

31 *and to do my best to help abate that suffering?*

32 Each individual, as the moral actor, must first choose the object - the happiness
33 of others – as his own value, before the question above can be made true for
34 him. The correctness of the statement does not exist outside of him, as some
35 imperative or command. He only answers to himself, when he chooses
36 happiness to be a value, and is now committed to fulfill it through action.

37 **Why Man is the Moral Actor**

38 The individual is the moral actor because of his metaphysical status in nature. He
39 has volition – the power or faculty of using his will to make conscious choices.

40 The precondition for volition is that man has a direct relationship with existence.
41 Nothing metaphysically mediates between man and existence. His actions are
42 determined by forces within his control, namely his mind. He is free to choose his
43 end and perform the necessary means to achieve it. No one but he can judge
44 morally for him which choices and actions he ought to pursue. Thus, he is the
45 prime mover of his own life. The prime mover moves other things, but is not itself
46 moved by any prior action.

47 If such were not the case, but rather he had a primary relationship with some
48 mediator, then the idea of volition would be out of the question. Because of his
49 subordinate position to the mediator, only the mediator could make such moral
50 judgments for the individual. The individual, acting as the moral agent, would
51 obey the commands of the mediator, the moral actor.

52 However, as previously mentioned, nothing metaphysically stands between man
53 and existence. Neither the conditions of birth, nor the external environment, will
54 ultimately determine a man's fate.

55 He is not a product of his birth. He is born with moral tabula rasa, the thesis of
56 the blank slate, which renders incompatible such notions as having innate
57 knowledge, genetic memory, evolution, instincts, or transcendental categories.
58 Neither is he born with original sin or automatic goodness. He is not born with
59 any particular beliefs, any habits of action, or any emotional preset. Instead, he
60 acquires all of these things.

61 Moreover, he is not a product of his environment. That is, he is not just a lump of
62 plasticine, molded and shaped by his environmental forces. He is not a product
63 of his upbringing, education or social class. Nor is he a puppet in the hands of a
64 personalized deity or impersonal omnipotent, supernatural force.

65 **Consciousness is Relational**

66 How is it that man has a direct relationship with existence? It is his cognitive
67 capacity, or consciousness, that has such a direct relationship with existence.

68 Consciousness is relational. The individual is the subject; existence is the object.
69 Without the object, consciousness would not exist. Every act of consciousness is
70 about something, whether it's sensing, imagining, recalling, introspecting, or
71 conceptualizing.

72 The individual did not create the object. The object enables him to differentiate
73 himself from the experience of awareness. He is the subject of awareness.
74 Existence is the object. In the conscious relation between object and subject,
75 primacy goes to the object.

76 Consciousness has two aspects: Perceptual awareness and conceptual
77 awareness. Perceptual awareness is direct and requires no effort. It is automatic
78 and physiologically causal. It takes place anytime an object in existence is there
79 to be perceived.

80 Meanwhile, conceptual awareness is every instance of awareness above
81 perception and introspection. It includes knowing, inferring, justifying, validating,
82 and so forth. Such awareness requires effort. This is where volition begins. The
83 individual must make the willful effort to discover the object of conceptual
84 awareness. At the conceptual level, he is the active cause to bring about the
85 awareness of the object. Nothing in existence, whether in the world or his mind,
86 stands in his way from making such a choice.

87 **In Conclusion**

88 The individual is the moral actor because of his metaphysical status in nature. He
89 has volition – the power or faculty of using his will to make conscious choices. It
90 begins with the choice of whether to use his conceptual awareness to discover
91 conceptual objects.

92 The precondition for volition is that man has a direct relationship with existence.
93 Nothing metaphysically mediates between man and existence. No one but he
94 can judge morally for him which choices and actions he ought to pursue.

95 Now that we've determined that man is the rightful moral actor, whose sense of
96 moral responsibility comes from an obligation, not duty, to do those actions
97 required to bring about an end of his own choosing, an important question arises
98 as to what end or values he ought to pursue.

99 For instance, in our original question, as the moral actor, he can choose
100 "happiness of others" as a value and consequentially become morally obligated
101 to be aware of the suffering of others, and do his best to help abate that

102 suffering. However, is that a good choice?

103 The third article in the series on Ethics and Moral Responsibility will address the
104 following: An important question arises as to what end or values he ought to
105 pursue? For instance, in our original question, as the moral actor, he can choose
106 “happiness of others” as a value and consequentially become morally obligated
107 to be aware of the suffering of others, and do his best to help abate that
108 suffering. However, is that a good choice? In general, is there a way for us to
109 evaluate our choices to see whether they are good ones? Yes there is. To do so
110 requires meta-ethical tools. This article introduces two such meta-ethical tools,
111 the moral standard and moral compass. It will define what these tools are and
112 how we can use them to assist us in choosing good values. The article will show
113 that the moral standard is our individual life, and moral compass is reason.
114 However, the article will ask whether it logically follows that, choosing the value
115 “happiness of others”, is a sound one, based on the newly defined standard and
116 compass. Ethical Egoists will raise the issue, as to whether such a value really
117 serves the individual’s end.

118 So what’s next? Do we dismiss “happiness of others” completely? The fourth
119 article will explore the issue raised by Ethical Egoists and attempt to see whether
120 it’s logically possible that such a value can serve our own end. To do so, the
121 article will present a hypothesis, which if correct, will show that such a value can
122 serve our own end.