

Moral Thinking: An Introduction To Values And Ethics

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Indian Ethics and Epics

Hello everyone. Today we will be talking about Ethics in the Indian Tradition. And this is the culminating section of the entire course. In fact, Ethics in the Indian Tradition itself, is a subject of enquiry, is an exhaustive subject of enquiry. And there is a lot of details over there. However, a course on Ethics, especially sourced in India, cannot do justice to its name, if it does not talk about Ethics in Indian Tradition.

So, here I make no claim of giving you an exhaustive introduction. But a very brief, perhaps a window view of, what Ethics in the Indian Tradition has been. This is something that, many of you, who are students from India, will be able to connect with their lived experience, the terminologies, they have come across in their families, with Ethics in Indian Tradition. So, this itself is quite a huge enterprise.

And, my aim here is to give you a brief overview, and to know some concepts, to know some theories that you have to, not even theories, but just concepts and notions, to prepare you to explore this field further, if you wish to do so. So, we are typically looking at the, classical Indian thought. Now, Indian as a category can be enormous. And, it would mean ancient, medieval, modern India. India has been a land of thinkers.

So, there have been a lot of thinkers. And, every thinker has a significant section spent on, ethical theories. So, the source text that I would recommend for you all, a very simple introductory text is, Kedarnath Tiwari's, Classical Indian Thought. So, Tiwariji has written a wonderful introductory book, trying to consolidate, what ethical thinking in Indian tradition has been, mostly focused on the ancient Indian tradition. Now, let us start with, we will briefly go over a few views, and understand how they have been dealt with.

The Vedic view, classically what we have heard about the Vedas. And, Vedas have a lot of stories in them. And, they talk of a lot of rituals of practices to do. And evidently,

therefore, the Vedic view is, externalistic view of morality. It talks about, Ritta, or the cosmic order, that is the supreme order, that is to be followed.

I will take a pause here, and talk about this term called, Ritta. Now, Ritta, you notice a dot below R. And, these are called, Diacritical marks. So, whenever one writes Sanskrit terms, in English language, the correct way is to use Diacritical marks. And you can look out, on the internet, and there are many help manuals about, how to use Diacritical marks with pronunciations.

A good idea would be, to write your own name, with using Diacritical marks. And, that would be the most accurate way of writing, an Indian sounding name, in English alphabets. So, Ritta. Ritta is also known as, the cosmic order. Now, Ritta is an example of, Teleology.

If you all remember, Teleology, that we talked about from Ethics. Teleology was about purpose. Ritta says that, there is a cosmic order, that executes itself. Not that, it needs to be followed. But, there is a cosmic order.

The Universe, the cosmos is purposive. It is teleological. And, one ought to act according to that. So, in this sense, there is an eternal order, that needs to be followed. And, in the Vedic view, the Ritta, or the cosmic order is supreme.

And, it needs to be followed, all else is wrong. Right and wrong have no sanction, of the inner character or motive. Sin is regarded simply as, disobedience of the commands of a God. So, it is quite ritualistic. The Vedic injunctions are generally ritualistic.

They are focusing on your acts. They are focusing on acts. So, ethical judgements are pronounced on acts. So, and these are generally associated with stories of gods, and injunctions from gods, which need to be followed. So, this is mostly externalistic, with little consideration of inner motive, or intention of the doer, for judging his act to be right or wrong.

So, the Vedic view we see, mostly focuses on our external actions. Does not pay too much heed, or does pay very little heed, to the inner life, the motivation, the intention of the acts. Now, let us look at the view of the Smritis. Again, Smritis here, you would notice, the dot put here, is a diacritical mark. Smritis and Dharma Shastras, here again, are diacritical marks.

So, these are what, is a good idea, that if you would like to maintain a level of accuracy, in writing Sanskrit terms in English, your proficiency on diacritical marks, will make it

very accurate. Now, the view of the Smritis, Dharma Shastras. These are the Shastras, talking about Dharma. And here, let me spend a moment on this term, Dharma, which is a very deep profound concept, and which can be seen as the Sanskrit equivalent of, what is morality. So, Dharma itself could mean so many things.

Dharma could mean properties. So, the Dharma of fire is to burn. Dharma is also the right way of doing things. Dharma is definitely not religion, the way religion is meant to be. But, Dharma is something that, you ought to do in a certain circumstance.

Dharma is something, that is your property. Dharma can be many things. And so, any discourse on Dharma is essentially a discourse on ethical theory, in the Indian tradition. So, the Dharma Shastras also preach, externalistic ethics, where inner motive or intention of the doer, this should be of the doer, does hardly seem to constitute the rightness or wrongness of the action, done by him. So, the doer's rightness inner motive, does not matter here.

Dharma Shastras are again focused on the externalistic world. There is occasional mention of inner virtues, inner virtues as an intention. Remember, when we talked about Virtue Ethics, this was talking about the inner world, the world of character, the world of intentions. Purity of motive and intention, is also necessary for doing moral acts. Only overt acts will not do.

So, here we see a movement from the Vedic time focus on external acts, to internal acts also. So, there seems to be a little involvement of motive, in this particular view of the Smriti's, that there is a role of intentionality, there is a role of your inner life, of purity of motive and intention, as necessary for coming out to judge an ethical character of an act. Then, we come to the Upanishadic view. In the Upanishadic view, inner dispositions start becoming important. So, and I quote from the text, referred.

I quote, sin is not merely failure to do the right, but failure to let good intention to act. Actions do not bind, what binds is the evil disposition. So, end quote. So, this is where, in the Upanishadic view, Upanishads also as a philosophy, start advocating or discussing the abstract. They move from Puranas and Vedas, which comprise more of stories and injunctions, to Upanishads, which comprise more of philosophical expositions.

So, here you can see the Upanishadic view, the inner dispositions start becoming important. So, it is not about just, what you act, but what is the disposition from which you act. Then we come to Nyaya and Vaishishikavu. These are also schools of philosophy. So, there are various schools of Indian philosophy, if you may or may not be aware of.

So, Charuvaka is the school of Indian philosophy, that is characterized sometimes separately, because it is a materialist school of philosophy. There is Nyaya Vaishik, there is Sankhya Mimansa, there is Vedanta, there is Jaina, there is Buddha. Of course, then there is Vedanta split into Advaita Vedanta, Ramanuja Vedanta, Vishishta Advaita. So, these are roughly schools of philosophy, that you may just hear, or not worry, if it does not register with you. Because, it is beyond the profile of the course, that we are doing right now.

So, Nyaya Vaishikavu is another school of philosophy. For the Nyaya Vaishishikavu, righteousness and unrighteousness are the qualities of the self, and not the objective act, which is prompted by the self. This is why, it is the purity or impurity of our intentions, a visanthé, which constitutes the rightness or wrongness of our actions. Now, we will see, how tremendous importance being paid to the notion of intentions. That intentions become crucial in determining the rightness or wrongness of action.

And here, intention becomes crucial to moral thinking and judgement. Now, the Mimansika view. The Mimansika view reads out, that rightness and wrongness are objective categories. And, they have nothing to do with subjective motives of intention.

This is again a seesaw. And that is why, also there, you will come across the difficulty of summarising the Indian tradition. Because, the Indian tradition comprise, even in the ancient Indian tradition of schools, which have been very much contrasting in their approaches to knowledge. So, look, where Nyaya Vaishikavu paid so much of importance to intentionality. The Mimansika schools are ignoring the importance of subjective notions of motives and intentions. And rather, they are focusing on objective categories, and looking at acts as crucial.

So, even accidental acts are also culpable. Intention does not matter. So, even when one unintentionally commits something, does a morally loaded act. Well, then one is held accountable for it. This is the Mimansika way of looking at things.

So, remember a few classes earlier, when we talked of an example, where there was a crowd of people near a pond, where a child was almost drowning. And another curious onlooker came in to find it out, and was pushed into the water, and by the way rescued the child. Because it was not his volition to jump into the water and rescue the child. But, he was pushed by the crowd accidentally, and he did the rescue by the way. So, for a Mimansika, that also earns credit to him, even though it was not his intention to save the child.

Vidhis, or processes and Nishedas, that which is forbidden, are the dos and don'ts, to be followed meticulously. So, for the Mimamsika view is quite ritualistic. The Vidhis and Nishedas, are to be followed meticulously. Then we can talk about the Baudha and Jain views. There is quite a bit of similarity between them.

Actions are good or bad, not in terms of external consequence they produce, but the inner motive, which prompts them. So again, the importance of inner motive, and consequences do matter. It is not just the intention, that one holds, but also the consequences that come about. Now, each of these schools, that I have mentioned, is an enormous school of Philosophy, with a significant discussion on Ethical Theory.

And, this in no way does justice to it. But just to introduce you to the school, so that you are familiar with the names, and what kind of positions taken. And again, the almost impossible task of summarising, what is essential to Indian thinking. Because, you can find Indian Philosophical schools, so contrasting. And in fact, even sometimes contradicting, each other's point of view. Now, let us look at some characteristics of Indian Moral System.

This Sri Kedarna Tiwari has tried to abstract, as something which summarizes across these systems. And, take a look at them, so that you can make some sense out of it. So, the importance is given both, to social and individual aspect of Ethics. Sometimes it helps to contrast, to understand the orient in light with the Occident, the East in light of the West. So, one thing that was common about Indian Moral Systems is that, not only have they focused on the individual, but also the social.

Both of them seem to merit attention, in the ethical framework. The outlook of most Indian Moral Systems is spiritual. And the spiritual goal is Moksha. However, there is a school of philosophy, Charu Vata, that do not align themselves to this spiritual goal of Moksha.

For them, death is the end of life. So, there is a contrarian view, a contrarian school, even within the school of ancient philosophy. Indian Moral Systems have a strong metaphysical basis. Ethics is integrated with metaphysics. For most Indian schools of philosophy, ethics is not a standalone, isolated, discrete enterprise. Rather, it is integrated with the metaphysics of the system at large.

So, that means, the kind of ontology, the kind of core metaphysical theories, that the system holds, will influence the kind of moral values, that system propagates. Authority is a crucial source of knowledge, or moral knowledge. So, sometimes authority is taken as a crucial source of knowledge. Indian Moral Systems aim to be practical. It aims to

create an accessible code of conduct, for living life.

So, it is not just mere theoretical speculation, but also it tries to bring about a practical aim, to create an accessible code for common people to live their lives. And finally, the Indian Moral Systems are deeply humanistic. That is, they are centred around humans. They are not universalistic in that sense, that they cater to some abstract idea. But they are very much keeping human beings at the centre of their conceptualisation.

Now, with this, when we talk of Ethics, in the Indian tradition, or in any long tradition, in any ancient tradition, how can we not talk about Epics. Epics are crucial to moral theorising, to moral thinking, in any tradition. And our tradition, or Indian tradition, is no exception to that. Any talk of Ethics, cannot but include the Epics.

And let us take a look at this. Because, most of you have, or many of you would be familiar with, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Many of you would be familiar with, different Epics of different cultures. So, we will just take a look, prepare the ground, for how to use the Epics, or how Epics have contributed to moral thinking, in various traditions. So, this is a more general understanding of Epics, which we see, that can help moral theorising take place in various traditions, typically now in the Indian tradition.

Let me read out, from the screen. The Epics are a fertile conceptual resource, for extracting and exacting philosophical perspectives, that may provide a more grounded and rooted introduction, to ethical problems. The Epics route to moral philosophising, is not only a potent philosophical discourse, but also a discourse, that is rooted in context, and makes for a very engaging and profound philosophical exercise, even in the domain of Ethics. The Epics are definitely are cultural heritage, and have influence in more ways than apparent.

So, the Epics are stories. What are they doing. They are extracting and exacting philosophical perspectives, moral perspectives, rendered in the form of a story, sometimes fictional, sometimes real. And as we later see, that does not make a difference to the, its potency, as a tool for moral theorising, for philosophical theorising. Here again, now there is another notion, that I would like to introduce, so that you can start making an appreciating. In fact, rather articulating a more important sense of, what is a narrative.

Narrative is a word, that you may have been using and hearing. But, let us look at Epics as narratives, taking stories seriously. Right. When you watch a movie, when you watch a cinema.

There is a narrative, that is playing along. What is a narrative. A narrative is a story, in the first person, that is playing along. There is a narrative of your life. There is a narrative of a story. There is a narrative of cinema, that gives you a holistic first person, inside view of life, it happens. So, let us say, the narrative in political philosophy, for the past half a century, is that, democracy is one of the best forms of government.

So, this is a narrative, that has come into being, that sometimes is also alleged to be manufactured. Narratives are not empirically verifiable, per say. But narratives are so macro, so big picture, that they are almost speculative. But, they also form the dominant way of looking at the world. Let me read out, what a narrative is, from the Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms.

A telling of some true or fictitious event, or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator to a narratee, although there may be more than one of each. Narratives are to be distinguished from descriptions of qualities. This should be a recounted, states or situations. Let me start. Narratives are to be distinguished from descriptions of qualities, states or situations, and also from dramatic enactments of events.

Although a dramatic work may also include, narrative speeches. A narrative will consist of a set of events, recounted in a process of narration, in which the events are selected and arranged, in a particular order, which is the plot. The category of narrative includes both, the shortest account of events. For example, the cat sat on the mat, or a brief news item. And, the longest historical or biographical diaries, travelogues, as well as novels, ballads, epics, short stories, and other fictional forms. So, if that sounds confusing, just look at, or try to understand narratives, as something which is a holistic picture of, what is happening in the first person view, right.

The narrative of a world order. So, a story that puts out a narrative. So, narratives are stories, and stories are important. Stories are serious, they are not just for entertainment. Although they do entertain, but we also need to understand, the things that entertain, can also teach. So, all teaching does not have to be drab and boring.

And, all entertainment does not have to be, without any learning quotient. So, narratives and epics, in my understanding, as a classic example of something, which educates, while it entertains. That is the power of stories, and that is the power of narratives. So, narrative is associated with the oral tradition. Now, let us look at the oral tradition.

Now, if you look, the history of your own family, right. Your own particular family that you have, is not something that has been written down in a history book, unless until you belong to, one of the royal families. But, for most of us commoners, our personal

histories, our family's histories, are transmitted through word of mouth. They are not documented in writing. Now, let us look at the history of human civilisation. Printing, writing, is quite recent, if you compare it with the history of humankind, thinking and learning.

In the Indian tradition, for a long time, knowledge was transferred verbatim. So, it was recited and memorised, and it was transferred through the oral tradition. There was no writing, for quite some time. The oral tradition meant that, things are transferred through speech, through memory, but not through writing. Let us look at, how the oral tradition is defined. The passing on from one generation, to another, of songs, chants, proverbs, and other verbal compositions, within and between non-literate cultures, or the accumulated stock of works, thus transmitted by word of mouth, ballads, folk tales, and several different versions.

Because, each performance is a fresh improvisation, based around a core of narrative incidents, and formulaic phrases. The state of dependence on the spoken word, in oral cultures, is known as, Orality. So, knowledge is passed from one generation to another, by the means of oral tradition, by means of memory. So, if you would look at, religious institutions of today also, say Madrasas, or Gurukuls, a lot of knowledge is passed through the oral tradition. That means, the students are made to recite it continuously, till they have memorised it completely, and that goes on to the next generation.

But now, be cautious of the fact, or of the easy conclusion, that you think that printing and technology, were the only reasons, why the oral tradition prevailed, or the lack of printing technology, was the only reason why, the oral tradition prevailed. But, is there something more in the oral tradition, that is not covered by printing, or not covered by documented way of transmission of knowledge. And here, I will give you a short snippet for you to think of, the relation between memory and understanding. Right. And this is laying the foundation of, why the oral tradition has a character, independent of just storing information.

So, it is not that, earlier there were no computers. So, that is why, human beings memorised and stored it. And now, this is, there are computers, the storage part of it is done in the computers, and human beings need not memorise it. The story is not that simple. And here, if you look at the assumptions, that the oral tradition carries, that memory and understanding, have a deep relation. Now, once you have memorised a text, let us say in a Gurukul or in a Madrasa, or in a religious institution.

Once one has memorised a text, one is able to recall parts of it, arguments of it, bring it to a, related to a current context, and get an understanding of it. If one has not

memorised it, the understanding cannot, you cannot pull out relevant sections of it, by looking into the book, or by searching it from the computer. Because, you would not know, what is relevant. To know, what is relevant is to have it in your memory, and thereby have that understanding. Think over this, as a justification of, why the oral tradition carries, meaning over and above, the usual way of transmission of knowledge, through printing, written documentation, or electronic storage records.

When one remembers something, one can spot the relevant section, and recall it, and relate it to the current context. If one has no memory of it, or very little memory of it, it cannot be pulled out by the person, for use in a context, that has come up. Now, let us come to the question, that what are the Epics. Now, Epics is not just a genre in literature, but a classic, that has survived the test of time, and is a significant perspective on the civilisation.

Now, this is crucial to comprehend, that Epics are not just stories or literature. But, one thing about Epics is, they have survived for quite a long time. Look at, Classics. The Classics have been read for, over and over long durations, and human history. Look at the Mahabharata or the Ramayana.

Five hundred years back also, people read the Mahabharata or the Ramayana. So, in five hundred years, is quite a recent past, in the history of that text. The Epics pose a question, that is essentially and eternally human. A rendition of the human predicament. The Epics pose a question, that is essentially and eternally human.

A rendition of the human predicament. And regional or temporal retellings, are only the contextual answers, to these human questions. So, when we look at Epics, what is it that makes them last so long. What makes them last so long, is because they connect to the human predicament. That generations, across centuries, have made sense of it.

And, that is the reason, why the text has continued. Else, the text should have disappeared, or become redundant or irrelevant. But, because every generation is able to make certain, make sense out of it, can relate to it, it continues. And, why can people make sense out of it.

Why does every generation make sense out of it. Because, it is a rendition of the human predicament. The human predicament, as something which is classically identical across time. That is, by the very nature of being. Let me give an example, to flesh it out, and for it to make sense to you. The joy of conquering, that human beings feel a certain joy, in encountering a difficulty, and conquering it.

This is a rendition of the human condition, a plot of human life. In different generations, in different centuries, this is fleshed out differently. This is instantiated differently. Say, 500 years back, it could have been a battle with a neighbouring army. Say, 10,000 years back, it could be battle with an animal predator.

With currently, it could be just climbing a mountain. May be, in the future, it could be playing an immersive video game, where there are a lot of difficulties planted, and one has to conquer that. So, the sense of conquest, sense of challenge and conquest, is something that remains common. How it is instantiated, or the particulars in which it takes place. That is what keeps changing, over time.

Taking from Paul Merchant, an epic is the animated history, or a lived experience history of the land. A subjective, phenomenological method to resurrect the past, in its totality, exceeding the resurrection of dead artefacts from excavation. Now, if not to complicate this further, but just to allow you to, help you to appreciate, and think about the power of Epics.

That it is a lived experience history. Right. So, Epics are not just archaeological findings. Epics are just mere historical facts, or brute facts. But rather, they are, how life proceeded.

Let me give you an example here. Archaeology. Archaeology is both, an art and a science. How is that so. Let us look at it. An Archaeologist digs up, and say finds some artefacts. Does carbon dating, finds out in which period do they belong to. This is the science and technology part of it.

But given the artefacts, given the excavations, and the maps, and the buildings, what kind of life was lived there. What was the story of life there, is not something that the artefacts will tell us. It is something that, we have to knit and imagine, that what is the way life was led over there. And, that is the art's part of the archaeological enterprise. So, to build the story, the narrative of life that took place, from the artefacts that have been excavated, from the buildings, structures, maps, everything that has been excavated.

They do not tell the story. You have to create the story. Because, there can be different stories. And, this is the humanities part of archaeology, where the story is built. And, the most consistent story is regarded as the story of that particular civilisation, that has been excavated. Now, the epics are a scaffolding to understand ourselves.

And interrogation, to reveal the here and now. And self-revelation, is the precursor to any meaningful change. Now, here we are moving from ethical theories, to almost

metaphysical or epistemological flames. That, we are looking at self-revelation. That, what are the epics doing. The epics are interrogating, to reveal the here and now. And how, to understand, to ask those questions, with which we realise, what our moral framework is, with what our understanding of life is.

So, if these are complicated, you can ignore them. But, if you are finding juice in it, you are welcome to take it further. These are not a part of the core skills required, to do a course in Ethics. But, these are something openings, that give you scope for exploring further. A civilizational interrogation, to enlighten the human condition of the present.

And using a part of this interrogation, to think about the moral questions, and the philosophising, that follows. So, when we look at, say a classical story, right, an epic. Let us say, I can think of, Vibhishan deciding in the Ramayana, Vibhishan deciding to side with Ram, instead of Ravana, who happens to be his own brother. Now, that is a classic example of, Vibhishan valuing justice or truth, over loyalty, towards Kith and Kain.

Now, whether we find Vibhishan as a hero, or an anti-hero, also tells something about us. It is interrogating us. So far, us as in as a society, a civilisation, even an individual, that if we have a situation, where we think that, no, what Vibhishan did was wrong, then the interrogation leads us to find out, that well, we value loyalty, more than truth. Whereas, if we think that, he did the right thing, then the society or the individual, is a one that holds justice or truth, more important than loyalty. Because, even we can drop the use of the word justice. And, let us just complete it, as what is right, and what is loyal.

Is loyalty more important than being right, or is being loyal, being right. In that sense, a complicated or deep reading of epics will tell you, that the epics are not a set of answers. Rather, they are a set of questions, that each epoch has to answer for itself, in light of the various answers, versions, and retellings, that have occurred earlier, across time and space. This supposed ambiguity is not its weakness, but strength.

The ability to connect and interrogate, various varied epochs. So, an epic has various regional retellings. The Mahabharata, or say the Ramayana, typically in Malaysia, is different. In Sri Lanka, is different. Even in parts of India, the Ramayana has different retellings.

What is the advantage, and why these retellings. Is it that, we need to search one authentic telling of the Ramayana. No. The claim here being made is that, these regional retellings incorporate the local context. And therefore, make it relevant to the local

situation and context. So, here is where, the oral tradition incorporates context. There is a strong view that, epics are carried by the oral tradition, and hence inexact. That means, a question that perhaps bothers many of us, and particularly younger people, that well, did the Ramayana, or did the Mahabharata, or did any particular epics actually take place.

Is it historical, or is it fictional. The answer here is, it does not matter, whether it is historical or fictional. It being factual, does not add to its credibility, or it is being imaginary or fictional, does not take away anything from its credibility. Because, the purpose of it, is not historical documentation, but an interrogation of a society, to help a society to arrive at a moral compass. So, the oral tradition, let me read it out.

Oral tradition can be a strength, rather than weakness. For the oral tradition keeps the text alive, alive to the context. The oral tradition incorporates the context. So, when a few moments earlier, we were talking about, what is special about oral tradition. Did the oral tradition, was it just waiting for technology to take over, and bring a smoother, more effective, error proof way of transmitting knowledge.

No. The oral tradition also has its own character. So, when the oral tradition transmits knowledge, it keeps the text alive, alive to the context. That means, if you look at new movies, that are being made. Say, I can think now immediately, of Bahubali. A movie that has, you can see quite thematically, represents a lot from the epics, to bring it out, as a classic battle between good and evil, of loyalty, of betrayal.

So, these are the plots that come across. And a regional retelling, incorporating contexts, these are all the power of oral tradition, that a written tradition is fixed, and rigid does not allow for it.

As Skinner, etc., put it in Mahantai, that is J.N. Mahantai's book, this one. The idea of the truth about the past, uncontaminated by present perspective and concerns, is a romantic ideal of purity, which has no relations to any actual enquiry. So, this whole notion of purity, the exactness, is perhaps the wrong thing, we are looking for. And, that is what Skinner has argued here, that the idea of a truth about the past, uncontaminated by present perspectives, is frivolous. Because, the past is fleshed out, in the vocabulary of the present. So, if we are thinking, there a pure representation of the past, independent of the context of the present, we are perhaps in a misguided enterprise.

That is the claim. And, that is a power of oral tradition. Because, the oral tradition continuously incorporates the context. So, the text is alive, in that sense. Because it is growing. If it were just a printed text, or a codified text, it would be dead, because there

is no scope for a change. So, the idea of India, as a nation, cannot be comprehensively explicated, without referring to the various epics, that constitute the nation. And this is true, for any nation, any civilisation, any culture, to understand them, to understand the idea of a nation, one has to look into its epics, that preceded.

As Professor A. Raghuram Raju points out, in contrast, the constituents of Indian nation are family, region, Bhasha, the past, and so on. Hence, to understand the nation in India, unlike a nation in the West, it is necessary to acknowledge its contents. In sum, focusing on the constituents of the Indian nation, would reveal the non-derivative aspects of the Indian nationalism. So, to understand India as an idea, ethical theories in India, and before that, to understand India, one needs to look at, so many constituents, that go up to making a nation. Now, in conclusion. The epics serve as rich stimuli, for any civilisation, to interrogate itself, and to attain a clarity on itself, that is possible only in the big picture, that can be painted, with the epics.

The facticity or historicity of the epics, has little to do with its significance. It is a civilizational rendition, a story of the human condition, not the laying out of historical facts. The profoundness of the epics can be tapped, to bring out moral philosophising, which is conceptually rich, and contextually connected. So, Ethics in Indian tradition, if we ought to look at it, and in fact in any tradition, we ought to look at the epics. Because, the epics are what bring out the moral philosophising of the tradition.

The epics is something, that is both entertaining, and thereby has a wider reach, and yet has the subtle implanted character of moral theorising. So, when we discuss the epics, when we discuss the Rama and the Mahavarata, or whichever epics in whichever tradition, we are also engaging an act of moral theorising. Perhaps an act of moral thinking, which is more practical, closer to lived experience, than Iveritat theorising. With this, we come to an end, of the course, Moral Thinking, an introduction to Values and Ethics. We have had a brief introduction, to various kinds of moral concepts.

And, I hope, this has enriched your understanding of the value domain, that we all come across. And it encourages you to identify value problems, to understand value problems, and to make moral or value arguments. Thank you very much, for your attention. And I hope, you do well. Thank you. .