

## WITTGENSTEIN'S VIEWS ON NONSENSICALITY OF ETHICS

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**ABSTRACT:** This paper is an attempt to discuss explicitly certain ethical remarks made by Wittgenstein in his early writings of *Tractatus* (1921) and in *A Lecture on ethics* (1929). In both the works, his understanding of ethics goes a step further than the traditional conception of ethics. For him, ethics is transcendental and ethical values are absolute in nature. The absolute nature of ethical values is not opposed to the relative values rather they are involved in two different issues. Values which are concerned with the empirical aspects of the life and world are relative in nature and values which are to do with the moral aspects of the life and world are absolute in nature. The paper analyses why ethics is viewed as supernatural and values are seen as lying beyond the world? It also discusses why the very expression of ethical judgment of value leads to absurdity.

**Key words:** Wittgenstein, ethics, higher, absolute, supernatural, language, nonsense

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### 1. Introduction

The correct method in philosophy, according to Wittgenstein, is “to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural sciences— i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy” (Wittgenstein 1961a: #6.53). Philosophical analysis is limited only to the ‘propositions of natural sciences’ or ‘empirical propositions’ (Wittgenstein 1961a: #4.001, 4.111). In the realm of philosophy, no meaningful discourse is permissible beyond it. Propositions in this context must fulfill bi-polar conditions. By saying this, Wittgenstein delineates the limits of both — the language and the philosophical

activity. The domain of language and the domain of philosophy here are only a systematic description of 'how things being made to explore the more significant issues in life which otherwise cannot be put within the framework of language and philosophy. They lie in realm of higher. Values- the ethical, aesthetic, and religious, are non-factual, unconditional and are devoid of empirical content. They are seen as transcendental in character. Accordingly, the world is bereft of the ethical values as it contains nothing more than the facts. Ethics being beyond the world, is viewed as supernatural which cannot be captured within the network of natural world and natural language. Wittgenstein's entire philosophy is considered as propounding a new approach to moral philosophy.

## **2. Transcendental Ethics**

Wittgenstein perceives the domain of the world as devoid of values. The world is nothing more than a series of the happenings of facts. In the world everything is as it is, and everything happens as it does happen. And the entire happening in the world is completely causal and logical in nature. Hence, no value exists in the world, and "if it did exist, it would have no value" (TLP#6.41). If there is anything that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of 'what happens and is the case'. For all that happens and is the case in the world is completely subject to accidental. What makes values non-accidental cannot lie *within* the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental (TLP#6.41). Values such as 'good' and 'evil' are not the properties of the world, they are placed outside the world. Wittgenstein makes it clear that "a world in which there is only dead matter is in itself neither good nor evil, so even the world of living things can in itself be neither good nor evil" (NB, 79). Accordingly, the world is bereft of the ethical values. Unlike facts, values (ethical, aesthetic, and religious) are non-accidental, unconditional and devoid of empirical content. They are transcendental in character. Values originate from a transcendental vision of reality. They are conceived as higher and therefore, cannot be properties of anything whose subject is accidental in nature. Locating the values outside the world, Wittgenstein gives the supernatural status to them as being the predicates of the subject, which cannot be part of the world (NB, 79, TLP#5.632). In this way, ethics is supernatural and hence, cannot be expressed by means of language.

Wittgenstein's understanding of the transcendental ethics does not mean that he has ruled out the significance of the ordinary life and ordinary ethics. Rather he wants to go beyond the traditional approaches of morality as form of doctrine and makes move for the truly higher life. His central concern is to establish the relation between values and the world where values are said to be outside the world and ethics being its condition. Ethics does not treat of the world (*NB*, 77) but it provides the possible conditions under which the ethically meaningful world is perceived. The relation between ethics and the world is made possible by virtue of the will of the subject. The subject or self is acknowledged as the bearer of the ethical values setting the conditions for moral significance of the world. So, the notion of subject comes at the center to establish the primacy of 'the higher.' First of all, the subject whose will is the bearer of the ethical values such as good and evil, is powerless with respect to the happenings of the facts in the world. For subject, the world is simply fate (Wittgenstein 1961a: #6.373). Secondly, the happenings of the facts in the world do not have any logical or casual relation to their ethical values. "How things are in the world is a matter of complete indifference for what is higher" (Wittgenstein 1961a: #6.432). This is based on the distinction made between facts and values i.e. the distinction between 'how things are in the world' and 'what is their significance.' Things in the world would acquire "significance" only through their relation with the will of the subject (Wittgenstein 1961, 84e). Wittgenstein gives equal emphasis on both life and the world; life which is purely subjective and personal and the world which is conceived objective and factual. Giving emphasis on transcendental ethics, Wittgenstein looks for higher order values which are not accessible in ordinary ethics. Ethics for him is an enquiry into the meaning of life, or into what makes life worth living, or into the right way of living (*LE*, 5); it does not delve into the empirical world. Wittgenstein claims that what gives meaning to life or what makes life happy or unhappy, does not lie within the world. Therefore, he proclaims, the sense of the world cannot be captured within the network of facts in the world; it must lie outside the world (*TLP*#6.41). The higher order of values is different from the relativity of truth values. This has been made clearly by Wittgenstein in his distinction between the relative and the absolute values. He points out that if we look at these phrases such as 'what is valuable and meaningful in life', 'what makes life worth living', 'what is the right way of living' (*LE*, 5) we will get a rough

idea as to what it is that ethics is concerned with. The most striking issue here is that each of these expressions may be actually used in two different senses – the trivial or relative sense and the ethical or absolute sense. In this article, we will examine critically why Wittgensteinian notion of ethical values are absolute in nature and why any statements made about these values simply lead to nonsense.

### 3. Absolute Value vs Relative Value

In *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein makes a clear distinction between using an expression in relative sense and using it in the absolute (Wittgenstein 1965: 5, 7). In its relative sense comparison is made with a predetermined standard in the field. On the other hand, in its absolute sense something is valued as absolute because of its intrinsic nature without bringing comparison with any set standards. Absolute value is eternal, non-accidental, unconditional, and remains unchanged in different context. It is good in itself and thereby, it is valuable for its own sake. But the relative value is temporal, accidental, conditional, and may change from time to time. In a relative sense something is said to be good only when it serves towards some purpose and some end. The term ‘good’ when used in relative sense to say, ‘this is a good table’, means that the table serves a certain predetermined purpose. The word ‘good’ here has only meaning so far as this purpose has been previously fixed upon (Wittgenstein 1965: 3). In this case, an object or action would acquire value if it serves a certain predetermined purpose. A pen is valuable if it can be used for writing purpose. The pen obtains its functional value when someone wants to write something. The pen does not obtain the same value, if the person does not know how to write. Relative values keep on changing in accordance with contexts and situations and thereby, they are relative in nature. A chair which is counted as a good one in a particular context may not remain so in another context. Values in relative sense may change not only from context to context but also from person to person. What is good for someone may not be necessarily so for others. The word ‘good’ in relative sense simply means coming up to a certain predetermined standard. When we say that this man is a good pianist we mean that he can play pieces of a certain degree of difficulty with certain dexterity (Wittgenstein 1965: 5). As Wittgenstein writes,

And similarly if I say that it is important for me not to catch cold I mean that catching a cold produces certain describable disturbances in my life and if I say that this is the *right* road I mean that it’s the right road

relative to a certain goal. Used in this way these expressions don't present any difficult or deep problems (Wittgenstein 1965: 5).

Wittgenstein states that when the terms such as 'good', 'right', 'bad', etc., are used in relative sense, they do not present any 'difficult and deep problems'. The situations would be completely different when these expressions are used in an absolute sense. This is precisely because the issues dealt in both the cases are completely different in nature. When it comes to making judgment, there is an unbridgeable gap between the two cases.

In *Lecture on Ethics*, Wittgenstein offers the following two cases to clarify the distinction between a judgment of absolute value and a judgment of relative value.

Supposing that I could play tennis and one of you saw me playing and said "Well, you play pretty badly" and suppose I answered "I know, I'm playing badly but I don't want to play any better," all the other man could say would be "Ah then that's all right." But suppose I had told one of you a preposterous lie and he came up to me and said "You're behaving like a beast" and then I were to say "I know I behave badly, but then I don't want to behave any better," could he then say "Ah, then that's all right"? Certainly not; he would say "Well you *ought* to want to behave better." Here you have an absolute judgment of value, whereas the first instance was one of a relative judgment. (Wittgenstein 1965: 5)

What would count as playing good depends on certain preset standards and conditions of playing. One may strive for it but it is not necessary for all those who opt for playing. One may even play just for keeping in good health or for relaxation. Others would not object if one is not interested to play any better. It becomes an instance for a relative judgment of value. On the other hand, in the second case telling a preposterous lie or behaving badly cannot be counted as a moral choice. Behaving badly would count as incorrect and morally unacceptable. To behave better is a rational way of living for human beings, which is unconditional. Therefore, nobody can refute the logical necessity of such ethical judgments. It is a case of absolute judgment of value.

Playing tennis better is conditional as one has a choice to go for it or refuse. It depends on agent's inclination and does not create any moral dilemma in any case. Others would find it alright if one says she/he does not want to play any better. But in an ethical

context not behaving well cannot be accepted as exercise of choice. Others would not find it alright at all if one says “I know I behave badly, but then I don’t want to behave any better,” behaving badly is morally unacceptable. In ethical context, it is unconditional and it is expected one ought to want to behave better. In every situation, it may not be appropriate to say that “you ought to want to play better” but in any situation of ill behavior one could always say “you ought to want to behave better.” It would be ethically inappropriate if one denies to accept it. Playing tennis well is not something which someone ought to want to play in an unconditional sense. But behaving well has to be taken by all of us in an unconditional sense.

No possible justification can be given if asked why one ought to behave better? This is precisely because it is an unconditional value which each and every man ought to follow. No logical or causal reasons can be offered for it. There is a moral necessity that everyone ought to behave well. The justification comes to an end in such cases. Contrary to it, justifications can be offered if asked why one should play better and also for not doing so. Such justification would be entirely based on certain facts related with person’s interest and inclination. In ethical context personal taste, choice, inclination, and interest do not play any role in reaching the judgment. This reiterates Wittgenstein’s claim that a judgment of relative value is a mere statement of facts and a judgment of absolute value is not.

Wittgenstein further explicates how the judgment of absolute value and judgment of relative value involve two different issues:

Every judgment of relative value is a mere statement of facts and can therefore be put in such a form that it loses all the appearance of a judgment of value: Instead of saying “This is the right way to Granchester,” I could equally well have said, “This is the right way you have to go if you want to get to Granchester in the shortest time”; “This man is a good runner” simply means that he runs a certain number of miles in a certain number of minutes, etc. Now what I wish to contend is that, although all judgments of relative value can be shown to be mere statement of facts, no statement of fact can ever be, or imply, a judgment of absolute value. (Wittgenstein 1965: 6)

The statement 'this is the right road to get to Granchester' becomes relative as it aims to fulfill to a goal which is predetermined. If calling a particular way to Granchester 'right' implies reaching there in the shortest time, then it would be a right way for somebody who is interested to reach there in the shortest time. This judgment that 'this is the right way' has to be withdrawn for somebody who has no interest in getting to Granchester in the shortest time. What counts as 'right' here depends on one's interest. But this is not the case with statement of judgment of absolute value. "The judgment that we ought to want to behave better is not withdrawn as devoid of sense if we say that we are not interested in behaving better" (Phillips 2001: 353). Values are called absolute only when they do not lose their significance even if they go against one's desire, taste, inclination, etc.

An absolute value cannot be derived from factual statements. That is, no statements of fact can ever be statements of absolute value. Any attempt to ascribe absolute value to relative judgments of value leads to absurdity. Wittgenstein puts it clearly,

The right road is the road which leads to an arbitrarily predetermined end and it is quite clear to us all that there is no sense in talking about the right road apart from such a predetermined goal. Now let us see what we could possibly mean by the expression, 'the absolutely right road.' I think it would be the road which *everybody* on seeing it would, *with logical necessity*, have to go, or be ashamed for not going. And similarly the *absolute good*, if it is a describable state of affairs, would be one which everybody, independent of his tastes and inclinations, would *necessarily* bring about or feel guilty for not bringing about. And I want to say that such a state of affairs is a chimera. No state of affairs has, in itself, what I would like to call the coercive power of an absolute judge.  
(Wittgenstein 1965: 7)

An absolute value has a moral force which compels us for certain actions in a given situation independent of our liking or disliking for it. Wittgenstein calls it coercive power of absolute values. That is why, absolute value judgments call for persuasive actions. But this coercive power of an absolute judge does not lie in a state of affair. No road can be called 'the absolute right road' independent of people's interests, tastes, and inclinations. As discussed above what counts as right may change with our interests

and situations. It would be absurd to believe that one may feel ashamed for not going on a particular road. Similarly, a describable state of affairs does not necessitate logically the absolute good. Feeling guilty for not being able to help a needy cannot be compared with feeling guilty for not being able to score high marks in the examination. In fact, it may not be appropriated even to talk about guilt in the later case. The state of affair, in this case, 'high score in the examination', does not have the coercive power of an absolute judge. Those who succeed in attaining the state of affair, 'high score in the examination', do not necessitate logically better learning compared to others. In other words, if better learning is taken as an absolute good, it would be absurd to expect that all those who score higher in examination have learned more. Ethical values such as 'good', 'bad', 'evil', etc., can never be properties of anything whose subject is accidental or factual in nature. Therefore, he goes beyond Moorean understanding of 'good' by claiming that good is divine and cannot be ascribed as an ethical predicate in the relative judgments of value.

Wittgenstein gives supernatural status to good as good is not a quality of the world outside us. Also, good is not an attribute to our state of mind. He writes,

What is Good is Divine also. That, strangely enough, sums up my ethics. Only something Supernatural can express the Supernatural. You cannot lead people to the good; you can only lead them to some place or other; the good lies outside the space of facts (Wittgenstein 1980: 3).

What he means by good lies outside space and time i.e. outside the world. It is not like a thing, state of affairs, or place in the world which can be defined in terms of facts. Proclaiming good as supernatural situates it outside the domain of language. Since, all meaningful statements are necessarily descriptive in nature and ethics lies outside the factual world, ethical statements cannot be uttered meaningfully. Propositions can express nothing that is higher (Wittgenstein 1961a: #6.42). In other words, there are no propositions which, in any absolute sense, are sublime, important, or trivial. This makes Wittgenstein's contention very clear that all judgments of relative value can only be shown as statements of facts, but no statement of facts can imply a judgment of absolute value (Wittgenstein 1965: 7).

#### **4. Ethics as Supernatural**

Ethics for Wittgenstein is concerned only with absolute values and has supernatural status. Absolute values are intrinsic in nature and transcend the world. We encounter

only facts in the natural world which is only a subject matter of scientific enquiry. What is supernatural lies beyond the natural world and hence outside the realm of scientific enquiry. Natural language consists of all relative judgments of value and true scientific propositions which are factual in nature. Judgments of absolute value being beyond the facts cannot be captured by the natural language; they convey something higher. Words in natural language are like vessels capable only of containing and conveying meaning and sense. They cannot be used meaningfully to express something which is supernatural or higher. "Ethics, if it is anything, is supernatural, and our words express facts; as a teacup will only hold a teacup full of water and if I were to pour out a gallon over it" (Wittgenstein 1965: 7). This implies that facts and propositions are concerned only with relative values. Absolute value is bereft of the factual and the propositional forms.

Wittgenstein gives an interesting example in *Lecture on Ethics* about an omniscient person who knows all the movements of all the bodies in the world – dead or alive. He also knows all the states of mind of all human beings that ever lived. If such person writes all what he knows in a big book, then this book would contain only whole description of the world. The subject matter of the book would contain all relative judgments of value, and all true propositions that can be made to describe the world. The book would contain nothing that can be called an ethical judgment or anything that would logically imply such a judgment (Wittgenstein 1965: 6). Ethics being supernatural, cannot find a place in such a book. Using Wittgenstein's example of reading description of a murder in this world-book, we can now say that it would have only a detailed account of physical and psychological facts pertaining to the murder. How the murder was committed? What was the mental state of a person who is held accountable for the murder? The reading of this description of factual details and mental states of the murderer may cause in us or others pain or rage or any other emotion. But this all would be simply facts and only facts. These facts will contain nothing which could be called ethics. Such description of the murder in the book will be on exactly the same degree as any other event or fact in the world, for instance the falling of a stone.

By making a strict dichotomy between facts and values Wittgenstein reemphasizes that ethical values can never be exhausted by the facts of the world. Ethics in this sense,

being higher, cannot find place in a book on science the subject matter of which could never be intrinsically sublime and above all other subject matters. He expresses his feelings by using a metaphor of a man who if writes a book on Ethics which really is a book on Ethics, this book, with an explosion, would destroy all the other books in the world (Wittgenstein 1965: 7). Such book cannot contain anything but what is the case in the world. In other words, given the limitations of language, a book on ethics cannot be written. If such book can exist at all it would destroy all other books with an explosion. That is, the subject matter of such book being above all other subject matters would cease the possibility of having books on any other subject matter.

Other misuse of language which Wittgenstein points out is in expressions of some of our experiences in everyday life. Absurdity arises when we are inclined to ascribe absolute values in expressing our everyday experiences. In *Lecture on Ethics* he mentions three such instances: 'the experience of wondering at the existence of the world', 'the experience of feeling absolutely safe whatever happens', and 'the experience of feeling guilty'. An analysis of these expressions would be implicit to understand what he meant by misuse of language in these cases.

In the first case of wondering at the existence of the world, it would be appropriate to wonder at the existence of a thing when we think of it as something extraordinary or unusual. Ordinarily we use the term wonder in cases when we imagine something not being the case or we find it extraordinary compared to other things of similar kind which are found in normal circumstances. We wonder when we find something as being other than what it is in usual sense. But we cannot wonder at something when it is to be the case like the existence of the world. How one can wonder at the existence of the world when one cannot imagine it not to be the case? To say, one cannot imagine the world the way it is or cannot imagine that such world exists would be absurd. Wittgenstein replaces the expressions of wondering by phrases 'how extraordinary that anything should exist' or 'how extraordinary that the world should exist' (Wittgenstein 1965: 8). They are clear cases of misuse of language. It is nonsense to say "I wonder at such and such thing being the case" if I cannot imagine it not to be the case. It makes good sense to wonder at something being the case if it is expected not to be the case in ordinary sense. "In every such case I wonder at something being the case which I *could* conceive *not* to be the case" (Wittgenstein 1965: 8). It has a perfectly good

sense to say that I can wonder at the size of a dog if it is much larger than the usual ordinary size one has ever seen before. So 'I wonder at the size of this dog' has sense only if I could conceive it not to be the case. But it is nonsense to say that I wonder at the existence of the world, because I cannot imagine it not to be the case (Wittgenstein 1965: 9).

The second case of 'the experience of feeling absolutely safe whatever happens' can also be shown to have similar problem. Ordinarily, if I am safe, nothing can happen to me. If I am in my room I cannot usually be run over by an omnibus. I am safe if I have had whooping cough and cannot get affected with it again. This is what we mean in ordinary sense when we say what it is to be safe. But to use the expression safe in absolute sense leads to absurdity. It would be nonsense to say "I am feeling absolutely safe." In ordinary usage of the expression one cannot find a state of affairs or situation where one could claim of being absolutely safe. I may trip over in my room and hurt myself badly or be run over by an omnibus or have a recurrence of whooping cough. But in a religious context to say "I am feeling absolutely safe in the hands of God" would again be nonsensical for different reason. Wittgenstein points out that a certain characteristic misuse of our language runs through *all* ethical and religious expressions (Wittgenstein 1965: 9). Though in the present case, the expression 'feeling safe' seems *prima facie* to be just a simile used as a means to describe a fact. But in this case one cannot identify any fact to be described by the simile. In other words, the simile is used for *nothing*. And so, what at first appeared to be a simile now seems to be mere nonsense (Wittgenstein 1965: 10).

Similarly, in the third case of 'feeling guilty' in its absolute sense would count as misuse of the word 'guilt'. In its ordinary usage saying that one is absolutely guilty would not make any sense. In the religious context, feeling guilty would be described by the phrase that God disapproves of our conduct. And again, use of the simile 'guilt' to describe such experience of feeling guilty would be nonsensical. Feeling guilty in religious context is a mystical experience and is inexpressible. In such context, it is a permanent state of guilt without being guilty of anything particular (Barrett 1991: 82). Wittgenstein succeeds in making a very intricate point by using these three experiences discussed above. These experiences, for someone who have experienced them, seem to have intrinsic and absolute value. But it leads to a paradoxical situation.

These experiences, which are facts and are describable, seem to have supernatural value (Wittgenstein 1965: 10). Wittgenstein meets the paradox by pointing out how it will be seen generally:

Well, if certain experiences constantly tempt us to attribute a quality to them which we call absolute or ethical value and importance, this simply shows that by these words we don't mean nonsense, that after all what we mean by saying that an experience has absolute value is just a fact like other facts and that all it comes to is that we have not yet succeeded in finding the correct logical analysis of what we mean by our ethical and religious expressions. (Wittgenstein 1965: 11)

But he himself is very clear that no description would do to describe what absolute values stand for. For he claims to reject every significant description that anybody possibly suggest, *ab initio* on the ground of its significance. These ethical and religious expressions were nonsensical not on the basis of not being able to find their correct expressions. But Wittgenstein claims, their nonsensicality was their very essence (Wittgenstein 1965: 11). Any attempt to express the ethical and the religious would be an attempt to go beyond the world and hence, beyond the significant language. To talk or to write ethics and religion, for Wittgenstein, is to run against the boundaries of language. But he has deep reverence towards the tendency of human mind to make such attempts.

Wittgenstein further expounds on what makes the statements of ethics and religion nonsensical by introducing the notion of miraculous. He defines miracle as 'an event the like of which we have never yet seen.' His example of someone in the audiences suddenly growing a lion's head would be one such case. It would count as miraculous as long as we do not have the matter scientifically investigated. But when we look at it scientifically 'everything miraculous would disappear.' The truth is that 'the scientific way of looking at a fact is not the way to look at it as a miracle' (Wittgenstein 1965: 11). In attempting to give a factual meaning to the words by which we intend to express this experience, we have already crossed the experiences of miracle and have started to look at them in the wrong way. When somebody attempts to express a feeling of seeing the world as miracle by saying "I wonder at the existence of the world", it leads to absurdity. The feeling of absolute values does not treat facts in the word rather they

involve the notion of miraculous. For Wittgenstein, a miracle is not an event or fact in the world happening in particular space and time. Hence, it is not a matter of scientific enquiry. But when we look at it the way we look at the facts or events in the world it ceases to be a miracle. A miracle has to be seen in an absolute sense. No expression can express it, since to say of an experience that it is mystical or miracle is to attempt to go beyond the limits of language.

Propositions of ethics and religion do not add to our knowledge. Though propositions can express nothing higher but Wittgenstein shows a deep reverence towards the tendency in the human mind to talk ethics and religion. Saying that nonsensicality is their very essence clearly indicates that such nonsensicality cannot be ridiculed. The deeper sense such propositions attempt to express about the ultimate meaning of life, the absolute good, the absolute valuable is of greater interest, though not for science. In the case of somebody 'feeling absolutely safe' what one means is that the events of the world do not affect him anymore. The facts of the world are accepted as accidental and life, in its religious and ethical sense, is seen beyond it. One sees himself beyond, above, and outside the vicissitudes of the world.

We may be run over by a bus or have a recurrence of whooping cough, but this has no effect on our mind or soul. Once we have accepted the fact that we are prone to these vicissitudes, we are safe from them. In a sense they affect us; but in another sense they do not and cannot. We have accepted them as the accidents of life, so they can neither surprise nor hurt us (Barrett 1991: 81).

This has a close similarity with Indian concept of *Stitahprajnana*, a person who has attained a state of mind where he sees himself *with* the world but not *in* the world. in such context the word 'absolutely safe' does not mean renunciation of personal interest rather a mystical experience of not seeing any particular fact differently or making discrimination among them. Such feeling is not about experiencing the facts, but seeing oneself outside of it. This is what which becomes inexpressible. But when we speak of being absolutely safe in an ordinary sense within a given time and space, such usage is a misuse of language and hence, nonsense. To say that one is safe in absolute sense of this term is to say that one is safe regardless of whatever happens in the world. "To be safe essentially means that it is physically impossible that certain things should happen

to me and therefore it is nonsense to say that I am safe whatever happens. Again this is a misuse of the word 'safe' (Wittgenstein 1965: 6). It is an experience which is beyond and outside the phenomenal world. Hence the absolute value cannot be conceived within the spatio-temporal experiences as it transcends the phenomenal world.

Similar is the case with the experience of feeling guilty. We all feel guilty of our wrong doing in various degrees of gravity. We talk about being guilty of something in particular. But to say we are in a permanent state of guilt without being guilty of anything does not make sense. Yet mystics and people of various religious faiths do say such experience of guilt is real and is deeply significant. Cyril Barrett suggests that the feeling of absolute guilt is the reverse of the feeling of wonder. It is the realization that, in so far as we are facts, things, and state of affairs that make up the world and have a psychological 'I' we are inadequate. Realization of such inadequacy is a mystical experience in Wittgenstein's sense (Barrett 1991: 82).

The walls of our cage set by the language do not permit to convey the sense of miraculous or mystical. Wittgenstein calls it absolutely hopeless attempt to run against these walls. What the values in ethics and religion stand for "cannot be taught and followed according to convenience. ... moral life is far above the mundane business of learning moral rules, as it is deep enough to be talked about and discussed" (Pradhan 2009: 190). Of course, the way Wittgenstein has defined ethics in later period, is slight different from his earlier writings but nature of ethics remains same which is transcendental and cannot be said meaningfully in the realm of language. Words expressing absolute values do not have an everyday use to which they can be brought back from their metaphysical one (Wittgenstein 1958: §116). They lack a 'language-game' or their 'original home.' Ethics thus concerns to the higher order of life and the world and aims at bringing about the aspiration of realizing the ultimate meaning of life. By seeing the life as higher and eternal, he attempts to show how to find sense of the world and realize what is valuable and meaningful in it. Ethics cannot be captured in any linguistic expression but can be realized and felt in our everyday life practices. Ethics aims at bringing the moral values deeply into human consciousness as it concerns with the meaning of life. What is absolutely valuable and good cannot be disregarded. We cannot stop living and learning an ethical life. This respect for moral life and moral values makes Wittgenstein repudiate any trivialization of ethics as a

discipline. Unlike any social or intellectual construct, ethics originates from our deeply felt personal responses to life and the world. It represents our desire to say something about the ultimate meaning of life and characterizes the world and our relationship to it. Ethics for Wittgenstein is to do with an individual clarification of life conduct. Life itself is the answer to its quest for an ethical meaning. Therefore, ethical expressions do not assert anything empirically; rather they exhibit something deeper and higher that is neither true nor false. They have no sense and no theoretical contents according to the rules of language. But they are purely absolute and eternal, and hence, ineffable.

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