**Master II: Ethics and Deontology Teacher: KHELEF Embarka**

**Lecture/ TD 2 Ethical Dilemmas**

**Introduction:**

1. **What is a dilemma?**

A difficult situation where one has to choose between two or more conflicting options neither of which is acceptable.

1. **What is a moral Dilemma?**

A moral dilemma involves human action. It is a situation where moral agents, people involved are forced to choose between two or more conflicting actions neither of which resolves the situation a morally acceptable manner.

1. **Conditions for a dilemma to be called so:**
2. The agent is obliged to make a decision about which course of action is best.
3. There must be different courses of action to choose from.
4. No matter what course of action is taken, some moral principles are compromised.
5. **Types of moral dilemmas:**
6. **Epistemic and Ontological dilemmas:** Epistemic dilemmas refer to those situations where the agent hardly knows which one takes precedence over the other or does not know which option is moral. The agent needs more knowledge about the situation.

An ontological dilemma: the agent has to choose between two or more conflicting requirements, but neither of them overrides the other(s). the agent does not know which option is stronger than the other. S/He then cannot choose.

1. **Self-imposed dilemmas vs. World-imposed dilemmas**

Self-imposed dilemmas are caused by the moral agent's wrong doings while the world-imposed dilemmas are imposed by outside world events which place the agent in a situation of moral conflict.

1. **Obligation vs. Prohibition dilemmas**

A situation where the person is faced with more than one feasible action and all are obligatory. Whereas in a prohibition Dilemma, all feasible actions are forbidden.

1. **Single agent dilemma vs. Multi-personal Dilemmas**

A single agent dilemma involves one person. The person ought all things considered to do 'A'; and ought all things considered to do 'B', but s/he cannot do both. Multi-person dilemmas involve more than one person. One ought to do 'A' and the other ought to do 'B', and although each on can do what he ought to do, it is not possible for both to do their corresponding duties. This dilemma requires more than choosing; it also entails that people involved reached a general consensus.

1. **Solving an Ethical Dilemma:**

One characteristic and challenge of dilemmas is that they do not offer any obvious solution which would comply with ethics and norms. Philosophers throughout history faced such dilemmas and thought and worked hard to solve them. principles were put forward to find a solution when caught in a difficult choice

1. **Talk it Out** – The best way to determine whether a dilemma exists is to discuss it with other people. Since two heads are better than one as the proverb says, a collective analysis of the situation can shed light on whether a dilemma really exists and the moral implications of each available option. This would help refute the paradox.
2. **Understand Duties & Obligations**– A great way to approach any ethical dilemmas is from the standpoint of understanding the agent’s duties in the situation. In a business context, a fiduciary duty to the organizations legally obligates the agent to act in the best interests of shareholders. Contractual obligations can also play a role in determining how to resolve an ethical dilemma.
3. **Value theory approach helps to maximize the Good and minimize the Bad**: When a problem has no perfect solution, the best approach is to analyze the outcomes of each potential action and choose the action with the greatest positive impact and least negative impact.

References:

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