential of man. He takes this perspective and applies it to the modern age, with particular emphasis on formulating appropriate concepts of practice, virtue, and tradition. In the latter, his goal is to create a community in which practices relevant to the fulfillment of human nature can be carried out. MacIntyre attempts to make Aristotelian virtue ethics relevant to modern times, a reinterpretation he believes necessary because moral philosophies always reflect the morality of some particular social and cultural point of view. He argues that no system of morality can be everywhere valid.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government finds compatibility with many areas of MacIntyre's theories. The identification of human virtue (or the inner quality) is essential to the fulfillment of the potential of man. MacIntyre's goal of establishing a community in which the fulfillment of an individual's highest nature can be possible is also praiseworthy. The principal area of difference between the two ethical and political philosophies is the role of spirituality in human affairs. The inner quality philosophy believes that spirituality plays a key role in identifying and expressing an individual's highest virtue, whereas MacIntyre prefers to use

human rationality to arrive at an understanding of that virtue. The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government is based on the integration of the material and spiritual aspects of mankind and considers human rationality to be mostly relevant to the known material side of existence. The spiritual side of man is often best known through other instruments of perception and understanding, such as intuition, inspiration, and conscience. In addition to the five temporal senses, mankind has spiritual senses that can be developed and refined to discern a broader reality through the application of the higher mind.

[Charles Taylor \(b. 1931\). Canada](#)

Taylor's most important work is *Sources of the Self*, in which he rejects a strictly scientific or naturalistic explanation of the self in favor of a view of self as a moral agent. He revisits many theories from the past and concludes that we essentially are ethical beings, with a human inwardness related to God in some way. Taylor's argument is that we need to understand why we believe something. He finds that the key to self-fulfillment is to pursue something greater than one's own self-interest. He also believes that contradictions between cultures, ideologies, and policies are natural and that it is unrealistic to expect a solution to all disagreement. We ought instead to strive to understand other perspectives and together figure out how to manage our differences.

Comparison: The inner quality philosophy of ethics and government supports many of Taylor's ideas. While he does not probe as deeply as he might into the spiritual link between God and man, he does suggest that such self-discovery is both possible and desirable. The fact that he views self as a moral agent and urges people to pursue something greater than themselves places Taylor well within the paradigm of the inner quality philosophy.

Observations on Similarities and Differences

In making the above comparisons, I found it interesting that most of the assumptions and conclusions of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government can be found in earlier ethical and political theories, although not in any single work to my knowledge. The similarities validated a key observation of the inner quality: truth is everywhere to be found and it is freely accessible to anyone who wants to pursue it. The ideas that man has a material and spiritual side, that God is the creator of the soul, that individuals have a special virtue which ought to be identified and expressed to achieve personal and social happiness, that government ought to focus on the wellbeing of its citizens, that leaders have special responsibilities to protect their societies and represent the people before God, that policies should harmonize good ends with moral means, and that a close spiritual partnership can exist between God and man to improve humanity's political and social institutions – are all familiar themes in the long and rich history of political and ethical thought. More unusual in Western political traditions are the concepts of karma, reincarnation, and dharma, which nonetheless are found in many non-Western philosophies.

I believe the unique value of the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government is that it integrates all of the above elements into a single theory. Also of interest is the fact that the practical application of the inner quality philosophy is valid whether one approaches it from a perspective of idealism or realism. In other words, the inner quality can be seen as the character of the soul, or the inner quality can be seen as man's best character having evolved as altruism in nature. As an author, I hope this brief introduction into the inner quality philosophy of ethics and government will inspire readers to look closely within themselves for that spark of goodness which opens many possibilities for improved society and government in the future.

About the Author

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