



Critique of Practical Reason

IMMANUEL KANT

Plain English Translation

MOUSEIA



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Plain English Translation

Translated by Michael Berardi

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THIS EDITION

Complete machine-assisted Plain English translation made independently and directly from the same German text, including all eighteen author notes.

TRANSLATOR

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THE WORK

Written 1788 · Moral philosophy

SOURCE

Original text from gutenberg.org.

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Edition dated 26 October 2026

Contents



Title page	1
Preface	2
Introduction: The idea of a critique of practical reason	14
Doctrine of the elements of pure practical reason PART I	16
Book I, Chapter I: The principles of pure practical reason	17
Book I, Chapter II: The concept of an object of pure practical reason	55
Book I, Chapter III: The incentives of pure practical reason	69
Critical examination of the analytic of pure practical reason BOOK I	86
Book II, Chapter I: A dialectic of pure practical reason in general	103
Book II, Chapter II: The dialectic of pure reason in determining the highest good	107
Doctrine of the method of pure practical reason PART II	143
Conclusion	154

Title page



Critique [AA V 1] of Practical Reason
by
Immanuel Kant.

Preface



Preface. [A 3] [AA V 3]

This work explains well enough why its title is a critique of practical reason in general, rather than of *pure* practical reason. Its parallel with the critique of speculative reason might seem to call for the latter title. It only aims to show *that there is pure practical reason*. For this purpose, it critically examines reason's whole *practical capacity*. If it succeeds, it does not need to criticize the *pure capacity itself* to see whether reason *oversteps its limits* by claiming such a capacity as a mere presumption, as speculative reason does. For if reason really is practical as pure reason, it proves its own reality and that of its concepts by what it does. All quibbling against the possibility of its being practical is then pointless.

This capacity also establishes transcendental *freedom* [A 4] in the absolute sense that speculative reason needed when using the concept of causality. It needed freedom to escape the antinomy it inevitably encounters when it tries to think of the *unconditioned* in the series of causal connections. But it could present this concept only as a possibility, as something not impossible to think. It could not establish its objective reality. Its only purpose was to keep reason from being challenged in its very nature and thrown into an abyss of skepticism by the supposed impossibility of something it must at least accept as thinkable.

The concept of freedom, insofar as its reality is proved by an absolutely certain law of practical reason, now forms the *keystone* of the whole structure of a system of pure reason, even speculative [AA V 4] reason. All the other concepts—those of God and immortality—which remain unsupported in speculative reason as mere ideas, now connect with freedom. With it and through it they gain stability and objective reality. That is, their *possibility* is [A 5] *proved* by the fact that freedom is actual. For this idea reveals itself through the moral law.

Freedom is also the only idea of speculative reason whose possibility we *know a priori*, although we have no insight into it. This is because freedom is the condition¹ of the moral law, which we do know. The ideas of *God* and *immortality*, however, are not conditions of the moral law. They are only conditions of the necessary object of a will determined by this law—that is, of the [A 6] purely practical use of our pure reason. So we cannot claim to *cognize* or *understand* even the possibility of these ideas, let alone their actuality. Still, they are conditions for applying the morally determined will to its object, which is given to it *a priori*: the highest good. Consequently, their possibility can and must be *assumed* in this practical relation, although we do not cognize or understand it theoretically. For this last requirement, it is enough for practical purposes that they contain no internal impossibility (contradiction). Here, then, is a ground for holding something true that is merely *subjective* when compared with speculative reason, yet *objectively* valid for an equally pure, but practical, reason. Through the concept of freedom, this gives the ideas of God and immortality objective reality, and gives us warrant, indeed a subjective necessity—a need of pure reason—to assume them. This does not expand reason’s [AA V 5] theoretical cognition. Instead, it supplies the possibility that was previously only a *problem* but is now an *assertion*. In this way it links the practical [A 7] use of reason with the elements of its theoretical use. This need is not a hypothetical one serving some *optional* speculative purpose: that we must assume something if we *want* to complete reason’s use in speculation. It is a need imposed by a *law*: to assume something without which we cannot achieve what we *ought* unfaithfully to make the purpose of our conduct.

It would certainly satisfy our speculative reason more to solve these problems on its own, without this detour, and keep the resulting insight for practical use. But our capacity for speculation simply is not that capable. Those who boast of such lofty cognitions should not keep them to themselves. They should present them publicly for examination and appreciation. They want to *prove* them. Very well! Let them do so, and the Critique will lay all its weapons at their feet as victors. *Why do you stand still? They are unwilling. Yet they could be happy.*— Since they do not in fact want to, presumably because they cannot, we must take up the Critique again [A 8]. We must seek the concepts of *God, freedom, and immortality* in the moral use of reason and ground them on it, since speculation cannot adequately guarantee their *possibility*.

Only here does the puzzle of the Critique become clear. How can we *deny objective reality* to the supersensible *use of the categories* in speculation, yet *grant them this reality* in relation to the objects of pure practical reason? This must seem *inconsistent* as long as we know such a practical use only by name. But a full analysis of that use now shows us something else. The reality in question does not amount to any theoretical *determination of the categories* or any extension of cognition into the supersensible. It means only that in this relation they have *an object* at all. For they are either contained *a priori* in the necessary determination of the will or inseparably connected with its object. The inconsistency disappears, because [A 9] these concepts are being used differently from the way speculative reason [AA V 6] requires. In fact, a very satisfying confirmation of the speculative Critique's *consistency of thought* now appears, one we could hardly have expected. That Critique insisted that objects of experience as such, including our own subject, must count only as *appearances*. Yet it also insisted that things in themselves must underlie them, so that not everything supersensible should be treated as fiction or its concept as empty of content. Now practical reason, independently and without arranging anything with speculative reason, gives reality to a supersensible object of the category of causality, namely *freedom*. As a practical concept, it does so only for practical use. It thus confirms by a fact what previously could only be *thought*. At the same time, the strange but indisputable claim of the speculative Critique—that

even *the thinking subject is, to itself, merely an appearance in inner intuition*—is fully confirmed in the Critique of Practical Reason. Indeed, we would have to arrive at it [A 10] even if the former had never proved it.²

This also explains why the most important objections to the Critique that I have encountered so far hinge on precisely these two points. *On the one hand*, the objective reality of categories applied to noumena is denied in theoretical cognition but asserted in practical cognition. *On the other*, there is the paradoxical demand that we regard ourselves as noumena insofar as we are subjects of freedom, but also as phenomena in our own empirical consciousness insofar as we belong to nature. As long as people had no definite concepts of morality and freedom, they could not guess what [A 11] was supposed to underlie the alleged appearance as a noumenon. Nor could they tell whether it was possible to form a concept of it at all, if all the concepts of pure understanding in their theoretical use had already been assigned exclusively to mere appearances. Only a detailed critique of practical [AA V 7] reason can remove all these misunderstandings. It can bring into clear view the consistency of thought that is precisely the Critique's greatest merit.

That is my justification for sometimes reexamining in this work the concepts and principles of pure speculative reason, even though they have already undergone their own critique. This would not normally suit the systematic development of a science being established. Matters already decided should properly be cited, not reopened. But *here* it was permissible, even necessary, because reason is being considered as it moves to an entirely different use of those concepts from the use it made of them *there*. Such a transition requires comparing [A 12] the earlier use with the new one. We need to distinguish the new path clearly from the old and also show how they connect. So reflections of this kind—including the renewed discussion of freedom, but now in the practical use of pure reason—should not be seen as insertions intended merely to fill gaps in the critical system of speculative reason. That system is complete for its purpose. Nor are they supports and buttresses added afterward, as happens with a building put up too hastily. They are genuine connecting parts that show the system's coherence. They make it possible to understand concepts in their

actual presentation that previously could only be represented as possibilities. This reminder chiefly concerns the concept of freedom. It is surprising that so many people still boast that they understand it perfectly well and can explain its possibility, while considering it only in a psychological relation. If they had first examined it closely in its transcendental relation, they would have recognized both [A 13] its *indispensability* as a problematic concept in the full use of speculative reason and its complete *incomprehensibility*. Had they then moved to its practical use, they would have arrived on their own at exactly the same account of that use and its principles which they otherwise accept so unwillingly. The concept of freedom is the stumbling block for all *empiricists*. But it is also the key to the highest practical principles for *critical* moral philosophers, who thereby [AA V 8] see that their procedure must be *rational*. I therefore ask readers not to skim what is said about this concept at the end of the *Analytic*.

I must leave those familiar with this kind of work to judge whether developing such a system of pure practical reason from its critique has required much effort or little. The chief concern was not to miss the right standpoint from which the whole could be accurately mapped out. It does presuppose [A 14] the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, but only insofar as that work gives a preliminary acquaintance with the principle of duty and provides and justifies a definite formula for it.³ In other respects it stands on its own. There is also a sound reason, in the nature of this practical capacity of reason, why a *division* of all practical sciences has not been included for *completeness*, as it was in the *Critique of Speculative Reason*. That is because, to classify duties by specifically determining them as human duties, we must first know the subject of that determination [A 15]—the human being—as it actually is, though only to the extent needed for duty in general. But this does not belong in a critique of practical reason in general. Such a critique must fully state the principles of its possibility, scope, and limits without special reference to human nature. The division therefore belongs here to the system of the science, not to the system of its critique.

In the second chapter of the *Analytic*, I hope I have answered a certain sharp, truth-loving, and therefore always respectable reviewer of that *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. He objected *that the concept of the [AA V 9] good had not been established there before the moral principle*, as he thought necessary.⁴ I have also taken account of [A 16] various other objections sent to me by men [A 17] who show that discovering the truth matters to them (for those who keep only their old system [A 18] in view, and have already decided what to approve or disapprove, do not want a discussion that might obstruct their [AA V 10] private aim). I will continue to proceed in this way.

When defining a particular capacity of the human soul in terms of its sources, content, and limits, the nature of human cognition requires us to start with its *parts*. We must present them precisely and as completely as our current stock of established elements allows. But a second consideration is more philosophical and *architectonic*. We must correctly grasp the *idea of the whole*. From it, we must view all those parts in their mutual relations by deriving them from the concept of that whole within a capacity of pure reason. This examination and confirmation is possible only [A 19] through the closest familiarity with the system. Those who have been reluctant to undertake the first investigation, and so have not thought this familiarity worth acquiring, never reach the second stage: the overview. This is a synthetic return to what was previously given analytically. No wonder they find inconsistencies everywhere. The gaps these seem to suggest are not in the system itself, but only in their own disconnected train of thought.

For this work, I have no fear of being accused of trying to introduce a *new* language, because the kind of cognition here naturally comes closer to ordinary understanding. Nor could anyone have thought of making that accusation against the first Critique if they had thought it through rather than merely leafed through it. Making up new words where the language already has no shortage [A 20] of expressions for the concepts concerned is a childish effort to stand out from the crowd. If not through new and true thoughts, then at least through a new patch on an old coat. So if readers of that work know more familiar expressions that fit the thought just as well as mine seem to me to do,

they would do me a great favor by supplying them, for I only want to be understood. Or if they think they can demonstrate that these thoughts themselves are worthless, and therefore so is every expression designating them, they would render a service to philosophy. But as long as those thoughts stand, [AA V 11] I very much doubt that more familiar expressions equally suited to them can be found.⁵

[AA V 12] In this way the *a priori* principles of two [A 21] capacities of the mind—the cognitive faculty and the faculty of desire—would now have been established [A 22] and defined in terms of the conditions, scope, and limits of their [A 23] use. A secure foundation would thereby have been laid for systematic philosophy as a science, both theoretical and practical.

What worse thing could happen to these efforts than someone's unexpected discovery that there is, and can be, no *a priori* cognition at all? But there is no danger of that. It would be like trying to prove through reason that there is no reason. For we say we cognize something through reason only when we are aware that we could have known it even if we had not encountered it in experience as we did. Cognition through reason and *a priori* cognition [A 24] therefore mean the same thing. Trying to squeeze necessity out of a proposition based on experience—*water from a pumice stone*—and with it give a judgment true universality, is a direct contradiction. Without that universality there is no inference of reason, including inference by analogy, which involves at least presumed universality and objective necessity and therefore always presupposes them. Substituting subjective necessity, or habit, for objective necessity, which occurs only in *a priori* judgments, means denying reason the capacity to judge the object: to cognize it and what belongs to it. For example, when something has often and always followed a certain previous state, we could not say that we can *infer* the one from the other. That would imply objective necessity and the concept of an *a priori* connection. We could only expect similar cases, much as animals do. This means rejecting the concept of cause as fundamentally false, a mere deception of thought. Suppose we tried to remedy this lack of objective [A 25] and consequently universal validity by saying that we see no reason to attribute a different way of representing things to other rational beings. If that

were a valid inference, our ignorance would do more to expand our cognition than all our reflection. For merely because we know no rational beings other than humans, we would be entitled to assume that their nature is the same as the nature we know in ourselves. In other words, we would actually know them. I will not even dwell on the point that universal acceptance of a judgment does not prove its objective [AA V 13] validity—its validity as cognition. Even if such agreement happened to occur, it could not prove agreement with the object. Rather, objective validity alone provides the ground for necessary universal agreement.

Hume would also feel quite at home with this system of *universal empiricism* [A 26] in principles. For, as is well known, he asked only that the concept of cause should contain a merely subjective necessity, namely habit, instead of any objective meaning of necessity, so as to deny reason any judgment about God, freedom, and immortality. He certainly knew very well how to draw conclusions with complete logical rigor once his principles were granted. But even Hume did not make empiricism so universal as to include mathematics. He regarded its propositions as analytic. If that were correct, they would indeed be absolutely certain. Yet this would not allow us to infer that reason can also make absolutely certain judgments in philosophy—synthetic ones, such as the principle of causality. But if empiricism about principles were accepted *universally*, mathematics would be included too.

Now suppose mathematics conflicts with a reason that admits only empirical principles [A 27]. This is inevitable in the antinomy, since mathematics proves the infinite divisibility of space beyond dispute, while empiricism cannot allow it. Then the greatest possible certainty of demonstration openly contradicts the supposed inferences from principles of experience. We must then ask, like Cheselden's blind man: which is deceiving me, sight or touch? For empiricism rests on a necessity that is *felt*, while rationalism rests on one that is *understood*. Universal empiricism thus reveals itself as the genuine *skepticism* that was wrongly attributed to Hume in so unrestricted a sense,⁶ since he at least left mathematics as a reliable touchstone of experience [A 28] [AA V 14]. Universal

empiricism, by contrast, permits no touchstone of experience at all. Such a touchstone can be found only in *a priori* principles, although experience consists not merely of feelings but also of judgments.

Still, in this philosophical and critical age, this kind of empiricism can hardly be meant seriously. Presumably it is proposed only to exercise judgment and, through contrast, to bring the necessity of rational *a priori* principles into clearer view. We can therefore thank those who are willing to undertake this otherwise not especially instructive work.

- ¹ To prevent anyone from imagining *inconsistencies* here, I will add a reminder. I now call freedom the condition of the moral law, but later in this work I claim that the moral law is the condition under which we can first *become conscious* of freedom. Freedom is indeed the *ground of being* of the moral law, while the moral law is the *ground of knowing* freedom. For if the moral law were not *first* clearly thought in our reason, we would never consider ourselves entitled to *assume* anything like freedom, even though freedom involves no contradiction. But if there were no freedom, the moral law could *not be found* in us at all.
- ² Causality as freedom and causality as natural mechanism are established in one and the same subject, the human being: the first through the moral law, the second through the law of nature. Combining them is impossible unless we represent the human being as a being in itself in relation to the first, and as an appearance in relation to the second—the former in *pure* consciousness, the latter in *empirical* consciousness. Without this, reason's contradiction with itself is unavoidable.
- ³ A reviewer who wanted to criticize this work came closer to the truth than he may have intended. He said that it presented no new principle of morality, but only a *new formula*. But who would want to introduce a new principle of all morality, as though inventing it for the first time? That would be as if the world before him had known nothing about duty or had been thoroughly mistaken about it. Anyone who knows what a *formula* means to a mathematician—one

that determines exactly what to do to solve a problem and prevents mistakes—will not regard a formula that does this for all duty in general as insignificant or unnecessary.

- ⁴ Someone might also object that I did not first explain the concept of the *faculty of desire* or of the *feeling of pleasure*. This would be unfair, since we should properly be able to presuppose the explanation given in psychology. Yet that definition might make the feeling of pleasure the basis for determining the faculty of desire, as in fact is usually done. This would necessarily make the supreme principle of practical philosophy *empirical*. But that is precisely what must first be decided, and this Critique completely refutes it. So I will give the explanation here in the form needed to leave this disputed point undecided at the beginning, as it should be.—*Life* is a being's capacity to act according to laws of the faculty of desire. The *faculty of desire* is its *capacity, through its representations, to cause the actuality of the objects of those representations*. *Pleasure* is the *representation of the agreement of an object or an action with the subjective conditions of life*: that is, with the capacity for a *representation to cause the actuality of its object*, or to determine the subject's powers to act to produce it. I need no more than this for the critique of concepts borrowed from psychology. The Critique itself supplies the rest. It is easy to see that this explanation leaves undecided whether pleasure must always underlie the faculty of desire, or whether under certain conditions it may only follow that faculty's determination. For the explanation is composed entirely of features belonging to pure understanding, namely categories, which contain nothing empirical. Such care is highly advisable throughout philosophy, yet often neglected: we should not prejudge matters through a risky definition before fully analyzing the concept, an analysis often achieved only much later. Throughout the Critique of both theoretical and practical reason, readers will also find many opportunities to remedy shortcomings and correct errors in philosophy's old dogmatic procedure. These are noticed only when reason uses concepts in a way *directed at reason as a whole*.

⁵ Here I fear occasional misinterpretation of certain expressions more than incomprehensibility. I chose those expressions with the greatest care to keep their intended concept in view. In the table of categories of *practical* reason, under modality, the *permitted* and *forbidden*—what is practically and objectively possible and impossible—have almost the same meaning in ordinary speech as the next category, *duty* and *what is contrary to duty*. But here the *first* means what agrees or conflicts with a merely *possible* practical precept, such as the solution of all problems in geometry and mechanics. The *second* means what stands in that relation to a law *actually* present in reason in general. This difference in meaning is not wholly foreign to ordinary speech, though somewhat unusual. For example, a public speaker as such is *forbidden* to coin new words or phrases; a poet is *permitted* to do so to some extent. Neither case concerns duty. For no one can stop someone who wants to ruin his reputation as a speaker. The issue here is only the distinction between *imperatives* whose determining grounds are *problematic*, *assertoric*, and *apodictic*. Similarly, in the note where I compared the moral ideas of practical perfection in different philosophical schools, I distinguished the idea of *wisdom* from that of *holiness*, although I myself declared them fundamentally and objectively identical. But there I mean only the wisdom that a human being—the Stoic—claims to possess: wisdom *subjectively* attributed to a human being as a property. Perhaps *virtue*, another expression the Stoic made much of, would better describe his school's characteristic feature. But the expression *postulate* of pure practical reason could cause the most misunderstanding, if confused with the meaning of postulates in pure mathematics, which carry absolute certainty. Those postulate the *possibility of an action* whose object has already been theoretically cognized *a priori*, with complete certainty, as *possible*. A postulate of pure practical reason, however, postulates the possibility of an *object* itself—God and the soul's immortality—on the basis of absolutely certain *practical* laws, and thus only for the purposes of practical reason. Here the certainty of the postulated possibility is not theoretical, and therefore not apodictic: it is not necessity cognized with regard to the object. Instead, it is an assumption necessary for the subject to follow rea-

son's objective but practical laws, and so merely a necessary hypothesis. I could find no better expression for this subjective yet genuine and unconditional necessity of reason.

- 6 Names designating allegiance to a school have always caused much unfair distortion. It is rather like someone saying: *N.* is an *idealist*. Although he not only fully admits but insists that actual objects of external things correspond to our representations of external things, he still maintains that the form of their intuition belongs not to them, but only to the human mind.

Introduction: The idea of a critique of practical reason



Introduction. [AA V 15] [A 29] The idea of a critique of practical reason.

The theoretical use of reason dealt with objects of the cognitive faculty alone. A critique of reason in this use really concerned only the *pure* cognitive faculty. For this aroused the suspicion, later confirmed, that it could easily stray beyond its limits among unreachable objects or even mutually conflicting concepts. The practical use of reason is different. Here reason deals with determining grounds of the will. The will is a capacity either to produce objects corresponding to representations or at least to determine itself to bring them about, whether or not its physical power is sufficient—that is, to determine its causality [A 30]. For here reason can at least come to determine the will, and always has objective reality to the extent that only willing is at issue. The first question, then, is whether pure reason alone is sufficient to determine the will, or whether reason can be its determining ground only when empirically conditioned. At this point a concept of causality enters that the Critique of Pure Reason has justified, although it cannot be presented empirically: *freedom*. If we can now find grounds to prove that this property really belongs to the human will, and likewise to the will of all rational beings, we will have shown more than that pure reason can be practical. We will have shown that pure reason alone, and not empirically limited reason, is unconditionally practical.

Consequently, we will have to develop not a critique of *pure practical* reason, but only of *practical* reason in general [AA V 16]. For pure reason needs no critique once it has been shown to exist. It itself contains the standard for criticizing every use of it. The task of the Critique of [A 31] Practical Reason in general is therefore to prevent empirically conditioned reason from the presumption of wanting to be the will's sole and exclusive determining ground. Once pure reason is established as existing, its use is only immanent, which means it stays within its own domain. The empirically conditioned use, by contrast, is transcendent when it claims sole authority. It makes demands and issues commands that go completely beyond its domain. This is exactly the reverse of what could be said about pure reason in its speculative use.

Even so, since the cognition underlying practical use here is still that of pure reason, the division of a critique of practical reason must be arranged, in its general outline, to match that of speculative reason. We will therefore need a *Doctrine of Elements* and a *Doctrine of Method*. In the former, the first part, we will need an *Analytic* as the rule of truth, and a *Dialectic* to present and resolve illusion in the judgments of practical reason. But the order of the subdivisions of the Analytic will again be the reverse of that in the [A 32] Critique of Pure Speculative Reason. For in the present critique we will start from *principles*, proceed to *concepts*, and only from these, if possible, to the senses. In speculative reason, on the other hand, we started from the senses and had to finish with principles. The reason is again that we now deal with a will. We must consider reason not in relation to objects, but to this will and its causality. So principles of causality that is empirically unconditioned must come first. Only after that can we try to establish our concepts of the determining ground of such a will, of their application to objects, and finally of their application to the subject and its sensibility. The law of causality through freedom—that is, some pure practical principle—must inevitably come first here. It determines the only objects it can be related to.

PART I

Doctrine of the elements of pure practical reason



Of the

[A 33] [AA V 17] Critique of Practical Reason

Part I. Doctrine of the Elements of Pure Practical Reason.

Book I, Chapter I: The principles of pure practical reason



Book I. [AA V 19] [A 35] The Analytic of Pure Practical Reason.

Chapter I. On the Principles of Pure Practical Reason.

[§ 1] Definition.

Practical *principles* are statements containing a general determination of the will that includes several practical rules. They are subjective, or *maxims*, when the subject regards the condition as valid only for their own will. They are objective, or practical *laws*, when the condition is recognized as objectively valid, that is, valid for the will of every rational being.

Remark.

If we assume that *pure* reason can contain a ground that is practically sufficient, that is, sufficient for determining the will, then there are practical [A 36] laws. Otherwise, all practical principles will be mere maxims. In a rational being whose will is affected by feelings and desires, maxims can conflict with practical laws that the being itself recognizes. For example, someone can adopt the maxim never to let an insult go unavenged, while also seeing that this is not a practical law but only their own maxim. As a rule for the will of every rational being, it could not be consistent with itself in one and the same maxim. In cog-

nition of nature, the principles of what happens—for example, the principle that action and reaction are equal in the transfer of motion—are also laws of nature. That is because the use [AA V 20] of reason there is theoretical and determined by the character of the object. In practical cognition, which deals only with determining grounds of the will, principles we adopt are not, just for that reason, laws to which we are unavoidably subject. That is because in practical matters reason deals with the subject, namely the faculty of desire. The rule can vary in many ways according to that faculty's particular character.—A practical rule is always a product of reason, because it prescribes an action as a means to an effect intended as an end. But for a being in whom reason is not the sole determining ground of the will, this rule is an *imperative*. That is, it is a rule marked by an “ought,” which expresses the objective necessitation to act. It means that if reason completely determined the will, the action would inevitably follow this rule. Imperatives therefore hold objectively and are entirely different from maxims, [A 37] which are subjective principles. Imperatives determine either the conditions of a rational being's causality as an effective cause, solely with regard to the effect and what is sufficient to produce it, or simply the will, whether or not it is sufficient to produce the effect. The first would be hypothetical imperatives and contain only instructions for skill. The second, by contrast, would be categorical and alone would be practical laws. So maxims are *principles*, but not *imperatives*. Imperatives themselves, when conditional, determine the will not simply as will but only in relation to a desired effect. These hypothetical imperatives are practical *instructions*, but not *laws*. Laws must determine the will sufficiently as will, before I even ask whether I have the ability needed for a desired effect, or what I must do to produce it. They must therefore be categorical. Otherwise they are not laws, because they lack necessity. If necessity is to be practical, it must be independent of conditions arising from feelings and desires, which attach to the will only contingently. Tell someone, for example, that they must work and save when young so as not to suffer want in old age. This is a correct and also important practical instruction for the will. But we can easily see that the will is being directed toward something *else*, which we assume the person desires. We must

leave that desire to the person acting: perhaps they foresee other resources besides wealth earned by their own efforts; perhaps they do not hope to grow old at all; or perhaps they think they can get by poorly if they should ever be in need. Reason is the only source of any rule [A 38] that is to contain necessity. It does put necessity into this instruction too, since otherwise it would not be an imperative. But this necessity is only subjectively conditioned, and we cannot assume it to the same degree in all subjects. For reason to give laws, however, it must need to presuppose only *itself*. [AA V 21] This is because a rule is objectively and universally valid only when it holds without the contingent, subjective conditions that distinguish one rational being from another. Now tell someone never to make a lying promise. This rule concerns only their will, whether or not it can achieve whatever aims they may have. Willing alone is what this rule is to determine entirely *a priori*. If this rule proves practically correct, then it is a law, because it is a categorical imperative. Thus practical laws concern only the will, regardless of what its causality accomplishes. We can leave that causality aside, since it belongs to the sensible world, in order to have these laws in their purity.

[§ 2] Theorem I.

All practical principles that presuppose an *object* (matter) of the faculty of desire as the determining ground of the will are empirical, without exception, and cannot provide practical laws.

By the matter of the faculty of desire I mean an object whose reality is desired. Now suppose the desire for this object comes before the practical rule and is the condition [A 39] for adopting that rule as a principle. Then I say, *first*, that this principle is always empirical. For in that case the determining ground of choice is the representation of an object, together with that representation's relation to the subject through which the faculty of desire is determined to make the object real. Such a relation to the subject is called *pleasure* in the reality of an object. So this pleasure would have to be presupposed as a condition that makes the determination of choice possible. But no representation of any object, whatever it may be, allows us to know *a priori* whether it will involve

pleasure, displeasure, or indifference. In such a case, then, the determining ground of choice must always be empirical. So too must the material practical principle that presupposes it as a condition.

Now, *second*, suppose a principle rests only on the subjective condition of being receptive to pleasure or displeasure. This condition can always be known only empirically and cannot hold in the same way for all rational beings. Such a principle can certainly serve as a *maxim* for the subject who has that receptivity. But it cannot serve as a *law*, even for that subject, because it lacks objective [AA V 22] necessity, which must be known *a priori*. So a principle of this kind can never provide a practical [A 40] law.

[§ 3] Theorem II.

All material practical principles, as such, are of one and the same kind. They fall under the general principle of self-love or personal happiness.

Pleasure in the representation of a thing's existence, insofar as it is to be a determining ground for desiring that thing, rests on the subject's *receptivity*, because it *depends* on the existence of an object. It therefore belongs to sense (feeling), not to the understanding. Understanding expresses a relation of the representation *to an object* in terms of concepts, not to the subject in terms of feelings. So this pleasure is practical only insofar as the feeling of enjoyment that the subject expects from the object's reality determines the faculty of desire. Now a rational being's awareness of enjoyment in life, continuing uninterrupted throughout its whole existence, is *happiness*. The principle of making this the highest determining ground of choice is the principle of self-love. Thus all material principles that locate the determining ground of choice in the pleasure or displeasure expected from some object's reality [A 41] are entirely *of the same kind* in this respect: they all belong to the principle of self-love or personal happiness.

Corollary.

All *material* practical rules locate the determining ground of the will in the *lower faculty of desire*. If there were no *merely formal* laws of this faculty that sufficiently determined the will, then we could not acknowledge any *higher faculty of desire* either.

Remark I.

It is surprising that otherwise perceptive thinkers believe they can distinguish the *lower* from the *higher faculty of desire* [AA V 23] by asking whether the *representations* connected with the feeling of pleasure originate in *the senses* or in *the understanding*. When we ask about the determining grounds of desire and locate them in the enjoyment expected from something, it makes no difference where the *representation* of this pleasing object comes from. All that matters is how much it *pleases*. A representation may have its seat and origin in the understanding. But if it can determine choice only by presupposing a feeling of pleasure in the subject, then its being a determining ground of choice depends entirely on the character of inner sense: namely, on its capacity to be pleasantly affected by that representation. Representations of objects may be of very different kinds. They may be representations of the understanding, [A 42] or even of reason, as opposed to representations of the senses. Still, the feeling of pleasure through which alone they actually determine the will is of the same kind. This is the enjoyment, the pleasure expected from them, that drives the activity of producing the object. These feelings are alike not only because they can always be known only empirically, but also because they affect one and the same vital force, which expresses itself in the faculty of desire. In this respect, each can differ from any other determining ground only in degree. Otherwise, how could we compare two determining grounds that are completely different in their kind of representation, in terms of their *magnitude*, so as to prefer the one that affects the faculty of desire most? The very same person can return unread an instructive book that comes into their hands only once, so as not to miss a hunt. They can leave in the middle of a fine speech so as not to be late for a meal. They can leave an entertaining rational conversation, which they otherwise value highly, to sit down at the gaming table. They can even turn away a poor person whom they would otherwise enjoy helping, because they have only enough money in their pocket to pay for admission to a play. If the determination of their will rests on the feeling of enjoyment or unpleasantness they expect from some cause, it makes no difference to them what kind of representation affects them. To make their choice, they care only about how intense and

lasting the enjoyment is, how easily it can be obtained, and how often it can be repeated. Someone who needs gold to spend is completely indifferent to whether its material, [A 43] the gold, was dug out of a mountain or washed out of sand, provided it is everywhere accepted at the same value. In just the same way, someone concerned only with enjoying life does not ask whether representations come from understanding or sense, but only *how much pleasure, and how great a pleasure*, they will provide for the longest time. Only those who would like to deny pure reason the ability to determine the will without presupposing any feeling [AA V 24] can stray so far from their own definition. They first bring things under one and the same principle, only to declare afterward that they are entirely different in kind. For example, we find that people can take pleasure even in the mere *exercise of their powers*: in awareness of their mental strength when overcoming obstacles to their purposes, in developing their intellectual talents, and so on. We rightly call these *finer* pleasures and enjoyments. More than other pleasures, they are under our control. They do not wear out; instead, they strengthen our capacity to enjoy them further, and they develop us at the same time as they please us. But this does not justify presenting them as a way of determining the will different from determination merely through sense. These pleasures themselves depend for their very possibility on a feeling built into us, which is the first condition of this satisfaction. To call this a different kind of determination is just like ignorant people who want to dabble in metaphysics: they imagine matter so fine, so excessively fine that the very thought could make them dizzy, and then believe they have conceived a *spiritual* yet extended being. If, like *Epicurus*, we rely on virtue's promised pleasure alone to determine [A 44] the will, we cannot then criticize him for treating that pleasure as entirely the same kind as the pleasures of the crudest senses. For we have no reason to charge him with attributing the representations that arouse this feeling in us only to the bodily senses. As far as we can guess, he sought the source of many of them just as much in the use of the higher cognitive faculty. But that did not and could not prevent him, on the principle just mentioned, from regarding pleasure itself as entirely the same kind throughout. This includes the pleasure those possibly intellectual repre-

sentations give us, through which alone they can be determining grounds of the will. To be *consistent* is a philosopher's greatest obligation, yet it is the one most rarely met. The ancient Greek schools give us more examples of it than we find in our *syncretistic* age. In this age a certain *coalition system* of conflicting principles, full of dishonesty and shallowness, is contrived because it recommends itself better to a public content to know a little of everything and nothing as a whole, while remaining firmly seated in familiar positions. However much understanding and reason the principle of personal happiness may employ, it would still contain no determining grounds of the will except those suited to the *lower* faculty of desire. So either there is no higher faculty of desire at all, or *pure reason* must be practical on its own. That is, it must be able to determine [A 45] the will through the mere form of a practical rule, without presupposing any feeling. It must therefore do so without representations of the pleasant or unpleasant as the matter of the faculty of desire, which is always an empirical condition of principles. Only then is reason a true *higher* faculty of desire, and only insofar as it determines [AA V 25] the will by itself, rather than serving the inclinations. The faculty that can be determined by feelings and desires is subordinate to it. Reason is genuinely, indeed *specifically*, different from that faculty. Even the slightest mixture of the latter's impulses diminishes reason's strength and superiority, just as the slightest empirical element introduced as a condition into a mathematical proof lowers and destroys its standing and force. In a practical law, reason determines the will directly, not through an intervening feeling of pleasure or displeasure, not even a feeling about this law itself. Only its ability to be practical as pure reason makes it possible for reason to *give laws*.

Remark II.

To be happy is necessarily the wish of every rational but finite being, and so an unavoidable determining ground of its faculty of desire. For satisfaction with its whole existence is not something it possesses from the start. It is not a state of bliss that would presuppose awareness of its independent self-sufficiency. Instead, its finite nature itself imposes this problem on it, because it has needs. These needs concern the matter of its faculty of desire: something related to an

underlying subjective feeling of pleasure or displeasure, which determines what it needs to be satisfied with its condition. But precisely because the subject can know this material determining ground only empirically, it is impossible to regard this task as a law, since a law, as objective, would have to contain *the very same* [A 46] *determining ground* of the will in all cases and for all rational beings. For the concept of happiness does indeed underlie the practical relation of *objects* to the faculty of desire *everywhere*. But it is only a general heading for subjective determining grounds. It determines nothing specifically, although such specific determination is all that matters in this practical problem, and without it the problem cannot be solved at all. What each person is to count as their happiness depends on their own particular feeling of pleasure and displeasure. Even in one and the same subject, it depends on differences in need as this feeling changes. A *subjectively necessary* law, as a law of nature, is therefore *objectively* a highly *contingent* practical principle. It can and must differ greatly between subjects, and so can never provide a law. For the desire for happiness is concerned not with the form of lawfulness but only with the matter: whether, and how much, pleasure I can expect from following the law. Principles of self-love can certainly contain general rules of skill for finding means to ends. [AA V 26] But in that case they are merely theoretical principles⁷—for example, how someone who wants to eat bread should devise a mill. [A 47] Practical instructions based on them, however, can never be universal. For the determining ground of the faculty of desire rests on the feeling of pleasure and displeasure, which can never be assumed to be universally directed at the same objects. But suppose finite rational beings all thought exactly alike about what to take as objects of their feelings of pleasure or pain, and even about the means they must use to obtain the former and avoid the latter. Even then they could by no means present the *principle of self-love* as a *practical law*. For this agreement would itself still be contingent. The determining ground would still be only subjectively valid and merely empirical. It would lack the necessity conceived in every law: objective necessity based on *a priori* grounds. Unless, that is, we treated this necessity not as practical at all but as merely physical: our inclination would compel the action just as inevitably as we are made to yawn when

we see others yawn. We could more readily maintain that there are no practical laws at all, but only *recommendations* serving our desires, than raise merely subjective principles to the rank of practical laws. Such laws have objective, not merely subjective, necessity without exception. They must be known by reason *a priori*, not through experience, however empirically universal that experience may be. Even rules describing uniform appearances are called laws of nature—for example, mechanical laws—only when we either actually know them *a priori*, or assume, as with [A 48] chemical laws, that they would be known *a priori* from objective grounds if our insight went deeper. But merely subjective practical principles expressly require that they rest on subjective, not objective, conditions of choice. So they may always be presented only as mere maxims, never as practical laws. At first this last remark seems like mere quibbling over words. But it defines in words the most important distinction, one that comes into consideration only in practical investigations.

[§ 4] [AA V 27] Theorem III.

If a rational being is to think of its maxims as universal practical laws, it can think of them only as principles whose determining ground of the will lies not in their matter but solely in their form.

The matter of a practical principle is the object of the will. This either is or is not the will's determining ground. If it is, then the rule of the will would be subject to an empirical condition: the relation of the determining representation to the feeling of pleasure and displeasure. It would therefore not be a practical law. Now if we remove from a law all its matter, that is, every object of the will as a determining ground, nothing remains but the mere *form* of giving universal law. [A 49] So a rational being either cannot think of *its* subjective practical principles, or maxims, as universal laws at the same time, or must assume that their mere form, by which they *are suited to giving universal law*, makes them practical laws on its own.

Remark.

Even the most ordinary understanding can distinguish, without instruction, which form in a maxim is suited to giving universal law and which is not. For example, I have made it my maxim to increase my wealth by every safe means.

Now I hold a *deposit* whose owner has died without leaving a written record of it. Naturally, this is a case for my maxim. All I now want to know is whether that maxim can also hold as a universal practical law. So I apply it to the present case and ask whether it could take the form of a law. Could I, through my maxim, also give this law: everyone may deny holding a deposit when no one can prove it was entrusted to them? I immediately see that this principle, as a law, would destroy itself, because it would mean there were no deposits at all. A practical law that I recognize as such must qualify for giving universal law. This is an identical proposition and so is clear in itself. If I now say that my will is subject to a practical *law*, I cannot cite my inclination—in this case, my greed—as its determining ground suitable for a universal practical law. [AA V 28] For, far from being [A 50] suited to giving universal law, this inclination would destroy itself in the form of a universal law.

The desire for happiness is universal, and so is the maxim by which everyone makes happiness the determining ground of their will. Still, it is strange that intelligent people could think of presenting it, on that account, as a universal *practical law*. For a universal law of nature otherwise brings everything into agreement. But here, if we tried to give the maxim the universality of a law, precisely the opposite of agreement would result: the worst conflict, and the complete destruction of the maxim itself and its aim. For in that case the wills of all do not share one and the same object. Instead, each has their own object—their own well-being. This may happen to be compatible with other people's aims, which are likewise directed toward themselves. But that falls far short of being enough for a law, because the exceptions we are entitled to make as occasions arise are endless and cannot be precisely included in a universal rule. What results is a harmony like the one a certain satirical poem describes in the unity of minds between two spouses ruining each other: *Oh, wonderful harmony: what he wants, she wants too*, etc. Or it is like the declaration King *Francis I* is said to have made to Emperor *Charles V*: what my brother Charles wants—Milan—I want too. Empirical determining grounds are not suited to any universal external lawgiving, but neither are they suited to internal lawgiving. For each person bases inclination on their own subject, while another bases it on a

different subject. [A 51] Even within each subject, now one inclination and now another has the greatest influence. It is simply impossible to find a law that would govern them all under this condition, namely with agreement on every side.

[§ 5] Problem I.

Assuming that the mere lawgiving form of maxims alone is the sufficient determining ground of a will, find the character of a will that can be determined by this alone.

The mere form of a law can be represented only by reason. It is therefore not an object of the senses, and so does not belong among appearances. Its representation as the determining ground of the will thus differs from all determining grounds of events in nature under the law of causality. [AA V 29] For in those events the determining grounds must themselves be appearances. Now if no determining ground of the will other than this universal lawgiving form alone can serve as a law for it, such a will must be thought of as entirely independent of the natural law governing appearances in relation to one another: the law of causality. This independence is called *freedom* in the strictest, that is, transcendental, sense. Thus a will [A 52] for which the mere lawgiving form of its maxim alone can serve as a law is a free will.

[§ 6] Problem II.

Assuming that a will is free, find the law that alone is suited to determine it necessarily.

The matter of a practical law, that is, an object of a maxim, can be given only empirically. But a free will, though independent of empirical conditions—that is, conditions belonging to the sensible world—must still be capable of determination. So, independently of the *matter* of the law, a free will must still find a determining ground in the law. Yet apart from its matter, the law contains nothing but its lawgiving form. So the lawgiving form, insofar as it is contained in the maxim, is the only thing that can constitute a determining ground of the will.

Remark.

Freedom and unconditional practical law thus point back to each other. I am not asking here whether they really are different, or whether an unconditional law is simply the self-consciousness of pure practical reason, and this in turn is identical with the positive concept of freedom. Instead, I ask where our *cognition* of the unconditionally practical *begins*: with freedom or with practical law. It cannot begin with freedom. [A 53] For we cannot be directly conscious of freedom, since its first concept is negative. Nor can we infer it from experience, because experience gives us cognition only of the law of appearances, and thus of nature's mechanism, the exact opposite of freedom. So it is the *moral law*, of which we become directly conscious as soon as we formulate maxims of the will, that presents itself to us *first*. Reason [AA V 30] presents this law as a determining ground that no sensible conditions can outweigh, and that is indeed entirely independent of them. In doing so, it leads directly to the concept of freedom. But how is consciousness of this moral law itself possible? We can become conscious of pure practical laws just as we are conscious of pure theoretical principles: by attending to the necessity with which reason prescribes them to us, and to the exclusion of all empirical conditions, to which reason directs us. The concept of a pure will arises from the former, just as consciousness of a pure understanding arises from the latter. This is the true order of dependence among our concepts: morality first reveals the concept of freedom to us. Thus *practical reason* first confronts speculative reason with its most insoluble problem through this concept, putting it in the greatest difficulty. This is already clear from the following consideration. Nothing in appearances can be explained by the concept of freedom; nature's mechanism must always be our guide here. Moreover, when pure reason tries to ascend to the unconditioned in the series of causes, its antinomy entangles it in things beyond comprehension on either view. Yet the latter view, mechanism, at least [A 54] has a use in explaining appearances. So no one would ever have ventured to introduce freedom into science if the moral law, and with it practical reason, had not come along and forced this concept upon us. Experience also confirms this order of concepts in us. Suppose someone claims that their lustful inclination is completely irresistible whenever the desired object and the opportunity

are present. Ask whether they would not control their inclination if a gallows stood in front of the house where they found this opportunity, and they were to be hanged on it immediately after satisfying their lust. We need not spend long guessing their answer. But now ask this: suppose their ruler demanded, under threat of the same immediate death penalty, that they give false testimony against an honest man whom the ruler wanted to destroy on plausible pretexts. Would they consider it possible to overcome their love of life, however great it might be? Perhaps they would not dare to assert whether they would do it or not. But they must admit without hesitation that it would be possible for them. They therefore judge that they can do something because they are conscious that they ought to do it. They recognize in themselves the freedom that, without the moral law, would otherwise have remained unknown to them.

[§ 7] Fundamental Law of Pure Practical Reason.

Act so that the maxim of your will could always hold at the same time as a principle for giving universal law.

[AA V 31]

Remark. [A 55]

Pure geometry has postulates as practical propositions. But they contain nothing beyond the presupposition that we *can* do something if we should be required to do it. These are its only propositions that concern existence. They are therefore practical rules under a problematic condition of the will. Here, however, the rule says that we ought, unconditionally, to act in a certain way. So the practical rule is unconditional. It is therefore represented as a categorical practical proposition a priori, through which the will is objectively determined absolutely and directly—by the practical rule itself, which is therefore a law here. For *pure reason, practical in itself*, directly gives laws here. The will is thought of as independent of empirical conditions, and thus, as a pure will, as determined *by the mere form of the law*. This determining ground is regarded as the highest condition of all maxims. This is strange enough, and has no parallel anywhere else in practical cognition. For the *a priori* thought of a possible universal lawgiving, which is therefore merely problematic, is commanded unconditionally as a law, without borrowing anything from experience or from any

external will. Nor is it an instruction saying that an action ought to occur through which a desired effect becomes possible, since then the rule would always be physically conditioned. Instead, it is a rule that determines only the will *a priori*, with regard to the form of its maxims. Now it is at least not impossible to think of a law that serves only the *subjective* form of principles, yet acts as a determining ground through the *objective* form of a law in general. We can call consciousness of this fundamental law a fact of reason. [A 56] For we cannot reason it out from previously given data of reason, such as consciousness of freedom, since that is not given to us beforehand. Instead, it forces itself upon us on its own as a synthetic proposition *a priori*, grounded on no intuition, either pure or empirical. It would indeed be analytic if we presupposed freedom of the will. But freedom as a positive concept would require an intellectual intuition, which we must not assume here at all. Still, to regard this law as *given* without misunderstanding it, we must note carefully that it is not an empirical fact. It is the sole fact of pure reason, which thereby announces itself as originally giving laws: *this is what I will; this is what I command*.

Corollary.

Pure reason is practical on its own and gives human beings a universal law, which we call the *moral law*.

[AA V 32]

Remark.

The fact just mentioned cannot be denied. We need only analyze people's judgments about whether their actions conform to law. We will always find that, whatever inclination may say, their reason remains incorruptible and compelled by itself to measure the maxim of the will in an action against the pure will—that is, against itself, insofar as it regards itself as practical *a priori*. Now reason also declares this principle of morality to be a law for all rational [A 57] beings, precisely because of the universality of the lawgiving that it makes the highest formal determining ground of the will, regardless of all subjective differences in it. This applies insofar as they have a will at all: an ability to determine their causality through the representation of rules. Thus it applies insofar as they are capable of actions according to principles, and therefore also according to prac-

tical principles *a priori*, since these alone have the necessity that reason requires of a principle. So it is not restricted to human beings. It extends to all finite beings that have reason and will, and even includes the infinite being as the supreme intelligence. In the former case, however, the law has the form of an imperative. For we can presuppose a *pure* will in a finite being as rational, but not a *holy* will in it as a being affected by needs and sensible motives. A holy will would be incapable of any maxim conflicting with the moral law. For finite beings, therefore, the moral law is an *imperative* that commands categorically, because the law is unconditional. Such a will's relation to this law is one of *dependence*, called obligation. Obligation means a *necessitation* to an action, though only through reason and its objective law. This action is called *duty*, because a power of choice affected by feelings and desires—though not determined by them, and thus always free—carries with it a wish arising from *subjective* causes. This wish can therefore often oppose the pure objective determining ground. So it requires resistance from practical reason as moral necessitation. This resistance can be called an internal but intellectual constraint. In the all-sufficient intelligence, choice is rightly represented as incapable of any maxim that could not also be an objective law. The concept of *holiness* that belongs to it on this account places it [A 58] above, not all practical laws, but all practically restrictive laws, and thus beyond obligation and duty. Yet this holiness of the will is a practical idea that must necessarily serve as the *model*. All that finite rational beings can do is approach it without end. The pure moral law, which is therefore itself called holy, constantly and correctly holds this model before them. To be sure of this endless progress [AA V 33] in one's maxims, and of their constancy in continual advancement—that is, virtue—is the highest thing finite practical reason can achieve. Virtue itself, however, at least as a naturally acquired capacity, can never be complete. For assurance in such a case never becomes absolute certainty, and as persuasion it is very dangerous.

[§ 8] Theorem IV.

The *autonomy* of the will is the sole principle of all moral laws and the duties that conform to them. By contrast, all *heteronomy* of choice not only fails to ground any obligation, but actually opposes the principle of obligation and the

morality of the will. The sole principle of morality consists in independence from all matter of the law—that is, from a desired object—together with determination of choice by the mere universal lawgiving form of which a maxim must be capable. That *independence* is freedom in the *negative* sense. This *law-giving of its own* [A 59] by pure reason, practical as such, is freedom in the *positive* sense. Thus the moral law expresses nothing other than the *autonomy* of pure practical reason, that is, freedom. This is itself the formal condition of all maxims, under which alone they can agree with the highest practical law. Now the matter of willing can only be the object of a desire connected with the law. So if it enters into the practical law *as a condition of the law's possibility*, the result is heteronomy of choice: dependence on the natural law of following some impulse or inclination. The will then gives itself not the law, but only an instruction for rationally following laws of feeling and desire. A maxim formed in this way can never contain the form of universal lawgiving. It therefore not only fails to establish any obligation, but itself opposes the principle of *pure* practical reason, and thus also a moral disposition, even if the action arising from it should conform to the law.

[AA V 34]

Remark I.

So a practical instruction that carries a material, and therefore empirical, condition must never be counted as a practical law. For the [A 60] law of the pure will, which is free, places that will in an entirely different sphere from the empirical one. The necessity it expresses is not to be natural necessity. It can therefore consist only in formal conditions that make a law in general possible. All matter of practical rules always rests on subjective conditions. These give it no universality for rational beings except conditional universality: if I *desire* this or that, what must I then do to make it real? All such rules revolve around the principle of *personal happiness*. Now it certainly cannot be denied that all willing must also have an object, and thus matter. But that does not mean this matter is the determining ground and condition of the maxim. If it is, the maxim cannot be presented in a universally lawgiving form. For then the expectation of the object's existence would be the determining cause of choice. Willing

would have to rest on the dependence of the faculty of desire on the existence of some thing. This dependence can always be sought only in empirical conditions and so can never provide the ground for a necessary and universal rule. Thus the happiness of other beings can be the object of a rational being's will. But if it were the maxim's determining ground, we would have to presuppose that we find not only a natural pleasure but also a need in others' well-being, as the sympathetic temperament in human beings involves. Yet I cannot presuppose this need in every rational being, and not in God at all. So the matter of the maxim can remain, but it must not be the maxim's condition. Otherwise [A 61] the maxim would not be suited to be a law. The mere form of a law, which restricts the matter, must therefore also be a ground for adding this matter to the will, but not for presupposing it. Let the matter be, for example, my own happiness. If I attribute this to everyone—as I indeed may in the case of finite beings—it can become an *objective* practical law only if I include the happiness of others in it. Thus the law of promoting others' happiness does not arise from presupposing that this is an object of everyone's choice. It arises solely because the form of universality becomes the determining ground of the will. Reason requires this form as the condition for giving a maxim of self-love the objective validity of a law. So the object, others' happiness, was not the determining ground of the pure will. It was solely the mere lawful form by which I restricted my maxim based on inclination, to give it the universality [AA V 35] of a law and so make it conform to pure practical reason. Only from this restriction, and not from adding an external incentive, could the concept of an *obligation* to extend my maxim of self-love to others' happiness then arise. Remark II.

The direct opposite of the principle of morality is making *personal* happiness the determining ground of the will. As I showed above, this includes absolutely everything that locates the determining ground that is to serve as a law anywhere other than in the lawgiving form of the maxim. This conflict is not merely logical, like the [A 62] conflict involved in trying to raise empirically conditioned rules to necessary principles of cognition. It is practical. It would completely destroy morality if reason's voice regarding the will were not so

clear, so impossible to drown out, and so audible even to the most ordinary person. As things stand, this view can survive only in the bewildering speculations of the schools. They are bold enough to turn a deaf ear to that heavenly voice in order to uphold a theory that saves them the trouble of hard thinking. Suppose a friend whose company you otherwise enjoy tried to justify having given false testimony as follows. First they invoked what they claimed was the sacred duty of securing their own happiness. Then they listed all the advantages they had gained, and pointed to the clever precautions they had taken against any discovery—even discovery by you. They had told you the secret only so that they could deny it at any time. Finally, in complete seriousness, they claimed to have fulfilled a genuine human duty. You would either laugh right in their face or recoil in disgust. Yet if someone has based their principles solely on personal advantage, you would have nothing whatever to object to in these measures. Or suppose someone recommends a man as a manager to whom you can blindly entrust all your affairs. To inspire your confidence, they praise him as a clever man with a masterful grasp of his own advantage, and as a tirelessly active man who lets no opportunity for it go unused. Finally, to make sure [A 63] that no worries about his vulgar selfishness get in the way, they praise his refined way of living. He seeks pleasure not in hoarding money or crude extravagance, but in expanding his knowledge, in well-chosen, instructive company, and even in helping the needy. But he has no scruples about the means, which after all derive their worth or worthlessness only from the end. Other people's money and property serve his purposes [AA V 36] just as well as his own, whenever he knows he can use them without being discovered or stopped. You would either think the person recommending him was making a fool of you, or that they had lost their mind.—The boundaries between morality and self-love are so clear and sharp that even the most ordinary eye cannot fail to distinguish which of the two something belongs to. The following few remarks may seem unnecessary when the truth is so obvious. Still, they at least serve to give ordinary human reason's judgment somewhat greater clarity.

The principle of happiness can provide maxims, but never maxims suited to be laws of the will, even if we make *everyone's* happiness our object. For cognition of happiness rests entirely on data from experience. Every judgment about it depends very heavily on each person's opinion, which is itself also very changeable. So it can provide *general* rules, but never *universal* ones: rules that on average apply most often, but not rules that must hold always and necessarily. Thus no practical *laws* can be based on it. Precisely because an object of choice is made the basis of its rule here, and must therefore precede it, the rule can relate to and be grounded on nothing [A 64] but what is recommended, and thus on experience. Differences of judgment must then be endless. So this principle does not prescribe the very same practical rules to all rational beings, even though the rules fall under a common heading, namely happiness. The moral law, however, is thought of as objectively necessary only because it is to hold for everyone who has reason and will.

The maxim of self-love, or prudence, merely *advises*; the law of morality *commands*. There is a great difference between what we are *advised* to do and what we are *obligated* to do.

Even the most ordinary understanding can see quite easily and without hesitation what to do according to the principle of autonomy of choice. What to do on the assumption of heteronomy is difficult and requires knowledge of the world. That is, what *duty* requires presents itself to everyone on its own. But what brings genuine, lasting advantage is always shrouded in impenetrable darkness if this advantage is to extend over one's whole existence. It takes great prudence to use skillful exceptions to adapt a practical rule directed at such advantage to life's purposes even tolerably well. Yet the moral law commands everyone to obey, and to obey with the greatest exactness. So judging what to do according to it cannot be so difficult that even the most ordinary, untrained understanding would not know how to manage it without worldly wisdom.

Fulfilling morality's categorical command is within everyone's power [AA V 37] at all times. Fulfilling the empirically conditioned instruction of happiness is only rarely [A 65] possible, and is far from possible for everyone even with regard to a single aim. The reason is that the first concerns only the maxim,

which must be genuine and pure. The second also concerns the powers and physical ability to make a desired object real. A command that everyone should seek to make themselves happy would be foolish. For we never command anyone to do what they already inevitably want on their own. We would have to command only the measures to take, or rather supply them, since people cannot do everything they want. But commanding morality under the name of duty is entirely reasonable. For, first, not everyone is willing to obey its instruction when it conflicts with inclinations. And as for the measures by which someone can follow this law, these need not be taught here. For what they will in this respect, they can also do.

Someone who has *lost* at gambling may be *annoyed* with themselves and their imprudence. But someone conscious of having *cheated* at gambling, even if they won by doing so, must *despise* themselves as soon as they measure themselves against the moral law. So this law must surely be something other than the principle of personal happiness. For having to tell oneself, "I am *worthless*, even though I have filled my purse," must involve a different standard of judgment from applauding oneself and saying, "I am a *clever* person, because I have increased my funds."

Finally, in the idea of our practical reason, something else accompanies the violation of a moral law: its *deserving punishment*. Now the concept of punishment as such cannot be connected with [A 66] sharing in happiness. For the person imposing punishment may also have the kind intention of directing it toward that end. But it must first be justified in itself as punishment, that is, as a mere ill. The person punished must admit that justice has been done to them and that their lot completely fits their conduct, even if matters stopped there and they could look forward to no favor hidden behind this harshness. Every punishment as such must first involve justice, and justice makes up the essence of this concept. Kindness may also be combined with it, but the person deserving punishment has, by their conduct, not the slightest ground for counting on this. So punishment is a physical ill that, even if it were not connected with moral evil as a *natural* consequence, would still have to be connected with it as a consequence according to principles of moral lawgiving. Now every crime is

punishable in itself, even without regard to the physical consequences for the offender. That is, the offender forfeits happiness, at least in part. So it would clearly be absurd to say that their crime consisted precisely in bringing punishment upon themselves by damaging their own [AA V 38] happiness. Yet according to the principle of self-love, this would have to be the proper concept of every crime. On that view, punishment would be the reason for calling something a crime. Justice would instead have to consist in withholding all punishment and even preventing natural punishment. For then there would no longer be anything evil in the action, since the ills that would otherwise follow it, and for whose sake alone it was called evil, would now have been prevented. To regard all punishment and reward merely as [A 67] machinery in the hands of a higher power, serving only to set rational beings to work toward their final end, happiness, is even more clearly a mechanism of their will that abolishes all freedom. It is too obviously so for us to need to dwell on it.

More subtle, though just as false, is the claim of those who assume a special moral sense that determines the moral law instead of reason. On their view, consciousness of virtue would be directly connected with satisfaction and pleasure, and consciousness of vice with mental unrest and pain. They thus make everything depend, after all, on the desire for personal happiness. Without bringing in what was said above, I want only to point out the illusion involved. To represent a vicious person as tormented by mental unrest through consciousness of their offenses, they must already represent that person in advance as morally good to at least some degree in the basic foundation of their character. Similarly, they must already represent someone pleased by the consciousness of dutiful actions as virtuous. So the concept of morality and duty must have preceded all consideration of this satisfaction and cannot be derived from it at all. We must already value the importance of what we call duty, the authority of the moral law, and the immediate worth that following it gives a person in their own eyes. Only then can we feel that satisfaction in the consciousness of conforming to duty, and that bitter self-reproach when we can charge ourselves with violating it. So we cannot feel this satisfaction [A 68] or mental unrest before cognizing obligation, and make it the basis of obligation. We must

already be at least halfway to being an honest person even to form a representation of these feelings. I do not deny that, just as freedom makes the human will directly determinable by the moral law, frequent action in accordance with this determining ground can eventually produce a subjective feeling of satisfaction with oneself. On the contrary, it is itself a duty to establish and cultivate this feeling, which alone properly deserves to be called moral feeling. But the concept of duty cannot be derived from it. Otherwise we would have to think of a feeling of a law as such, and make something an object of sensation [AA V 39] that can be thought only through reason. Unless this is to be a flat contradiction, it would completely abolish every concept of duty, replacing it with a mere mechanical play of finer inclinations, which sometimes clash with the coarser ones.

Now let us compare our highest *formal* principle of pure practical reason, as autonomy of the will, with all previous *material* principles of morality. We can set out all the others in a table, in a way that actually exhausts all other possible cases except the single formal one. This will visibly prove that it is useless to look for a principle other than the one just presented.—All possible determining grounds of the will are either merely *subjective*, and therefore empirical, or *objective* and rational. Both kinds, in turn, are either *external* or *internal*.

Material practical determining grounds

[AA V 40] in the principle of morality are [A 69]

Subjective

external

- *Education* (according to *Montaigne*)
- *The civil constitution* (according to *Mandeville*)

internal

- *Physical feeling* (according to *Epicurus*)
- *Moral feeling* (according to *Hutcheson*)

Objective

internal

- *Perfection* (according to *Wolff* and the *Stoics*)

external

- The *will of God* (according to *Crusius* and other *theological* moralists)

[AA V 41] Those on the left are all empirical and clearly [A 70] entirely unsuited to be the universal principle of morality. Those on the right, however, rest on reason. For perfection as a *quality* of things, and supreme perfection represented in a *substance*, that is, God, can both be thought only through concepts of reason. But the first concept, that of *perfection*, can be taken in a *theoretical* sense. Then it means only the completeness of each thing within its kind—transcendental perfection—or of a thing merely as a thing in general—metaphysical perfection. Neither can be at issue here. In its *practical* sense, however, the concept of perfection means a thing's fitness or adequacy for all sorts of ends. This perfection as a *quality* of a human being, and thus internal, is nothing but *talent* and what strengthens or supplements it, *skill*. Supreme perfection in a *substance*, that is, God, and thus external perfection considered practically, is this being's adequacy for all ends in general. Ends must therefore be given to us beforehand. Only in relation to them can the concept of *perfection*, whether internal in ourselves or external in God, become a determining ground of the will. But an end, as an *object* that must precede the determination of the will by a practical rule and contain the ground of that rule's possibility, is the will's *matter*. Taken as the will's determining ground, it is always empirical. So it can serve the *Epicurean* principle of the doctrine of happiness, but never the pure rational principle of the doctrine of morality and duty. Talents and their development can become motives only because they contribute to life's advantages. Similarly, the [A 71] will of God can become a motive only through the *happiness* we expect from it, if we make agreement with it the object of our will without a prior practical principle independent of the idea of God. It follows, *first*, that all the principles listed here are *material*; *second*, that they cover all possible material principles. Finally, we can conclude that material principles are entirely unsuited to be the highest moral law, as has been proved. So the *formal practical principle* of pure reason is the *only possible* principle suited to categorical imperatives, that is, practical laws that make actions duties. According to this principle, the mere form of a universal lawgiving possible through our

maxims must constitute the highest and immediate determining ground of the will. It alone is also suited to be the principle of morality in general, both for judging the human will and for applying it to determine that will.

I. [A 72] [AA V 42] *The Deduction of the Principles of Pure Practical Reason.*

This Analytic shows that pure reason can be practical: it can determine the will on its own, independently of everything empirical. It does so through a fact in which pure reason actually proves itself practical in us: autonomy in the principle of morality, through which reason determines the will to act.—At the same time, it shows that this fact is inseparably connected with consciousness of freedom of the will, indeed identical with it. A rational being, as belonging to the sensible world, recognizes itself as necessarily subject to the laws of causality, like other effective causes. Through this consciousness of freedom, however, its will is at the same time, in practical matters, conscious of itself on another side, namely as a being in itself, and of its existence as determinable in an intelligible order of things. This is not in accordance with a special intuition of itself, but with certain dynamic laws that can determine its causality in the sensible world. For it has been sufficiently proved elsewhere that freedom, when attributed to us, places us in an intelligible order of things.

If we now compare this with the analytic part of the Critique of Pure [A 73] Speculative Reason, a striking contrast appears. There, the first given element making cognition *a priori* possible was not principles but pure sensible *intuition*, space and time. It made such cognition possible only for objects of the senses.—Synthetic principles from mere concepts without intuition were impossible. They could occur only in relation to that intuition, which was sensible, and thus only in relation to objects of possible experience. For concepts of the understanding, joined with this intuition, alone make possible the cognition we call experience.—Beyond objects of experience, and thus concerning things as noumena, speculative reason was rightly denied all positive *cognition*.—Yet it did secure the concept of noumena: the possibility, and indeed necessity, of thinking such things. For example, it defended against every [AA V 43] objection the assumption of freedom, understood negatively, as entirely com-

patible with those principles and restrictions of pure theoretical reason. But it did not give us any determinate or expansive cognition of such objects. Instead, it completely cut off every prospect of it.

By contrast, although the moral law gives no *prospect*, [A 74] it does provide a fact that is completely inexplicable from all the data of the sensible world and the entire scope of our theoretical use of reason. This fact points to a pure world of the understanding, indeed *positively determines* it, and lets us cognize something about it: a law.

This law is to give the sensible world, as *sensible nature*, the form of a world of the understanding, that is, of a *supersensible nature*, as regards rational beings, yet without impairing its mechanism. Now nature in the most general sense is the existence of things under laws. The sensible nature of rational beings in general is their existence under empirically conditioned laws, and thus *heteronomy* for reason. By contrast, the supersensible nature of these same beings is their existence according to laws independent of every empirical condition, and thus belonging to the *autonomy* of pure reason. The laws according to which the existence of things depends on cognition are practical laws. So supersensible nature, insofar as we can form a concept of it, is nothing other than *a nature under the autonomy of pure practical reason*. The law of this autonomy is the moral law. It is therefore the fundamental law of a supersensible nature and a pure world of the understanding, whose counterpart is to exist in the sensible world, yet [A 75] without impairing that world's laws. We could call the former, which we cognize only in reason, *archetypal nature* (*nature as a model*). We could call the latter copied nature (*nature as a copy*), since it contains the possible effect of the idea of the former as a determining ground of the will. For the moral law does in fact place us, in idea, within a nature in which pure reason, if accompanied by physical power adequate to it, would produce the highest good. It determines our will to give the sensible world this form, as a whole of rational beings.

Even the most ordinary attention to ourselves confirms that this idea really serves as a model, like a preliminary sketch, for our determinations of the will.

[AA V 44] When practical reason tests the maxim by which I intend to give testimony, I always consider what it would be like if it held as a universal law of nature. Clearly, in this form it would necessitate truthfulness in everyone. For treating statements as evidence while also allowing them to be deliberately untrue cannot coexist with the universality of a law of nature. Likewise, the maxim I adopt about freely disposing of my [A 76] life is determined at once when I ask what it would have to be like for a nature to maintain itself according to a law based on it. Clearly, in such a nature no one could end their life *at will*, because such an arrangement would not be an enduring natural order. The same holds in all other cases. But in actual nature, as an object of experience, the free will is not automatically determined to maxims that could by themselves establish a nature under universal laws, or that would automatically fit into a nature arranged according to them. Instead, private inclinations make up a natural whole under laws of feeling and desire—physical laws—but not a nature possible solely through our will according to pure practical laws. Yet through reason we are conscious of a law to which all our maxims are subject, as if a natural order also had to arise through our will. So this must be the idea of a nature not empirically given, yet possible through freedom, and therefore supersensible. We give this nature objective reality, at least in a practical respect, because we regard it as the object of our will as pure rational beings.

The difference, then, between the laws of a nature to which *the [A 77] will is subject* and those of a *nature subject to a will*, insofar as that will relates to its free actions, rests on the following. In the former, objects must be causes of the representations that determine the will. In the latter, the will is to be the cause of the objects. Its causality therefore has its determining ground solely in the pure faculty of reason, which can for this reason also be called pure practical reason.

So these two problems are very different: how pure reason can *on the one hand* cognize objects *a priori*, and how it can *on the other hand* directly be a determining ground [AA V 45] of the will, that is, of a rational being's causality with regard to the reality of objects, merely through the thought of the universal validity of its own maxims as law.

The first belongs to the critique of pure speculative reason. It requires a prior explanation of how intuitions are possible *a priori*. Without intuitions no object at all can be given to us, and therefore none can be synthetically cognized. Its solution is that all these intuitions are only sensible. So they cannot make possible any speculative cognition extending beyond possible experience. Thus all principles of pure speculative reason accomplish nothing [A 78] beyond making experience possible, either of given objects or of objects that may be given without end but are never given completely.

The second belongs to the *critique* of practical reason. It requires no explanation of how objects of the faculty of desire are possible. That task remains with the critique of speculative reason as a problem of theoretical cognition of nature. It asks only how reason can determine the maxim of the will: whether it does so only through empirical representations as determining grounds, or whether pure reason too would be practical and a law of a possible natural order that cannot be cognized empirically at all. The possibility of such a supersensible nature, whose concept could also be the ground of its reality through our free will, requires no *a priori* intuition of an intelligible world. Such an intuition, being supersensible, would in this case be impossible for us. For the issue is only the determining ground of willing in its maxims: whether it is empirical or a concept of pure reason concerning their lawfulness in general, and how it can be the latter. Whether the will's causality is sufficient to make its objects real is left to the theoretical principles of reason to judge, as an investigation [A 79] of the possibility of the objects of willing. Intuition of these objects is therefore no part at all of the practical problem. What matters here is only the determination of the will and the determining ground of its maxim as a free will, not the outcome. For provided the *will* conforms to the law of pure reason, its *ability* to carry things out may be whatever [AA V 46] it is. A nature may or may not actually arise from these maxims for giving laws to a possible nature. None of this concerns the critique that investigates whether and how pure reason can be practical, that is, directly determine the will.

In this task, then, the critique can blamelessly—and indeed must—begin with pure practical laws and their reality. But instead of intuition, it takes as their basis the concept of their existence in the intelligible world, namely freedom. For this concept means nothing else. Those laws are possible only in relation to freedom of the will, but are necessary if freedom is presupposed. Or conversely, freedom is necessary because those laws are necessary as practical postulates. How this consciousness of moral laws—or, what amounts to the same thing, of freedom—is possible cannot be explained further. But their admissibility can certainly [A 80] be defended in the theoretical critique.

The *exposition* of the highest principle of practical reason is now complete. First, we have shown what it contains: that it stands on its own, entirely *a priori* and independently of empirical principles. Then we have shown how it differs from all other practical principles. With its *deduction*—justifying its objective and universal validity, and gaining insight into the possibility of such a synthetic proposition *a priori*—we cannot hope to succeed as well as we did with the principles of the pure theoretical understanding. For those referred to objects of possible experience, namely appearances. We could prove that these appearances can be *cognized* as objects of experience only by being brought under the categories in accordance with those laws. Consequently, all possible experience must conform to these laws. But I cannot follow that course in deducing the moral law. For it does not concern cognition of the character of objects that may somehow be given to reason from elsewhere. Instead, it concerns cognition insofar as it can become the ground of the existence of the objects themselves, and reason through it has causality in a rational being. [A 81] That is, it concerns pure reason considered as a faculty that directly determines the will.

But all human insight comes to an end once we reach fundamental forces [AA V 47] or fundamental faculties. Their possibility cannot be comprehended through anything else; yet neither may they be invented and assumed at will. So in the theoretical use of reason, only experience can justify our assuming them. But here, regarding the pure practical faculty of reason, even this substitute is unavailable: we cannot offer empirical proofs instead of a deduction from *a pri-*

ori sources of cognition. For something that needs experience to prove its reality must depend, in the grounds of its possibility, on principles of experience. But pure reason that is nevertheless practical cannot possibly be counted among such things, given its very concept. Moreover, the moral law is given, as it were, as a fact of pure reason. We are conscious of it *a priori*, and it is absolutely certain, even if experience could supply no example in which it was followed exactly. So the objective reality of the moral law cannot be proved by any deduction or by any effort of theoretical reason, whether speculative or empirically supported. Nor, even if [A 82] we gave up absolute certainty, could it be confirmed through experience and so proved *a posteriori*. Yet it stands firm on its own.

But something different and quite paradoxical takes the place of this vainly sought deduction of the moral principle. Conversely, that principle itself serves as the principle for deducing an inscrutable faculty: freedom. No experience can prove this faculty. Yet speculative reason had to assume it at least as possible, in order to find among its cosmological ideas the unconditioned in respect of its causality, and thus avoid contradicting itself. The moral law, which itself needs no grounds to justify it, proves not merely freedom's possibility but its reality in beings who recognize this law as binding on them. The moral law is in fact a law of causality through freedom, and thus of the possibility of a supersensible nature. Likewise, the metaphysical law of events in the sensible world was a law of the causality of sensible nature. So the moral law determines what speculative philosophy had to leave undetermined: the law for a causality whose concept in speculative philosophy was merely negative. It thereby first gives this concept objective reality.

[AA V 48] The moral law provides this kind of credential by itself being established as a [A 83] principle for deducing freedom as a causality of pure reason. Since theoretical reason was compelled at least to *assume* the possibility of freedom, this credential is completely sufficient to meet its need, in place of any justification *a priori*. For the moral law proves its reality in a way that also satisfies the critique of speculative reason. It adds a positive determination to a causality that was thought of only negatively, whose possibility speculative reason could

not comprehend and yet had to assume. This positive determination is the concept of a reason that directly determines the will through the condition of a universal lawful form of its maxims. In this way it can, for the first time, give objective, though only practical, reality to reason, which always went beyond its bounds with its ideas whenever it tried to proceed speculatively. It transforms reason's *transcendent* use into an *immanent* one: being, through ideas, itself an effective cause in the field of experience.

The determination of the causality of beings in the sensible world, as such, could never be unconditional. Yet for every series of conditions there must necessarily be something unconditioned, and thus also a causality that determines itself entirely on its own. So the [A 84] idea of freedom as a faculty of absolute spontaneity was not a need but, *as regards its possibility*, an analytic principle of pure speculative reason. But it is absolutely impossible to give an example of it in any experience. Among the causes of things as appearances, no determination of causality can be found that is absolutely unconditioned. So we could only *defend* the *thought* of a freely acting cause, when applying it to a being in the sensible world that is also considered, on another side, as a noumenon. We did so by showing that there is no contradiction in regarding all its actions as physically conditioned insofar as they are appearances, while also regarding their causality as physically unconditioned insofar as the acting being is a being of the understanding. In this way we made the concept of freedom a regulative principle of reason. Through it I do not cognize at all what the object to which this causality is attributed is. But I remove the obstacle: on the one hand, in explaining events in the world, including actions of rational [AA V 49] beings, I do justice to the mechanism of natural necessity, going back endlessly from the conditioned to its condition. On the other hand, I keep open for speculative reason the place that is empty [A 85] for it, namely the intelligible, in which to locate the unconditioned. But I could not *give reality* to this *thought*: I could not transform it into *cognition* of a being acting in this way, even merely as regards its possibility. Pure practical reason now fills this empty place with a determinate law of causality in an intelligible world through freedom: the moral law. This adds nothing to speculative reason's insight, but it does add to

the *security* of its problematic concept of freedom. This concept is here given *objective reality* that, although only practical, is nevertheless beyond doubt. Practical reason does not even expand the concept of causality so as to extend its use beyond those limits. Its application, and therefore its meaning, properly occurs only in relation to appearances, to connect them into experiences, as the Critique of Pure Reason proves. For if practical reason aimed to extend that use, it would have to show how the logical relation of ground and consequence could be used synthetically with a kind of intuition other than sensible intuition. That is, it would have to show how a *noumenal cause* is possible. This it cannot do at all. But as practical reason, it takes no account of that task either. It simply locates the *determining ground* of a human being's causality as a sensible being [A 86]—a causality that is given—in *pure reason*, which is therefore called practical. Thus it uses the concept of cause itself solely for a practical purpose: not to cognize objects, but to determine causality with regard to them in general. Here it can leave entirely aside the concept's application to objects for the purposes of theoretical cognition, because this concept is always found in the understanding *a priori*, independently of all intuition. It can therefore locate the will's determining ground in the intelligible order of things, while readily admitting that it does not understand at all what determination the concept of cause might have for cognizing these things. It must, of course, cognize in a determinate way causality with regard to the will's actions in the sensible world. Otherwise practical reason could not actually produce a deed. But it need not be able to determine theoretically the concept it forms of its own [AA V 50] causality as a noumenon, for the purpose of cognizing its supersensible existence, and thus give it meaning in that respect. For it acquires meaning anyway, though only for practical use, through the moral law. Even considered theoretically, it always remains a pure concept of the understanding, given *a priori*, that can be applied [A 87] to objects whether they are given sensibly or not. In the latter case, however, it has no determinate theoretical meaning or application. It is only a formal, yet essential, thought of the understanding concerning

an object in general. The meaning reason gives it through the moral law is solely practical: the idea of the law of a causality (the causality of the will) itself has causality, or is its determining ground.

II. The Right of Pure Reason in Its Practical Use to an Extension That Is Not Possible for It on Its Own in Its Speculative Use.

In the moral principle we have established a law of causality that places causality's determining ground beyond all conditions of the sensible world. We have not merely *thought* of the will as determinable through belonging to an intelligible world, and thus of the subject of this will, the human being, as belonging to a pure world of the understanding, though unknown to us in that respect. That much was possible according to the Critique of Pure Reason [A 88] Speculative Reason. We have also *determined* this subject with regard to its causality by means of a law that cannot be counted among any laws of nature in the sensible world. Thus we have *extended* our cognition beyond that world's limits, a presumption that the Critique of Pure Reason declared invalid in all speculation. How, then, can the practical use of pure reason here be reconciled with the theoretical use of this same reason as regards defining the limits of its power?

David Hume, who can be said to have really begun all the attacks on the rights of pure reason that made a complete investigation of it necessary, reasoned as follows. The concept of [AA V 51] *cause* contains the *necessity* of a connection between the existence of different things, precisely insofar as they are different. Thus, if *A* is posited, I cognize that something entirely different from it, *B*, must necessarily also exist. But necessity can be attributed to a connection only insofar as it is cognized *a priori*. For experience would let us cognize only that a connection exists, not that it necessarily exists in that way. Now, he says, it is impossible to cognize the connection between one thing and *another*, or between one determination and another entirely different from it, [A 89] *a priori* and as necessary, if they are not given in perception. So the very concept of a cause is false and deceptive. To put it as mildly as possible, it is an illusion that may still be excused to this extent: the *habit*, a *subjective* necessity, of frequently perceiving certain things or their determinations as existing together or in succession is imperceptibly taken for an *objective* necessity to posit such a connec-

tion in the objects themselves. Thus the concept of a cause is acquired by stealth, not legitimately, and can never be legitimately acquired or authenticated. For it requires a connection that is in itself empty and imaginary, that cannot stand before any reason, and to which no object could ever correspond.— Thus, for the first time, *empiricism* was introduced as the sole source of principles concerning all cognition that deals with the existence of things. Mathematics was therefore still exempt. But with it came the most extreme *skepticism*, even concerning the whole science of nature as philosophy. For according to such principles we can never *infer* a consequence from given determinations of things in respect of their existence. That would require the concept of a cause, which contains the necessity of such a connection. We can only expect similar cases as before, according to the [A 90] rule of the imagination. But this expectation is never certain, however often it may have been fulfilled. Indeed, of no event could we say that something *must* have preceded it on which it *necessarily* followed; that is, that it must have a *cause*. Even if we knew of very many cases where something of this sort came first, so that a rule could be drawn from them, we still could not assume that things always and necessarily happen in this way. We would therefore have to give blind chance its due as well, where all use of reason [AA V 52] ends. This firmly grounds skepticism concerning inferences that ascend from effects to causes and makes it irrefutable.

Mathematics had escaped unscathed so far because Hume thought all its propositions were analytic: they progressed from one determination to another on grounds of identity, and thus according to the principle of contradiction. But this is false, since they are all synthetic. Geometry, for example, deals not with the existence of things but only with their *a priori* determination in a possible intuition. Yet it still passes, just as causal concepts do, from one determination *A* to an entirely different one *B*, as nevertheless [A 91] necessarily connected with it. But eventually this science, so highly praised for its absolute certainty, must also succumb to *empiricism in principles*. The reason is the same one that led Hume to substitute habit for objective necessity in the concept of cause. Despite all its pride, mathematics must accept a lowering of its bold

claims that command assent *a priori*. It must await approval of the universal validity of its propositions from the goodwill of observers. As witnesses, they would not refuse to admit that they too had always perceived matters as the geometer presents them in principles. So, although it was not actually necessary, they would permit us to expect the same in the future. In this way Hume's empiricism in principles inevitably leads to skepticism even about mathematics, and therefore about all *scientific* theoretical use of reason, since this belongs either to philosophy or to mathematics. Will ordinary reason fare better amid such a terrible overthrow as we see befalling the leaders of cognition? Or will it instead be caught even more irretrievably in the same destruction of all knowledge? Must a *universal* skepticism not follow from the same principles, though it would admittedly [A 92] affect only the learned? I leave everyone to judge for themselves.

Now my treatment in the Critique of Pure Reason was prompted by Hume's doctrine of doubt, but went much further. It covered the entire field of pure theoretical reason in its synthetic use, and thus also what is generally called metaphysics. [AA V 53] Regarding the Scottish philosopher's doubts about the concept of causality, I proceeded as follows. If Hume took objects of experience to be *things in themselves*, as indeed happens almost everywhere, he was entirely right to declare the concept of cause deceptive and a false illusion. For with things in themselves and their determinations as such, we cannot see why, because something *A* is posited, something else *B* must necessarily also be posited. So he could not admit any such cognition *a priori* of things in themselves. Still less could this perceptive thinker allow an empirical origin for this concept. That directly contradicts the necessity of connection that forms the essence of the concept of causality. So the concept was outlawed, and habit in observing the course of perceptions took its place.

But my investigations showed that the objects [A 93] we deal with in experience are by no means things in themselves, but only appearances. With things in themselves we cannot see—and it is indeed impossible to see—how, if *A* is posited, it should be *contradictory* not to posit *B*, which is entirely different from *A*. This is the necessity of the connection between *A* as cause and *B* as

effect. Yet we can quite well think that, as appearances in *one experience*, they must be necessarily connected in certain ways, for example in their temporal relations. They cannot be separated without *contradicting* the connection through which this experience is possible, in which they are objects and alone can be cognized by us. This did in fact turn out to be the case. So I could not only prove the objective reality of the concept of cause with regard to objects of experience, but also *deduce* it as an *a priori* concept because of the necessity of connection it involves. That is, I could show its possibility from pure understanding without empirical sources. Having thus removed empiricism concerning its origin, I could eliminate at the root its inevitable consequence, skepticism: first regarding natural science, then also regarding mathematics, since exactly the same grounds yield exactly the same result. Both sciences refer to [A 94] objects of possible experience. In this way I could also eliminate the complete [AA V 54] doubt concerning everything theoretical reason claims to understand.

But what about applying this category of causality to things that are not objects of possible experience, but lie beyond its limits? The same question applies to all the other categories, since without them no cognition of what exists can be achieved. For I could deduce the objective reality of these concepts only with regard to *objects of possible experience*. But precisely this—that I rescued them even in this case alone, and showed that through them objects can at least be *thought*, though not determined *a priori*—gives them a place in the pure understanding. From there they are referred to objects in general, sensible or non-sensible. If anything is still missing, it is the condition for *applying* these categories, especially causality, to objects: intuition. Where intuition is not given, applying them *for theoretical cognition* of an object as noumenon is impossible. Any attempt at this is therefore completely forbidden, as it was in the Critique of Pure Reason. Yet the concept's objective reality always remains. It can also [A 95] be used of noumena, but without our being able to determine this concept theoretically in the slightest and thereby produce cognition. For it was proved that this concept contains nothing impossible, even in relation to an object, by securing its place in the pure understanding in all its application to objects of

the senses. Afterward, when referred to things in themselves, which cannot be objects of experience, it may be incapable of being determined so as to represent *a determinate object* for theoretical cognition. Yet it could still be capable of being determined for application to some other purpose, perhaps a practical one. This would not be so if, as Hume held, the concept of causality contained something entirely impossible to think.

To find this condition for applying that concept to noumena, we need only look back at *why we are not satisfied with applying it to objects of experience*, but would also like to use it of things in themselves. It soon becomes clear that what makes this necessary for us is a practical, not a theoretical, purpose. [AA V 55] For speculation, even if we succeeded, we would [A 96] gain nothing genuine in cognition of nature or of any objects that might be given to us. At most we would make a great leap from what is sensibly conditioned to the supersensible, in order to complete and limit our cognition on the side of its grounds. Yet we already have enough to do staying with the sensibly conditioned and diligently following the chain of causes. An infinite gulf would still remain unfilled between that limit and what we know. We would have listened to an idle urge to question rather than to a serious desire for knowledge.

But besides the relation in which the *understanding* stands to objects in theoretical cognition, it also has a relation to the faculty of desire, which for this reason is called the will. It is called the pure will insofar as the pure understanding, which in such a case is called reason, is practical through the mere representation of a law. The objective reality of a pure will, or what is the same thing, of pure practical reason, is given *a priori* in the moral law, as if through a fact. For that is what we may call a determination of the will that is unavoidable, though not based on empirical principles. But the concept of a will already contains the concept of causality. Thus the concept of a pure will contains that of a causality with freedom: one that cannot [A 97] be determined according to laws of nature, and so cannot have any empirical intuition as proof of its reality. Yet in the pure practical law it fully justifies its objective reality *a priori*, though, as is easy to see, not for the theoretical but only for the practical use of reason. Now the concept of a being with a free will is the concept of a *noumenal cause*. We

are already assured that this concept does not contradict itself. For the concept of a cause originates entirely in the pure understanding. The deduction also secures its objective reality with regard to objects in general. In its origin it is independent of all sensible conditions, and thus in itself is not restricted to phenomena, except where a determinate theoretical use is intended. It can therefore certainly be applied to things as pure beings of the understanding. But this application cannot be grounded in any intuition, since intuition can always be only sensible. So, regarding the theoretical use of reason, [AA V 56] a *noumenal cause* is a possible and thinkable, yet empty, concept. But I do not claim through it to *know theoretically* the character of a being *insofar as* it has a *pure* will. It is enough for me [A 98] simply to designate it as such a being, and thus only to connect the concept of causality with that of freedom, and inseparably with the moral law as its determining ground. I certainly have the right to do this because of the pure, nonempirical origin of the concept of cause. For I consider myself entitled to no use of it except in relation to the moral law that determines its reality: only a practical use.

If, with Hume, I had denied the concept of causality objective reality in theoretical use not only regarding things in themselves, the supersensible, but also regarding objects of the senses, it would have lost all meaning. It would have been declared completely useless as a theoretically impossible concept. Since no use can be made of nothing, the practical use of a *theoretically void* concept would have been completely absurd. But as matters stand, the concept of an empirically unconditioned causality is theoretically empty, lacking an appropriate intuition, yet remains possible and refers to an undetermined object. Instead, it is given meaning through the moral law, and thus in a practical respect. So although I have no intuition that would determine its objective theoretical reality, it nevertheless has an actual [A 99] application that can be presented *concretely* in dispositions or maxims. That is, it has a practical reality that can be exhibited, and this is sufficient to justify it even regarding noumena.

Once this objective reality of a pure concept of the understanding has been introduced into the field of the supersensible, it also gives objective reality to all the other categories, though always only insofar as they stand in a *necessary* con-

nection with the determining ground of the pure will, the moral law. This reality is applicable only practically. It has not the slightest influence toward expanding theoretical cognition of these objects, as insight through pure reason into their nature. As we will also find later, these categories always refer only to beings as *intelligences*, and even in them only to the relation of *reason* to [AA V 57] *will*, thus always only to the *practical*. They claim no cognition of these beings beyond that. Any other properties that might be brought in along with them, belonging to the theoretical way of representing such supersensible things, must all then be counted not as knowledge but only as things we are entitled—and for practical purposes even required—to assume and presuppose. This holds even when we assume supersensible [A 100] beings, such as God, by analogy: that is, according to the pure relation of reason that we use practically regarding sensible beings. In this way, applying pure theoretical reason to the supersensible, but only for practical purposes, gives it not the slightest encouragement toward fanatical flights beyond its bounds.

Of the Analytic of Practical Reason

- ⁷ Propositions called *practical* in mathematics or natural science should properly be called *technical*. For these disciplines are not concerned with determining the will at all. They only indicate the variety of possible action sufficient to produce a certain effect. So they are just as theoretical as all propositions stating the connection of a cause with an effect. Anyone who wants the latter must also accept being the former.

Book I, Chapter II: The concept of an object of pure practical reason



Chapter II. The Concept of an Object of Pure Practical Reason.

By the concept of an object of practical reason, I mean the representation of an object as a possible effect through freedom. To be an object of practical cognition as such therefore means only that the will relates to the action that would make the object or its opposite actual. Judging whether something is an object of *pure* practical reason means only distinguishing whether it is possible or impossible to *will* the action through which a certain object would become actual if we had the capacity to bring it about. Experience must judge whether we have that capacity. [A 101] If the object is assumed to be the determining ground of our faculty of desire, its *physical possibility* through the free use of our powers must be established before we judge whether it is an object of practical reason. But suppose the law can be regarded *a priori* as the action's determining ground, and the action therefore as determined by pure practical reason. Then judging whether something is an object of pure practical reason is entirely independent of comparison with our physical [AA V 58] capacity. The only question is whether we may *will* an action directed toward an object's exis-

tence, if it were within our power. The action's *moral possibility* must therefore come first. For here the determining ground of the action is not the object, but the law of the will.

The only objects of practical reason, then, are *good* and *evil*. For the former means a necessary object of the faculty of desire, the latter a necessary object of the faculty of aversion, in both cases according to a principle of reason.

Suppose the concept of good is not to be derived from a prior practical law, but instead to serve as its basis. Then it can only be the concept of something whose existence promises pleasure [A 102] and so determines the subject's causality toward producing it—that is, the faculty of desire. But it is impossible to understand *a priori* which representation will be accompanied by *pleasure* and which by *displeasure*. So experience alone would decide what is directly good or evil. The property of the subject to which alone this experience can relate is the *feeling* of pleasure and displeasure, a receptivity belonging to inner sense. Thus the concept of what is directly good would concern only what is directly connected with the sensation of *enjoyment*. The concept of absolute evil would have to concern only what directly causes *pain*. But this already conflicts with ordinary language. It distinguishes the *agreeable* from the *good*, and the *disagreeable* from *evil*. It requires good and evil always to be judged through reason, and so through universally communicable concepts, rather than through mere sensation, which is restricted to individual subjects and their receptivity. Yet pleasure or displeasure cannot in itself be directly connected *a priori* with any representation of an object. So a philosopher who thought he had to base his practical judgment on a feeling of pleasure [A 103] would call *good* whatever is a *means* to the agreeable, and *evil* whatever causes discomfort and pain. For judging the relation of means to ends certainly belongs to reason. Reason alone can indeed understand the connection of means with their purposes. We might even define the will as the [AA V 59] capacity for ends, since ends are always determining grounds of the faculty of desire according to principles. Yet practical maxims following from the above concept of good merely as a means would never make anything good in itself an object of the will. They would always make it good only *for something*. The good would always be merely the

useful, and what it is useful for would always have to lie outside the will, in sensation. Now if this agreeable sensation had to be distinguished from the concept of good, there would be nothing directly good at all. We would have to seek the good only in means to something else, namely some agreeable experience.

There is an old formula of the schools: *We desire nothing except under the aspect of good; we avoid nothing except under the aspect of evil*. Its use is often correct, but also often very harmful to philosophy. For the expressions *good* and *evil* contain an ambiguity [A 104] caused by the limitations of the language. Each can have two meanings. This inevitably puts practical laws on an uncertain footing. Philosophy may clearly recognize the difference between the concepts in its use of the same word, yet be unable to find separate expressions for them. It is then forced into subtle distinctions on which agreement cannot later be reached, because no suitable expression could directly mark the difference.⁸

German fortunately has expressions that keep this distinction in view. For what the Latins call by the single word *bonum*, it has two very different concepts and equally different expressions: for *bonum*, the *morally good* and *well-being*. For *malum* it has *moral evil* and *ill-being* or *suffering*. So [AA V 60] it involves two quite different judgments whether, in considering an action [A 105], we look at its *moral good* and *evil* or at our *well-being* and *suffering* (ill-being). This already shows that the psychological proposition above is at least very uncertain if translated as: we desire nothing except with regard to our *well-being* or *suffering*. By contrast, it is unquestionably certain and entirely clear if stated as: under reason's direction, we will nothing except insofar as we consider it good or evil.

Well-being or *ill-being* always means only a relation to our state of *comfort* or *discomfort*, enjoyment and pain. If we desire or avoid an object on that account, we do so only in relation to our sensibility and the feeling of pleasure or displeasure it produces. But *good* or *evil* always means a relation to the *will*, insofar as it is determined by the *law of reason* to make something its object. The will is never determined directly by the object and its representation. It is instead a capacity to make a rule of reason the motive for an action through which an

object can become actual. Good or evil therefore properly refers to actions, not to a person's state of feeling. If something is to be, or be considered, absolutely good or evil—in every respect and without [A 106] any further condition—only the way of acting, the will's maxim, and thus the acting person as a good or evil human being could be called that, not a thing.

So people may laugh all they like at the Stoic who, suffering the most violent gout pains, cried out: "Pain, however much you torture me, I will never admit that you are something evil (*κακον*, *malum*)!" Yet he was right. It was an ill: he felt that, and his cries revealed it. But he had no reason to admit that moral evil therefore attached to him. For pain does not lessen his value as a person at all, only the value of his condition. A single lie of which he was aware would have had to crush his spirit. Pain, however, only gave him occasion to raise his spirits, if he was aware that he had not brought it on himself by any wrongful action and thus made himself deserving of punishment.

What we are to call good must, in every rational person's judgment [AA V 61], be an object of the faculty of desire. Evil must be an object of aversion in everyone's eyes. So this judgment requires reason as well as sense. This applies to [A 107] truthfulness as opposed to lying, to justice as opposed to violence, and so on. But we can call something an ill that everyone must also declare good, sometimes indirectly, sometimes even directly. Someone who undergoes surgery undoubtedly feels it as an ill. But through reason, both that person and everyone else declare it good. Now suppose someone who likes to harass and disturb peaceful people finally meets their match and receives a sound beating. That is certainly an ill, yet everyone approves and considers it good in itself, even if nothing further results from it. Even the person receiving it must recognize in his reason that he is being treated justly. For he sees the proportion between well-being and good conduct, which reason inevitably holds before him, being put into exact practice here.

Our well-being and suffering certainly matter *a great deal* in the judgment of our practical reason. As far as our nature as sensible beings is concerned, *everything* depends on our *happiness*, provided that happiness is judged, as reason especially requires, not by a passing sensation but by the influence this contin-

gent circumstance has on our whole existence and our satisfaction with it. [A 108] Yet *not everything without exception* depends on it. Human beings have needs insofar as they belong to the world of sense. To that extent, their reason certainly has an unavoidable assignment from sensibility: to attend to its interests and form practical maxims concerning happiness in this life and, if possible, in a future one. But a human being is not so completely an animal as to be indifferent to everything reason says on its own, using it merely as a tool to satisfy needs as a sensible being. For possessing reason does not raise humans in value above mere animality if it serves only to do what instinct does for animals. It would then be merely a special method nature had used to equip humans for the same end for which it destined animals, without destining humans for a higher end [AA V 62]. Given the arrangement nature has made for them, humans do indeed need reason always to consider their well-being and suffering. But they also have it for a higher purpose: to take into account what is good or evil in itself, which only pure reason, with no interest in sense, can judge. And they have it not merely to take this into account, but to distinguish this judgment completely [A 109] from the former one and make it the supreme condition of that judgment.

Judging what is good and evil in itself, as distinct from what can be called so only in relation to well-being or ill-being, involves the following points. Either a principle of reason is already thought in itself as the will's determining ground, without regard to possible objects of the faculty of desire, and thus merely through the maxim's lawgiving form. In that case, the principle is a practical law *a priori*, and pure reason is assumed to be practical on its own. The law then determines the will *directly*. The action that conforms to it is *good in itself*. A will whose maxim always conforms to this law is *absolutely good in every respect*, and is the *supreme condition of everything good*. Or else a determining ground of the faculty of desire precedes the will's maxim. This presupposes an object of pleasure or displeasure, and thus something that *pleases* or *hurts*. Reason's maxim of promoting the former and avoiding the latter then determines actions as good in relation to our inclination, and therefore only indirectly—as means to some other end. Such maxims can never be called laws,

though they can be called rational practical precepts. In the latter case, the end itself, the enjoyment [A 110] we seek, is not a *moral good* but a *form of well-being*. It is not a concept of reason, but an empirical concept of an object of sensation. Yet using the means to it—that is, the action—is still called good, because it requires rational consideration. It is not absolutely good, however, but only good in relation to our sensibility and its feeling of pleasure and displeasure. The will whose maxim is affected by this is not a pure will, directed only toward that in which pure reason can be practical on its own.

This is the place to explain the paradox in the method of a critique of practical reason: *the concept of [AA V 63] good and evil must be determined not before the moral law, though it seems that it ought even to provide the law's basis, but only after it and through it, as is done here*. Even if we did not know that the principle of morality is a pure law determining the will *a priori*, we would still have to avoid assuming principles without any justification. We would have to leave it at least initially *undecided* whether the will has only empirical determining grounds or also pure ones *a priori*. For it violates every basic rule of philosophical procedure to assume in advance [A 111] that the very question to be decided has already been settled. Suppose we wanted to begin with the concept of good and derive the laws of the will from it. This concept of an object as good would also identify that object as the will's sole determining ground. Since the concept had no practical law *a priori* as its standard, the touchstone of good or evil could only be the object's agreement with our feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Reason's use could consist only in determining, first, this pleasure or displeasure in its overall connection with all the sensations of my existence, and second, the means of obtaining its object. Now only experience can establish what accords with the feeling of pleasure. Yet the practical law would supposedly have to rest on this as its condition. That would directly rule out the possibility of practical laws *a priori*. This is because people thought it necessary first to find an object for the will whose concept, as something good, must supply the will's universal, though empirical, determining ground. But what needed to be investigated first was whether the will also has an *a priori* determining ground. Such a ground could never have been found anywhere except

in a pure practical [A 112] law, insofar as it prescribes to maxims the mere form of law, without regard to an object. Instead, an object conceived as good or evil was already made the basis of every practical law. Without a prior law, that object could only be thought through empirical concepts. So people had already deprived themselves in advance of even the possibility of thinking a pure practical law. Had they [AA V 64] first investigated that law analytically, they would instead have found that the concept of good as an object does not determine the moral law. Rather, the moral law first determines and makes possible the concept of good, insofar as it deserves that name without qualification. This observation concerns only the method of investigating the highest moral questions, but it is important. It explains at once what caused all the philosophers' errors about morality's supreme principle. For they searched for an object of the will to make it the content and basis of a law. That law would then determine the will not directly, but through the object brought into relation with the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. Instead, they should first have searched [A 113] for a law that determined the will directly and *a priori*, and only then determined the object in conformity with that will. Whether they placed this object of pleasure, which was supposed to supply the supreme concept of good, in happiness, perfection, moral feeling, or God's will, their principle was always heteronomy. They inevitably encountered empirical conditions for a moral law. For they could call their object, as the will's direct determining ground, good or evil only according to its direct relation to feeling, which is always empirical. Only a formal law can be a determining ground of practical reason *a priori*: a law prescribing to reason nothing but the form of its universal lawgiving as the supreme condition of maxims. The ancients openly revealed this error by making their moral investigation entirely a matter of determining the concept of the *highest good*. This was an object they then intended to make the will's determining ground in the moral law. But such an object can be presented to the will only much later, once the moral law has been independently established and justified as the will's direct determining ground, and the will has thus been determined *a priori* as to its form. We will attempt this in [A 114] the Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason. Among modern philosophers, the

question of the highest good seems to have fallen out of use, or at least become secondary. As in many other cases, they hide the same error behind vague words [AA V 65]. Yet it can still be seen in their systems, where it always reveals heteronomy of practical reason. From this, a moral law commanding universally *a priori* can never arise.

As consequences of the will's determination *a priori*, the concepts of good and evil also presuppose a pure practical principle, and therefore a causality of pure reason. They therefore do not originally refer to objects, as the pure concepts of understanding or categories of reason in its theoretical use do—for example, as determinations of the synthetic unity of the manifold of given intuitions in one consciousness. Rather, they presuppose these objects as given. They are all *modes* of a single category, causality, insofar as its determining ground consists in reason's representation of a law of causality. Reason gives itself this law as a law of freedom and thereby proves itself practical *a priori*. Now actions [A 115], *on the one hand*, fall under a law that is not a law of nature but a law of freedom, and thus belong to the conduct of intelligible beings. *On the other hand*, as events in the world of sense, they also belong to appearances. So the determinations of practical reason can occur only in relation to the latter, and thus in conformity with the categories of understanding. But their purpose is not a theoretical use of understanding, bringing the manifold of sensible *intuition* under one consciousness *a priori*. It is only to subject the manifold of *desires a priori* to the unity of consciousness of a practical reason commanding in the moral law, or of a pure will.

These *categories of freedom*, as we will call them in contrast to the theoretical concepts as categories of nature, have an obvious advantage over the latter. The categories of nature are only forms of thought. Through universal concepts they designate objects in general only indeterminately, for any intuition possible for us. The categories of freedom, by contrast, concern the determination of a *free power of choice*. No fully corresponding intuition can be given for it, but it rests on a pure practical law *a priori*, something no concept in the theoretical use of our cognitive faculty does. So, as elementary practical concepts, they have as their given basis not the form of intuition [A 116], space and time,

which does not lie in reason itself and must be taken from elsewhere [AA V 66], namely sensibility. Instead, they have the *form of a pure will* within reason, and thus within the capacity for thought itself. All the precepts of pure practical reason concern only the *determination of the will*, not the natural conditions, belonging to practical capacity, for *carrying out its purpose*. As a result, practical concepts *a priori*, in relation to the supreme principle of freedom, immediately become cognitions. They need not wait for intuitions to acquire meaning. The remarkable reason is that they themselves produce the actuality of what they refer to—the will’s disposition—which theoretical concepts do not do at all. We must note, however, that these categories concern only practical reason in general. In their order they therefore proceed from what is still morally undetermined and sensibly conditioned to what is sensibly unconditioned and determined solely by the moral law.

Table [A 117]

of the categories of freedom in relation to the concepts of good and evil.

1.

Quantity

- Subjective, according to maxims (the individual’s *intentions of will*)

Objective, according to principles (*precepts*)

A priori principles of freedom that are both objective and subjective (*laws*).

2.

Quality

- Practical rules of *doing* (*prescriptive*)

Practical rules of *not doing* (*prohibitive*)

Practical rules of *exceptions* (*exceptive*).

3.

Relation

- To *personality*

To the person’s *condition*

Reciprocally, of one person to the condition of another.

4.

Modality

- The *permitted* and *forbidden*
Duty and *what is contrary to duty*
Perfect and *imperfect duty*.

[AA V 67] It is easy to see that this table considers freedom as a [A 118] kind of causality that is not subject to empirical determining grounds, with regard to the actions it makes possible as appearances in the world of sense. It therefore relates to the categories of their natural possibility. Yet each category is taken so generally that the determining ground of that causality can also be assumed outside the world of sense, in freedom as a property of an intelligible being. Finally, the categories of modality introduce the transition from practical principles in general to moral principles, though only *problematically*. Only afterward, through the moral law, can these be presented *dogmatically*.

I add no further explanation of this table, since it is clear enough on its own. A classification of this kind, drawn up according to principles, greatly benefits every science in both thoroughness and clarity. For example, the table's first item immediately shows where practical considerations must begin: with maxims that each person bases on inclination; then precepts valid for a class of rational beings insofar as they share certain inclinations; and finally the law valid for all, regardless of their inclinations, and so on. In [A 119] this way we can survey the whole plan of what must be accomplished, including every question practical philosophy must answer and the order to follow.

The typic of pure practical judgment.

The concepts of good and evil first determine an object for the will. But they themselves fall under a practical rule of reason. If reason is pure, this rule determines the will *a priori* with regard to its object. Practical judgment is needed to decide whether an action possible for us in sensibility is a case falling under the rule. Through it, what the rule says generally, *in the abstract*, is applied to an action *in the concrete*. But a practical rule of pure reason, *first*, as something *practical*, concerns the existence of an object. *Second*, as a *practical rule* of pure reason, it carries necessity concerning the action's existence. It is therefore a practical law [AA V 68], not a law of nature operating through empirical determining grounds, but a law of freedom. According to it, the will is to be deter-

minable [A 120] independently of everything empirical, merely through the representation of a law in general and its form. Yet every actual case of a possible action can only be empirical, belonging to experience and nature. So it seems absurd to look in the world of sense for a case which, though always subject as such only to natural law, still allows a law of freedom to be applied to it, and to which the supersensible idea of moral good, which is to be presented there *concretely*, could be applied. The judgment of pure practical reason thus faces the same difficulties as that of pure theoretical reason. The latter, however, had a means of escaping them. Its theoretical use concerned intuitions to which pure concepts of understanding could be applied. Such intuitions, though only of objects of the senses, can still be given *a priori*. So far as the connection of their manifold is concerned, they can therefore be given *a priori* in conformity with pure concepts of understanding, as *schemata*. Moral good, by contrast, is supersensible as to its object. Nothing corresponding to it can therefore be found in any sensible intuition. Judgment under laws of pure practical reason thus seems to face special difficulties. They arise because a law of freedom is to be applied to actions as events occurring in the [A 121] world of sense, and thus belonging to nature in that respect.

Yet a favorable prospect again opens up for pure practical judgment here. When an action possible for me in the world of sense is subsumed under a *pure practical law*, the question is not the possibility of the *action* as an event in that world. For that question belongs to the judging of reason's theoretical use according to the law of causality, a pure concept of understanding for which reason has a *schema* in sensible intuition. Physical causality, or the condition under which it occurs, belongs among concepts of nature whose schema is drawn up by the transcendental imagination. But here we are concerned not with the schema of a case under laws, but with the schema—if the word is suitable here—of a law itself. For the *determination of the will* [AA V 69] (not the action in relation to its result) by the law alone, without another determining ground, binds the concept of causality to conditions entirely different from those constituting natural connections.

A natural law, as a law to which objects of sensible intuition as such are subject, must have a corresponding schema. This is a general [A 122] procedure of the imagination for presenting *a priori* to the senses the pure concept of understanding specified by the law. But no intuition, and therefore no schema for applying it *concretely*, can underlie the law of freedom, as a causality not conditioned by sense at all. The same holds for the concept of the unconditionally good. Consequently, the moral law has no cognitive faculty to mediate its application to objects of nature except understanding, not imagination. Understanding can supply an idea of reason not with a *schema* of sensibility, but with a law. This must still be a law that can be presented *concretely* in objects of the senses: a law of nature, but only as to its form as a law, for the purposes of judgment. We can therefore call it the *type* of the moral law.

The rule of judgment under laws of pure practical reason is this: ask yourself whether, if your proposed action were to occur according to a law of nature of which you yourself were a part, you could regard it as possible through your will. In fact, everyone uses this rule to judge whether actions are morally good or evil. People say: what if *everyone*, whenever [A 123] they thought it would benefit them, allowed themselves to cheat? Or considered themselves entitled to cut their life short as soon as they became completely tired of it? Or viewed others' distress with complete indifference? If you belonged to such an order of things, could you be in it with your will's consent? Now everyone knows that secretly allowing oneself to cheat does not mean everyone else does it too. Nor does being unkind without being noticed mean everyone will immediately be unkind to oneself. So comparing the maxim of one's actions with a universal law of nature is not the determining ground of one's will. Yet such a law is a *type* for judging that maxim according to moral principles. If the maxim of an action cannot pass the test supplied by the form of a [AA V 70] law of nature in general, it is morally impossible. Even the most ordinary understanding judges this way. For natural law always underlies all its most usual judgments, including judgments of experience. It therefore always has this law at hand. But where causality through freedom is to be judged, it makes the *law of nature*

merely the type of a *law of freedom*. Without something at hand that it could make an example in a case of experience, it could not give a law of pure practical reason a use in application.

So it is also permissible to use the *nature of the world of sense* as the *type* [A 124] of an *intelligible nature*, as long as I do not transfer intuitions and what depends on them to it, but relate to it only the *form of lawfulness* in general. Its concept occurs even in reason's most ordinary use, but it can be determinately cognized *a priori* only for reason's pure practical use, and for no other purpose. For laws as such are identical in this respect, wherever they take their determining grounds from.

Of everything intelligible, absolutely nothing has reality for us except freedom, through the moral law, and freedom only insofar as it is an assumption inseparable from that law. Any further intelligible objects to which reason might lead us under that law's guidance likewise have reality for us only for the purposes of the same law and the use of pure practical reason. Yet practical reason is entitled, and indeed required, to use nature, in its pure form of understanding, as a type for judgment. This observation therefore serves to prevent what belongs merely to the *typic* of concepts from being counted as part of the concepts themselves. As a typic of judgment, it guards against the *empiricism* of practical reason. That empiricism places the practical concepts [A 125] of good and evil merely in consequences experienced—in so-called happiness. Happiness and the endlessly beneficial consequences of a will determined by self-love, if that will also made itself a universal law of nature, can indeed serve as a fully suitable type of moral good. But they are not identical with it. The same typic also guards against the *mysticism* of practical reason, which turns what served only as a *symbol* into a *schema* [AA V 71]. It bases the application of moral concepts on actual yet nonsensible intuitions of an invisible kingdom of God, and wanders beyond all bounds. Only the *rationalism* of judgment suits the use of moral concepts. It takes from sensible nature nothing beyond what pure reason can also think on its own: lawfulness. And it carries into supersensible nature nothing except what can, in turn, actually be presented through actions in the world of sense according to the formal rule of a law of nature in general. Still,

guarding against the *empiricism* of practical reason is much more important and advisable, because *mysticism* remains compatible with the purity and loftiness of the moral law. Besides, straining one's imagination toward supersensible [A 126] intuitions is not especially natural or suited to ordinary thought, so the danger on that side is not so widespread. Empiricism, by contrast, uproots morality in dispositions. Yet it is there, and not merely in actions, that the high value lies which humanity can and should acquire through morality. Empiricism replaces duty with something entirely different: an empirical interest, through which inclinations trade with one another. Moreover, for that very reason it joins forces with all inclinations. Whatever form these take, they degrade humanity when raised to the dignity of a supreme practical principle. Yet they appeal so strongly to everyone's way of feeling. This makes empiricism far more dangerous than any fanaticism, which can never become a lasting condition for large numbers of people.

- 8 Moreover, the expression *under the aspect of good* is itself ambiguous. For it can mean that we represent something as good if and *because we desire* or will it. But it can also mean that we desire something *because we represent it as good*. So either desire determines the concept of the object as good, or the concept of good determines desire, or the will. In the first case, *under the aspect of good* would mean that we will something *under the idea* of good. In the second, it would mean that we will it *as a consequence of this idea*, which must precede willing as its determining ground.

Book I, Chapter III: The incentives of pure practical reason



Chapter III. The Incentives of Pure Practical Reason.

What is essential to all moral worth in actions is *that the moral law determine the will directly*. Suppose the will is determined *in conformity with* the moral law, but only through a feeling, of whatever kind, that [A 127] must be presupposed to make the law a sufficient determining ground of the will. If the will is thus not determined *for the sake of the law*, the action will have *legality*, but not *morality*. Now [AA V 72] by an *incentive* (*elater animi*) we mean the subjective determining ground of the will of a being whose reason does not, by its nature, already conform necessarily to the objective law. It follows, first, that we cannot attribute any incentives to the divine will. But the incentive of the human will, and that of every created rational being, can never be anything other than the moral law. So the objective determining ground must always, entirely on its own, also be the subjectively sufficient determining ground of the action, if the action is not merely to fulfill the *letter* of the law without its *spirit*.⁹

We must therefore not seek another incentive on behalf of the moral law to give it influence over the will, one that could make the law's own incentive unnecessary. All that [A 128] would produce is hollow, unstable pretense. It is even *questionable* to let other incentives, such as advantage, cooperate *alongside* the moral law. So all that remains is to determine carefully how the moral law becomes an incentive, and what happens to the human faculty of desire as an effect of this determining ground when it does so. For how a law can by itself directly determine the will—which is essential to all morality—is a problem human reason cannot solve. It is the same problem as how a free will is possible. We therefore have to show *a priori* not why the moral law itself supplies an incentive, but what effect it has—or, better, must have—on the mind insofar as it is an incentive.

What is essential to every determination of the will by the moral law is that, as a free will, it be determined by the law alone. This means not merely without the cooperation of sensible impulses, but even while rejecting all of them and restraining every inclination insofar as it might conflict with that law. To this extent, the effect of the moral law as an incentive is merely negative, and as such this incentive can be cognized *a priori*. For every inclination and every sensible impulse rests on [A 129] [AA V 73] feeling, and a negative effect on feeling, through the restraint of inclinations, is itself a feeling. We can therefore understand *a priori* that the moral law, as the will's determining ground, must produce a feeling that can be called pain, because it interferes with all our inclinations. Here we have the first, perhaps the only, case where we could determine from *a priori* concepts the relation of a cognition—here, one belonging to pure practical reason—to the feeling of pleasure or displeasure. All inclinations together, which can also be brought into a tolerable system whose satisfaction is then called personal happiness, constitute *self-centeredness* (*solipsismus*). This is either *self-love*, a *goodwill* toward oneself that takes precedence over everything (*Philautia*), or *self-satisfaction* (*Arrogantia*). The former is specifically called *love of self*, the latter *self-conceit*. Pure practical reason merely *restricts* love of self. Since it is natural and active in us even before the moral law, reason limits it only to the condition of agreeing with that law. It is then called *rational*

self-love. But reason *strikes* self-conceit *down* altogether. For all claims to self-esteem preceding agreement with the moral law are null [A 130] and completely unwarranted. Certainty of a disposition agreeing with that law is the first condition of any personal worth, as we will soon make clearer. Any pretension before that is false and contrary to law. Now the tendency toward self-esteem belongs among the inclinations the moral law restrains, insofar as that self-esteem rests merely on sensibility. So the moral law strikes down self-conceit. Yet the law is itself something positive: the form of an intellectual causality, or freedom. As it *weakens* self-conceit in opposition to its subjective counterpart, the inclinations in us, it is at the same time an object of *respect*. As it even *strikes down*, or humiliates, self-conceit, it is an object of the greatest *respect*. It is therefore also the ground of a positive feeling that is not empirical in origin and is cognized *a priori*. Respect for the moral law is thus a feeling produced by an intellectual ground. It is the only feeling we can cognize completely *a priori* and whose necessity we can understand.

[AA V 74] In the previous chapter we saw that the moral law, as the supreme condition of practical reason, [A 131] excludes everything presenting itself as an object of the will *before* that law from being a determining ground of the will under the name of unconditional good. We also saw that the mere practical form, consisting in maxims' fitness for universal lawgiving, first determines what is good in itself and without qualification, and grounds the maxim of a pure will, which alone is good in every respect. But we find that our nature as sensible beings is such that the matter of the faculty of desire—objects of inclination, whether of hope or fear—presses itself on us first. Our self, insofar as it can be determined by feeling, is completely unfit through its maxims for universal lawgiving. Yet it strives to assert its claims beforehand as the first and original claims, just as if it constituted our whole self. This tendency to make oneself, according to the subjective determining grounds of one's choice, the objective determining ground of the will in general can be called *self-love*. When it makes itself lawgiving and an unconditional practical principle, it can be called *self-conceit*. Now the moral law, which alone is truly objective, that is, objective in every respect, completely excludes self-love's influence on the supreme prac-

tical principle. It infinitely restricts self-conceit, which prescribes self-love's subjective conditions as laws. Whatever restricts our self-conceit in our own judgment humiliates us. So [A 132] the moral law inevitably humiliates every human being who compares the sensible tendency of their nature with it. That whose representation *as a determining ground of our will* humiliates us in our self-consciousness awakens *respect* for itself insofar as it is positive and a determining ground. The moral law is therefore also subjectively a ground of respect. Everything found in self-love belongs to inclination, and every inclination rests on feelings. Whatever restricts all inclinations together in self-love must therefore affect feeling. So we can understand how it is possible to see *a priori* that the moral law can have an effect on feeling. It excludes inclinations and the tendency to make them the supreme practical condition—that is, self-love—from any participation in supreme lawgiving. The effect [AA V 75] is merely *negative* on one side, but *positive* on the other, with regard to the restricting ground of pure practical reason. No special kind of feeling called practical or moral need be assumed to precede the moral law and serve as its basis.

The negative effect on feeling, the discomfort, is *pathological*, as is [A 133] every influence on feeling and every feeling in general. But this feeling is an effect of consciousness of the moral law. It therefore relates to an intelligible cause: the subject of pure practical reason as supreme lawgiver. In a rational subject affected by inclinations, it is called humiliation, or intellectual contempt. Yet in relation to its positive ground, the law, it is also respect for that law. No feeling for the law is present as such. Rather, reason judges that removing a hindrance, by clearing away resistance, is equivalent to positively promoting causality. That is why this feeling can also be called a feeling of respect for the moral law, and, on both grounds together, a *moral feeling*.

Through pure practical reason, the moral law is the formal determining ground of an action. It is also the material, though only objective, determining ground of the action's objects under the names of good and evil. In the same way it is the subjective determining ground, or incentive, for that action. For it influences the subject's sensibility and produces a feeling that promotes the law's

influence on the will. Here [A 134] no feeling attuned to morality *precedes* the law in the subject. That is impossible, since every feeling is sensible, whereas the incentive of a moral disposition must be free of every sensible condition. Instead, the sensible feeling underlying all our inclinations is indeed the condition of the sensation we call respect. But the cause that determines it lies in pure practical reason. Because of its origin, this sensation therefore cannot be called pathological, but must be called *practically produced*. This is because the representation of the moral law deprives self-love of its influence and self-conceit of its delusion. It thus reduces the hindrance to pure practical reason. By removing the counterweight, it produces in reason's judgment a representation of the superiority [AA V 76] of its objective law over the impulses of sensibility, and thus the relative weight of that law with regard to a will affected by sensibility. So respect for the law is not an incentive to morality. It is morality itself, considered subjectively as an incentive. By rejecting every claim of self-love opposed to it, pure practical reason gives authority to the law, which now alone has influence. We must note here that respect is an effect on feeling, and thus on [A 135] a rational being's sensibility. It therefore presupposes this sensibility and consequently the finitude of the beings on whom the moral law imposes respect. Respect for the *law* cannot be attributed to a supreme being, or to any being free of all sensibility, for which sensibility could therefore pose no hindrance to practical reason.

This feeling, called moral feeling, is thus produced solely by reason. It does not serve to judge actions, much less to ground the objective moral law itself. It serves only as an incentive to make that law one's maxim. But what name could be more suitable for this unusual feeling, which cannot be compared with any pathological feeling? It is so distinctive that it seems to be at the command of reason alone, specifically pure practical reason.

Respect always concerns persons, never things. Things can awaken *inclination* in us, and animals such as horses and dogs can even awaken *love*. Things can also awaken *fear*, as the sea, a volcano, or a predator does, but never *respect*. Something closer to this feeling is *admiration*. As an emotion, wonder, it can also concern things: for example, mountains reaching into the sky, the size [A

136], number, and vast distances of heavenly bodies, the strength and speed of certain animals, and so on. But none of this is respect. A human being can also be an object of love, fear, or admiration, even to the point of wonder, without thereby being an object of respect. A person's sense of humor, courage and strength, or power arising from rank among others can inspire such feelings in me. Yet inward respect for that person is still missing. *Fontenelle* says: "*I bow before a person of rank, but my mind [AA V 77] does not bow.*" I can add: before a humble, ordinary citizen in whom I perceive an integrity of character to a degree I am not conscious of possessing myself, *my mind bows*. It does so whether I want it to or not, however high I hold my head to keep him from overlooking my superior position. Why? His example holds before me a law that strikes down my self-conceit when I compare it with my conduct. I see its observance, and thus its *practicability*, proved before me in fact. I may even be conscious of an equal degree of integrity, yet the respect remains. For all human goodness is always imperfect. So the law, made visible through [A 137] an example, always strikes down my pride. The person before me supplies a standard for this. I do not know whatever impurity may still attach to him as I know my own, so he appears to me in a purer light. *Respect* is a *tribute* we cannot refuse to merit, whether we want to or not. We may withhold its outward expression, but we cannot prevent ourselves from feeling it inwardly.

Respect is so *far* from being a feeling of *pleasure* that we are reluctant to give ourselves over to it toward another person. We look for something that might ease its burden, some fault to compensate us for the humiliation such an example causes. Even the dead are not always safe from this criticism, especially when their example seems beyond imitation. Even the moral law itself in its *solemn majesty* is exposed to this effort to resist respect for it. Can anyone think there is another reason why people like to lower it to the level of a familiar inclination? Or that all their efforts to turn it into the favored prescription of their own well-understood advantage have some other cause than the wish to get rid of an intimidating respect that so [A 138] sternly confronts them with their own unworthiness? Yet there is also so *little displeasure* in it that, once we have set self-conceit aside and allowed this respect practical influence, we cannot look

enough at the law's splendor. The soul believes itself raised in proportion as it sees the holy law raised above itself and its frail nature. Great talents and [AA V 78] activity proportionate to them can indeed also produce respect, or a feeling like it. It is entirely fitting to accord this to them, and here admiration seems identical with that feeling. But on closer examination we will notice something else. It always remains uncertain how much of a person's skill comes from inborn talent and how much from cultivation through personal effort. Reason therefore tentatively presents the skill to us as the fruit of cultivation, and thus as merit. This noticeably lowers our self-conceit and either reproaches us or requires us to follow that example in a way suited to us. So the respect we show such a person is not mere admiration. Strictly speaking, it is respect for the law that the example holds before us. This is also confirmed by the following fact: when the ordinary crowd of admirers believes it has learned from elsewhere of the bad character of such a man, such as Voltaire [A 139], it gives up all respect for him. But the true scholar still feels respect, at least from the standpoint of his talents, because the scholar himself is involved in an occupation and calling that makes imitating him, to some extent, a law.

Respect for the moral law is therefore the only moral incentive, and one beyond doubt. This feeling is directed toward any object only on this ground. First, the moral law determines the will objectively and directly in reason's judgment. But freedom, whose causality can be determined by the law alone, consists precisely in restricting all inclinations, and thus our estimation of our own person, to the condition of following its pure law. This restriction affects feeling and produces a sensation of displeasure that can be cognized *a priori* from the moral law. But to this extent it is only a *negative* effect. Arising from the influence of pure practical reason, it chiefly restricts the subject's activity insofar as inclinations determine it, and thus lowers the subject's opinion of personal worth, which is reduced to nothing without agreement with the moral law. So the law's effect [A 140] on feeling is merely humiliation. We can indeed understand this *a priori*. But in it we can cognize not the power of the pure practical law as an incentive, but only resistance to the incentives of sensibility [AA V 79]. Yet the same law is objectively a direct determining ground of the

will, that is, in the representation of pure reason. This humiliation thus occurs only in relation to the law's purity. Consequently, lowering the claims of moral self-esteem—humiliation on the sensible side—raises the moral or practical estimation of the law itself on the intellectual side. In a word, it is respect for the law, and therefore also a feeling positive in its intellectual cause, cognized *a priori*. For every reduction of obstacles to an activity promotes the activity itself. Recognizing the moral law is consciousness of practical reason's activity from objective grounds. This activity fails to take effect in actions only because subjective, pathological causes hinder it. Respect for the moral law must therefore also be seen as its positive, though indirect, effect on feeling. The law weakens the inclinations' obstructing influence by humiliating self-conceit. Respect is thus a subjective ground of activity, an *incentive* to follow the law, and [A 141] a ground for maxims of a way of life conforming to it. The concept of an incentive gives rise to that of an *interest*. This is attributed only to a being with reason and means an *incentive* of the will insofar as it is *represented through reason*. Since the law itself must be the incentive in a morally good will, *moral interest* is a pure interest of practical reason alone, free of sense. The concept of a *maxim* also rests on that of an interest. A maxim is therefore morally genuine only when it rests solely on the interest taken in following the law. But all three concepts—*incentive*, *interest*, and *maxim*—can apply only to finite beings. For they all presuppose a limitation in a being's nature: the subjective character of its power of choice does not automatically agree with the objective law of practical reason. Such a being needs something to impel it to activity because an inner obstacle opposes that activity. So these concepts cannot apply to the divine will.

There is something so distinctive in the boundless esteem for the pure moral law, stripped of every advantage, as practical [A 142] [AA V 80] reason presents it for us to follow. Its voice makes even the boldest wrongdoer tremble and forces him to hide from its gaze. So we should not be surprised that speculative reason cannot fathom this influence of a merely intellectual idea on feeling. We must be content that we can still understand this much *a priori*: such a feeling is inseparably connected with the representation of the moral law in every finite

rational being. If this feeling of respect were pathological, and thus a feeling of pleasure grounded in inner *sense*, it would be pointless to seek an *a priori* connection between it and any idea. But it is a feeling directed solely toward the practical. It attaches to the representation of a law only because of its form, not because of any object of that law. It therefore cannot be counted as either enjoyment or pain. Yet it produces an *interest* in following the law, which we call *moral*. Indeed, the capacity to take such an interest in the law—or respect for the moral law itself—is properly *moral feeling*.

Respect for the law is consciousness of the will's *free* submission to the law, yet combined with an unavoidable constraint imposed on all inclinations [A 143] by one's own reason alone. The law that demands and also inspires this respect is plainly none other than the moral law. For no other law excludes all inclinations from directly influencing the will. An action that is objectively practical according to this law, to the exclusion of all determining grounds from inclination, is called *duty*. Because of this exclusion, the concept of duty contains practical *necessitation*: determination to actions however *unwillingly* they may be done. The feeling arising from consciousness of this necessitation is not pathological, as if produced by an object of the senses. It is possible only practically, through a prior objective determination of the will and causality of reason. As *submission* to a law, a command announcing constraint for the sensibly affected subject, it therefore contains no pleasure. To that extent it contains instead displeasure in the action. Yet because this constraint is exercised only through the lawgiving of one's *own* reason, it also contains *elevation*. The [AA V 81] subjective effect on feeling, insofar as pure practical reason alone causes it, can therefore be called only *self-approval* with regard to that reason. We recognize ourselves as determined to it without any interest, solely by the [A 144] law. We then become conscious of an entirely different interest, subjectively produced in this way, which is purely practical and *free*. Taking this interest in an action conforming to duty is not something an inclination recommends. Reason, through the practical law, commands it unconditionally and actually produces it. That is why it has its own distinctive name: respect.

The concept of duty therefore requires *objective* agreement of the action with the law, but subjectively, in its maxim, respect for the law as the sole way the law determines the will. This is the basis of the distinction between consciousness of having acted *in conformity with duty* and *from duty*, that is, from respect for the law. The former, legality, is possible even if inclinations alone determined the will. But the latter, *morality* or moral worth, must be placed solely in the action's being done from duty, that is, solely for the sake of the law.¹⁰

In every moral judgment it is of the greatest importance [A 145] to attend with the utmost precision to the subjective principle of all maxims. All morality in actions must be placed in their necessity *from duty* and from respect for the law, not from love and affection for what the actions are to produce. For humans and all created rational beings, moral necessity is necessitation, or obligation. Every action based on it must be represented as duty, not as conduct we already spontaneously like, or could come to like. It is as though we could ever reach a point where, without respect [AA V 82] for the law, which is connected with fear or at least concern about transgressing it, we could possess a *holiness* of will. We would then be like the Deity, raised above all dependence, acting spontaneously through an unshakable agreement of will with the pure moral law that had, so to speak, become our nature. Since we could never be tempted to be unfaithful to it [A 146], the law might finally even cease to be a command for us.

For the will of a supremely perfect being, the moral law is a law of *holiness*; for the will of every finite rational being, however, it is a law of *duty*, of moral necessitation, determining its actions through *respect* for this law and reverence for its duty. No other subjective principle must be assumed as an incentive. Otherwise, the action may indeed turn out as the law prescribes. But although it conforms to duty, it is not done from duty, and the disposition behind it is not moral. Yet that disposition is what this lawgiving is really concerned with.

It is very fine to do good to people from love and sympathetic goodwill, or to be just from love of order. But that is not yet the genuine moral maxim of conduct appropriate to our position among rational beings *as humans* if we presume, like volunteers, to put ourselves above the thought of duty in our proud

imagination. We would then claim to want, independently of a command, to do solely from our own pleasure what would supposedly need no command for us. We stand under a *discipline* of [A 147] reason. In all our maxims we must remember our submission to it, withhold nothing from it, and not diminish the law's authority through a self-loving delusion. Even though our own reason gives the law, we would diminish it by placing our will's determining ground anywhere other than in the law itself and respect for it, even if our will still conformed to the law. Duty and obligation are the only names we must give our relation to the moral law. We are indeed lawgiving members of a moral kingdom made possible through freedom and presented by practical reason as an object of respect. But we are also its subjects, not its sovereign. Failing to recognize our lower position as creatures, and self-conceit's resistance to the authority of the [AA V 83] holy law, already amount to abandoning it in spirit, even if its letter is fulfilled.

This is entirely compatible with the possibility of a command such as: "*Love God above all and your neighbor as yourself.*"¹¹ For as a command it demands respect for a law that [A 148] *commands love*. It does not leave it to our optional choice to make love our principle. But love of God as an inclination, pathological love, is impossible, since God is not an object of the senses. Such love toward human beings is possible, but cannot be commanded. For no human being can love someone merely on command. So only *practical love* is meant in this central statement of all laws. To love God in this sense means to carry out his commands *gladly*. To love one's neighbor means to perform every duty toward that person *gladly*. But the command making this a rule cannot command us to *have* this disposition in actions conforming to duty, only to *strive* for it. For a command to do something gladly contradicts itself, because if we already know on our own what we are obliged to do, and were also conscious of doing it gladly, a command about it would be entirely unnecessary. And if we do it, but not gladly, only from respect for the law, a command making that respect the incentive of the maxim would work directly against the disposition commanded. This law of all laws thus presents, like every moral precept of the Gospel, the moral [A 149] disposition in its complete perfection. As

an ideal of holiness, it is unattainable by any creature. Yet it remains the model we should strive to approach and equal in an uninterrupted but infinite progress. If a rational creature could ever reach the point of following all moral laws entirely *gladly*, that would mean it did not even have the possibility of a desire tempting it to depart from them. For overcoming such a desire always costs the subject a sacrifice. It therefore requires self-constraint: an inner necessitation to do what one [AA V 84] does not do entirely gladly. But a creature can never reach this level of moral disposition. As a creature, it is always dependent with regard to what it needs for complete satisfaction with its condition. So it can never be entirely free of desires and inclinations. Since these rest on physical causes, they do not automatically agree with the moral law, which has entirely different sources. They therefore always make it necessary to base the disposition of one's maxims, with regard to them, on moral necessitation. It must be based not on willing devotion, but on respect, which *demand*s observance of the law even if done unwillingly; not on love [A 150], which fears no inner resistance of the will to the law. Yet the creature must make that latter love, the mere love of the law, the constant, though unreachable, goal of its striving. For the law would then cease to be a *command*, and morality, now passing subjectively into holiness, would cease to be *virtue*. For as it becomes easier to satisfy what we esteem but also fear because we know our weaknesses, reverent fear turns into affection and respect into love. At least, that would be the completion of a disposition devoted to the law, if any creature could ever attain it.

This discussion is not aimed primarily at clarifying the Gospel command just quoted in order to counter *religious fanaticism* concerning love of God. Rather, it aims to define the moral disposition precisely, directly with regard to duties toward people, and to check, or if possible prevent, a *purely moral* fanaticism that infects many minds. The moral level on which human beings stand—and, as far as we can see, every rational creature—is respect for the moral law. The disposition required of them in following it is to do so from duty, not from [A 151] spontaneous affection, or even an uncommanded effort gladly undertaken on their own. The moral condition they can always occupy is

virtue: a moral disposition *in struggle*, not *holiness* in the supposed *possession* of complete *purity* in the will's dispositions. Encouraging people to actions as noble, lofty, and generous [AA V 85] attunes their minds to sheer moral fanaticism and heightens self-conceit. It gives them the delusion that duty, respect for the law, is not their actions' determining ground. Yet they *must* bear its yoke even unwillingly, a yoke that is gentle because reason itself imposes it. Duty still humiliates them as they follow or *obey* it. Instead, they are led to think these actions are expected from them not as duty but as sheer merit. For by imitating such deeds from such a principle, they would not in the least satisfy the law's spirit. That consists in a disposition submitting to the law, not in an action's lawfulness, whatever its principle may be. They place the incentive *pathologically*, in sympathy or self-love, rather than morally, in the law. Moreover, this produces an empty, high-flying, fanciful way of thinking. They flatter themselves with a spontaneous [A 152] goodness of mind that needs neither spur nor bridle, and for which no command is needed at all. They thereby forget their obligation, which they should think about before merit. We may indeed praise others' actions, done with great sacrifice solely for duty's sake, as *noble* and *lofty* deeds. Even then, this is justified only insofar as there are signs suggesting that they arose wholly from respect for duty, not from surges of emotion. But if we present them as examples to follow, respect for duty must always serve as the incentive, since it is the only genuine moral feeling. This serious, holy precept does not leave our vain self-love free to play with pathological impulses insofar as they resemble morality, or to congratulate ourselves on *meritorious* worth. If we search carefully, we will find a law of duty for every praiseworthy action. It *commands*, rather than leaving to our choice what might please our inclination. This is the only way of presenting matters that morally forms the soul, because it alone is capable of firm, precisely determined principles.

If *fanaticism* in its most general meaning is an overstepping, undertaken according to [A 153] principles, of the limits of human reason, then *moral fanaticism* is an overstepping of the limits pure practical reason sets for humanity. By setting them [AA V 86], reason forbids us to place the subjective determining ground of actions conforming to duty—their moral incentive—any-

where except in the law itself. It also forbids us to place the disposition thereby introduced into maxims anywhere except in respect for this law. It therefore commands us to make the thought of duty, which strikes down all *arrogance* and vain *self-love*, the supreme *principle of life* for all morality in human beings. If that is so, not only novelists and sentimental educators, however fiercely they attack sentimentality, but sometimes even philosophers, including the strictest of all, the Stoics, have introduced *moral fanaticism* in place of sober but wise moral discipline. The Stoics' fanaticism was more heroic, while that of the others was flat and sentimental. Without hypocrisy, we can truthfully say of the Gospel's moral teaching that it was the first to subject all good human conduct to the discipline of a duty set before people's eyes. It did so through both the purity of its moral principle and that principle's fitness for the [A 154] limitations of finite beings. It does not let them wander among dreamed-of moral perfections. And it set limits of humility—that is, self-knowledge—to both self-conceit and self-love, which are equally eager to ignore their limits.

Duty! What a great, lofty name. You contain nothing pleasing that flatters us, but demand submission. Yet you threaten nothing that would stir natural aversion in the mind and frighten it, in order to move the will. You simply set up a law that finds its way into the mind on its own, yet wins reverence even against our will, though not always obedience. Before it, all inclinations fall silent, even when secretly working against it. What origin is worthy of you? Where can we find the root of your noble ancestry, which proudly rejects all kinship with inclinations? To descend from that root is the indispensable condition of the worth that people can gain only through themselves.

It can be nothing less than what raises human beings above themselves as parts of the world of sense. It binds them to an order of things that only understanding can think, and that at the same time has under it the [A 155] whole world of sense, including humans' empirically determinable existence [AA V 87] in time and the totality of all ends, which alone is appropriate to unconditional practical laws such as the moral law. It is nothing other than *personality*: freedom and independence from the mechanism of all nature, yet considered at the same time as the capacity of a being subject to special pure practical laws given

by its own reason. The person, as belonging to the world of sense, is thus subject to their own personality insofar as they also belong to the intelligible world. No wonder, then, that human beings, belonging to both worlds, must regard their own being in relation to their second and highest vocation with reverence, and its laws with the highest respect.

This origin grounds various expressions designating the value of objects according to moral ideas. The moral law is *holy*, inviolable. Human beings are unholy enough, but the *humanity* in their person must be holy to them. In all creation, anything one chooses and has some power over can also be used *merely as a means*. Only a human being, and with them every rational creature, is an *end in itself*. For through the autonomy of freedom, that being is [A 156] the subject of the moral law, which is holy. Because of this autonomy, every will, even a person's own will directed toward themselves, is restricted to the condition of agreement with the rational being's *autonomy*. That being must not be subjected to any purpose that is impossible according to a law that could arise from the will of the affected subject itself. The subject must therefore never be used merely as a means, but always also as an end. We rightly attribute this condition even to the divine will in relation to rational beings in the world as God's creatures. For it rests on their *personality*, through which alone they are ends in themselves.

This respect-awakening idea of personality shows us the loftiness of our nature in its vocation. At the same time it reveals how far our conduct falls short of it, and thus strikes down self-conceit. The idea is natural and readily apparent even to the most ordinary human reason. Has not every even moderately honest person sometimes refrained from an otherwise harmless lie that could have either [AA V 88] got them out of an annoying situation or even benefited a beloved, deserving friend, solely [A 157] to avoid secretly despising themselves in their own eyes? In life's greatest misfortune, does not an upright person remain sustained by the consciousness that they have still preserved and honored the dignity of humanity in their person, and that they have no reason to feel ashamed before themselves or to fear the inward gaze of self-examination? They could have avoided that misfortune if only they could have disregarded

duty. This consolation is not happiness, not even the smallest part of it. For no one would wish for the opportunity to have it, perhaps not even for a life in such circumstances. But this person lives and cannot bear to be unworthy of life in their own eyes. This inner reassurance is therefore merely negative in relation to everything that might make life agreeable. It wards off the danger of falling in personal worth after the value of their condition has already been completely given up. It is the effect of respect for something entirely different from life. Compared and contrasted with it, life with all its comforts has no value at all. This person lives on only from duty, not because they find the slightest enjoyment in life.

Such is the genuine incentive of pure practical reason [A 158]. It is nothing other than the pure moral law itself, insofar as it lets us feel the loftiness of our own supersensible existence. Subjectively, it produces respect for their higher vocation in human beings who are also conscious of their sensible existence and of their dependence on a nature to that extent strongly affected by feeling. Now so many attractions and comforts of life can be connected with this incentive that, even for their sake alone, the wisest choice of a rational *Epicurean* reflecting on life's greatest well-being would favor morally good conduct. It may also be advisable to connect this prospect of cheerful enjoyment of life with that supreme motive, which is already sufficient on its own to determine the will. But this must serve only to counterbalance the temptations that vice never fails to hold out on the other side. When duty is at issue, the actual motivating power must not be placed in those comforts, not even in the smallest part. For that would amount to contaminating the moral disposition [AA V 89] at its source. The dignity of duty has nothing to do with the enjoyment of life. It has its own law and its own court. However much we might shake the two together to offer the mixture as medicine [A 159] for the sick soul, they immediately separate on their own. If they do not, the first has no effect at all. Even if physical life gained some strength from the mixture, moral life would still fade away beyond saving.

- ⁹ Of every lawful action that was nevertheless not done for the law's sake, we can say that it is morally good merely in its *letter*, not in its *spirit*, or disposition.
- ¹⁰ If we carefully consider the concept of respect for persons as explained above, we will notice that it always rests on consciousness of a duty held before us by an example. So respect can never have anything but a moral ground. Wherever we use this expression, it is very helpful, even psychologically useful for understanding human beings, to attend to the hidden and remarkable, yet frequent, regard people have for the moral law in their judgments.
- ¹¹ The principle of personal happiness, which some want to make the supreme principle of morality, forms a strange contrast to this law. It would read: "*Love yourself above all, but God and your neighbor for your own sake.*"

BOOK I

Critical examination of the analytic of pure practical reason



By a critical examination of a science, or of a part of it that forms a system in its own right, I mean this: investigating and justifying why it must have precisely this systematic form and no other, when compared with another system based on a similar cognitive faculty. Practical and speculative reason are based on the same cognitive faculty insofar as both are *pure reason*. We must therefore compare them to determine and explain the difference between their systematic forms.

The Analytic of Pure Theoretical Reason dealt with cognition of objects that may be given to the understanding. [A 160] It therefore had to start with *intuition*, and so with sensibility, since intuition is always sensible. Only then could it move on to concepts of the objects of this intuition. Only after presenting both could it end with *principles*. Practical reason, by contrast, is not concerned with *cognizing* objects. It is concerned with its own capacity to *make them real*, in accordance with its cognition of them. In other words, it deals with a *will*: a causality whose determining ground lies in reason. So it does not have to supply an object of intuition. As practical reason, it needs to supply *only a law* of that causality. For the concept of causality always involves a relation to a law

that determines how the various elements exist in relation to one another. A critical examination of its analytic, insofar as it is to be practical reason—which is the real problem—must therefore start with the *possibility of practical* [AA V 90] *principles a priori*. From there alone could it proceed to *concepts* of the objects of practical reason: the absolutely good and evil. It had first to supply these concepts in accordance with those principles. For before those principles, no cognitive faculty can supply these objects as good and evil. Only then could the final chapter close this part: the chapter on the [A 161] relation of pure practical reason to sensibility, and on its necessary influence on sensibility, an influence knowable *a priori*. That is the chapter on *moral feeling*. The Analytic of Pure Practical Reason thus divided the full range of conditions for its use in complete correspondence with theoretical reason, but in the reverse order. The Analytic of Theoretical Pure Reason was divided into transcendental aesthetic and transcendental logic. That of practical reason was divided, in reverse, into the logic and aesthetic of pure practical reason—if I may use these otherwise quite unsuitable names here simply for the analogy. Logic, in turn, was divided there into the analytic of concepts and the analytic of principles; here, into the analytic of principles and concepts. There the aesthetic had two parts, because sensible intuition has two forms. Here sensibility is not considered as a capacity for intuition at all, but only as feeling, which can be a subjective ground of desire. In this respect pure practical reason allows no further division.

It is also easy to see why we did not actually adopt this two-part division with its subdivisions. The example of the earlier work might well have tempted us to try it at first. For what we are considering here is *pure reason* [A 162] in its practical use. It therefore starts from principles *a priori*, not from empirical determining grounds. The division of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason must consequently resemble a syllogism. It proceeds from the universal in the *major premise*, the moral principle, through the subsumption of possible actions as good or evil under that principle in the *minor premise*, to the *conclusion*: the subjective determination of the will, an interest in the practically possible good and the maxim based on that interest. Anyone who has found the propositions presented in the Analytic [AA V 91] convincing will enjoy these comparisons,

for they rightly encourage the hope that we may one day understand the unity of the entire faculty of pure reason, theoretical as well as practical, and derive everything from a single principle. This is an unavoidable need of human reason. It finds full satisfaction only in a completely systematic unity of its cognitions.

If we also consider the content of the cognition we can have of and through pure practical reason, as its Analytic presents it, we find differences as striking as the analogy between it and theoretical reason. In the case of theoretical reason, the *capacity* [A 163] *for pure rational cognition a priori* could be proved quite easily and clearly by examples from the sciences. The sciences test their principles in so many ways through methodical use that there is less reason than in ordinary cognition to fear a hidden admixture of empirical grounds of cognition. But to show that pure reason, by itself and without any empirical determining ground mixed in, is also practical, we had to turn to the *most ordinary practical use of reason*. We had to establish the supreme practical principle as one that every person's natural reason recognizes as the highest law of their will: a law entirely *a priori*, independent of all sensory data. Even before science could take it up and use it, we had to establish and justify its pure origin *in the judgment of ordinary reason itself*. It was, so to speak, a fact preceding all quibbling about its possibility and all conclusions that might be drawn from it. What we have just said also explains this circumstance very well. Pure practical reason must begin with principles. These must therefore be the initial data underlying all science; they cannot first [A 164] originate in science. Moreover, moral principles could be justified as principles of pure reason quite securely just by appealing to ordinary human understanding. For anything empirical that might slip into our [AA V 92] maxims as a determining ground of the will immediately *reveals itself* through the feeling of pleasure or pain necessarily attached to it insofar as it arouses desire. Pure practical reason, however, directly *resists* accepting this feeling as a condition of its principle. Reason, in giving practical laws, resists every intrusive inclination. This resistance makes the difference between the empirical and rational determining grounds clear, prominent, and unmistakable, through a distinctive kind of *sensation*. This sen-

sation does not precede practical reason's legislation. Rather, that legislation alone produces it, and does so as a constraint. It is the feeling of respect. No one has this respect for inclinations, whatever their kind, but people do have it for the law. The difference becomes so clear that anyone, even someone with the most ordinary understanding, should immediately see in a given example that empirical grounds for willing can advise them to follow their attractions, [A 165] but can never require them to *obey* anything except the law of pure practical reason alone.

The first and most important task of the Analytic of Pure Practical Reason is therefore to distinguish the *doctrine of happiness* from the *doctrine of morals*. Empirical principles form the entire basis of the first, but must not enter the second even in the slightest degree. In making this distinction, the Analytic must be as *precise*—even, if that is what it takes, as *painstaking*—as any geometer in their work. Here the philosopher faces greater difficulty, as always in rational cognition through mere concepts without constructing them. No intuition can underlie a pure noumenon. But the philosopher also has an advantage. Almost like a chemist, the philosopher can at any time experiment with anyone's practical reason to distinguish the moral, pure determining ground from the empirical one. The experiment consists in adding the moral law as a determining ground to a will affected by experience—for example, the will of someone who would like to lie because it would gain them something. It is like a chemist adding alkali to a solution of lime in hydrochloric acid. The acid immediately leaves the lime and combines with the alkali, while the lime falls to the bottom. Likewise, [A 166] present the moral [AA V 93] law to someone who is otherwise honest, or who at least imagines being an honest person for the moment. Through that law they recognize a liar's worthlessness. Their practical reason immediately abandons the advantage, in judging what they ought to do, and joins with what preserves their respect for their own person: truthfulness. Once the advantage has been separated and washed clean of everything attached to it by reason—which stands entirely on the side of duty

—anyone can then weigh it. It may still be combined with reason in other cases, but not where it could conflict with the moral law. Reason never abandons that law, but joins itself to it in the closest possible way.

But this *distinction* between the principle of happiness and the principle of morality does not by itself *set them against* each other. Pure practical reason does not ask us to *give up* our claims to happiness. It asks only that, whenever duty is at issue, we *take no account* of them. In a certain respect, caring for our happiness may even be a duty. This is partly because happiness—including skill, health, and wealth—provides means for fulfilling our duty, and partly because a lack of happiness, such as poverty, creates temptations [A 167] to violate our duty. But promoting our happiness can never directly be a duty, much less the principle of all duty. Now every determining ground of the will except the one pure law of practical reason, the moral law, is empirical. As such, all these grounds belong to the principle of happiness. They must therefore all be separated from the supreme moral principle and never incorporated into it as a condition. That would destroy all moral worth, just as adding anything empirical to geometrical principles would destroy all mathematical certainty. This certainty is the finest thing mathematics possesses, in Plato's judgment, and it takes precedence even over all its usefulness.

Instead of a deduction of the supreme principle of pure practical reason—that is, an explanation of how such cognition *a priori* is possible—we could supply only the following point. If we understood how an efficient cause could be free, we would also understand not just the possibility but the necessity of the moral law as the supreme practical law of rational beings whose will is granted a free causality. For the two concepts are so inseparable that practical [AA V 94] freedom could also be defined as the will's independence of every law other than [A 168] the moral law alone. But we cannot possibly understand how an efficient cause can be free, especially in the world of sense. We are fortunate if we can be sufficiently assured that no proof of its impossibility can be given, and are then required by the moral law, which postulates freedom, to assume it, and by that very requirement also entitled to do so. Yet many people still believe they can explain freedom by empirical principles, like any other natural capacity. They

treat it as a *psychological* property, whose explanation requires only a closer investigation of the *nature of the soul* and the will's incentives. They do not treat it as a *transcendental* predicate of the causality of a being belonging to the world of sense, though this alone is what really matters here. In this way they undo the wonderful disclosure that pure practical reason gives us through the moral law: the disclosure of an intelligible world by giving reality to the otherwise transcendent concept of freedom. They thereby undo the moral law itself, which admits no empirical determining ground at all. So we must add something here to guard against this illusion and expose the full shallowness of *empiricism*.

The concept of causality as *natural necessity*, as distinct [A 169] from causality as *freedom*, concerns the existence of things only insofar as it *can be determined in time*. It therefore concerns them as appearances, in contrast to their causality as things in themselves. If we take the determinations of things' existence in time to be determinations of things in themselves—as people most commonly do—necessity in causal relations cannot be reconciled with freedom in any way. They contradict each other. For natural necessity implies that every event, and therefore every action occurring at a particular time, is necessary under the conditions of what existed at an earlier time. But past time is no longer within my control. Every action I perform must therefore be made necessary by determining grounds *that are not within my control*. In other words, at the moment I act I am never free. Even if I assumed that my entire existence was independent of any external cause, such as God, [AA V 95] so that the determining grounds of my causality and even of my entire existence lay nowhere outside me, this would not turn that natural necessity into freedom in the least. For at every moment I would still necessarily be determined to act by *what is not within my control*. [A 170] The series of events, stretching infinitely *backward*, would be an unbroken chain of nature. I would only ever continue it according to an already determined order, never start it on my own at any point. My causality would therefore never be freedom.

If we want to ascribe freedom to a being whose existence is determined in time, we cannot, at least in this respect, exempt it from the law of natural necessity governing all events in its existence, and so its actions too. That would amount to handing it over to blind chance. But this law inevitably concerns all the causality of things insofar as their *existence in time* can be determined. If this were also how we had to represent the *existence of these things in themselves*, freedom would have to be rejected as an empty and impossible concept. So if we still want to save freedom, only one course remains. We must ascribe a thing's existence, insofar as it is determinable in time, and thus its causality under the law of *natural necessity, only to appearance*. We must ascribe *freedom* to the very *same being as a thing in itself*. This is certainly unavoidable if we want to preserve both conflicting concepts. Yet when we apply them and try to explain how they are united [A 171] in one and the same action, great difficulties arise. These seem to make such a union impossible.

Suppose I say of someone who commits a theft that, under the natural law of causality, this deed necessarily resulted from determining grounds in the preceding time. Then it was impossible for the deed not to occur. How can judging it by the moral law change anything here? How can that judgment assume that the deed could have been left undone because the law says it ought to have been left undone? In other words, how can the person be called entirely free at the very time, and with respect to the very action, in which they are also subject to unavoidable [AA V 96] natural necessity? One attempted escape merely adjusts the *kind* of grounds determining their causality under natural law to a *comparative* concept of freedom. On this concept, an effect is sometimes called free when its determining natural ground lies *inside* the acting being. Thus we speak of a thrown body's free motion because, while it is flying, nothing outside it drives it. Or we call a clock's movement free because it drives its hand itself, without the hand needing to be pushed [A 172] from outside. In the same way, people call human actions free despite their being made necessary by determining grounds preceding them in time. They do so because these actions arise from internal representations produced by our own powers, from desires generated through those representations in response to circumstances, and thus

from our own choice. This is a miserable expedient. Some people still let it put them off and think they have solved, with a little quibbling over words, the difficult problem that millennia have worked on in vain. Its solution is hardly likely to lie so plainly on the surface. For the freedom that must underlie all moral laws and all imputation in accordance with them is not at all a question of whether causality determined by a natural law is made necessary by determining grounds *inside* the subject or *outside* it. Nor, in the first case, does it matter whether these grounds are instinctive or thought out by reason. These very people admit that the determining representations have the ground of their existence in time, specifically in the *previous state*, which in turn has its ground in an earlier state, and so on. However internal these determinations may be, and even if their causality is psychological rather than mechanical [A 173]—producing action through representations rather than bodily movement—they remain *determining grounds* of the causality of a being insofar as its existence is determinable in time. They therefore fall under necessitating conditions of past time. When the subject is to act, these are *no longer within its control*. They may involve psychological freedom, if one insists on using this word for a merely internal chain of the soul's representations. But they still involve natural necessity and thus leave no *transcendental* [AA V 97] *freedom*. That freedom must be thought as independence from everything empirical, and thus from nature altogether—whether nature is considered as an object of inner sense only in time, or also of outer sense in both space and time. Without freedom in this latter, proper sense, which alone is practical *a priori*, no moral law and no imputation according to it are possible. For this very reason, all the necessity of events in time under the natural law of causality can also be called the *mechanism* of nature. This does not mean that the things subject to it must be actual material *machines*. We are concerned only with the necessary connection of events in a temporal series as it unfolds under natural law. We may call the subject in which this [A 174] process occurs a *material automaton*, if matter drives the machinery, or, with Leibniz, a *spiritual automaton*, if representations drive it. If our will had no freedom beyond the latter—psychological and

comparative freedom, rather than also transcendental, that is, absolute freedom—then fundamentally it would be no better than the freedom of a roasting spit. Once wound up, that too carries out its movements by itself.

To remove the apparent contradiction between natural mechanism and freedom in the same action in the case presented, we must recall what was said in the Critique of Pure Reason, or follows from it. The natural necessity that cannot coexist with the subject's freedom attaches only to determinations of a thing subject to conditions of time. It therefore attaches only to those of the acting subject as an appearance. In this respect, the determining grounds of each of its actions lie in what belongs to past time and is *no longer within its control*. These grounds must include its already committed deeds and the character determinable through them in its own eyes as a phenomenon. But the very same subject [A 175] is also conscious of itself as a thing in itself. In this other respect, it considers its existence *insofar as that existence is not subject to conditions of time*, and considers itself determinable only by laws it gives itself through reason. In this existence, nothing precedes its determination of the will. Rather, every action and, in general, [AA V 98] every changing determination of its existence according to inner sense—even the whole sequence of its existence as a sensible being—must, in the consciousness of its intelligible existence, be regarded only as a consequence. It must never be regarded as a determining ground of its causality as a *noumenon*. In this respect, a rational being can rightly say of every unlawful action it commits that it could have left that action undone, even though the action as an appearance is sufficiently determined by the past and is therefore unavoidably necessary. For that action, together with all the past that determines it, belongs to a single manifestation of its character, a character it has made for itself. In accordance with that character, it imputes to itself, as a cause independent of all sensibility, the causality of those appearances.

The judgments of that remarkable capacity within us called conscience agree completely with this. A person may use every clever device to picture unlawful conduct [A 176] they remember as an unintentional mistake, a mere carelessness that can never be entirely avoided. They may present it as something in

which the current of natural necessity swept them along, and so declare themselves innocent. Yet they find that the advocate speaking in their favor cannot silence the accuser within them, if they are conscious that, when they committed the wrong, they were in their senses—that is, using their freedom. They may indeed *explain* their offense by a bad habit acquired through gradually neglecting to watch themselves, until they can view it as that habit's natural consequence. But this still cannot protect them from self-reproach and their own rebuke. This also explains remorse over a deed committed long ago whenever it is recalled. Remorse is a painful sensation produced by a moral disposition. It is practically empty insofar as it cannot undo what has been done. It would even be absurd—as *Priestley*, a genuine and consistent *fatalist*, declares it to be. For this frankness he deserves more approval than those who assert the will's mechanism in fact but its freedom in [A 177] words. Without making the possibility of such imputation understandable, [AA V 99] they still want to be thought to include freedom in their syncretistic system. Yet as pain, remorse is entirely legitimate. For when the moral law, the law of our intelligible existence, is at issue, reason recognizes no difference of time. It asks only whether the event belongs to me as my deed. If it does, reason always connects the same sensation with it morally, whether it is happening now or happened long ago. For in relation to the *intelligible* consciousness of one's existence, freedom, one's *sensible life* has the absolute unity of a single phenomenon. Insofar as it contains only appearances of one's disposition concerning the moral law—one's character—it must be judged not by the natural necessity that belongs to it as an appearance, but by the absolute spontaneity of freedom. We can therefore concede the following. If we could see so deeply into a person's way of thinking, as shown in both inner and outer actions, that we knew every incentive, even the slightest, and all the external occasions affecting those incentives, we could calculate that person's future behavior as certainly as a lunar or solar eclipse. Yet we could still maintain that the person [A 178] is free. For suppose we were also capable of another kind of vision, an intellectual intuition of the same subject. We certainly have no such vision; we have only the rational concept in its place. But if we had it, we would see that, regarding anything that can

concern the moral law, this whole chain of appearances depends on the spontaneity of the subject as a thing in itself. No physical explanation can be given of what determines that spontaneity. In the absence of this intuition, the moral law assures us of a distinction between two relations. One relates our actions as appearances to our subject's sensible being. The other relates this sensible being itself to the intelligible basis within us.—This perspective is natural to our reason, though inexplicable. It also lets us justify judgments that, despite being made with complete conscientiousness, initially seem to conflict with all fairness. There are cases in which people display wickedness from childhood, even under an upbringing that proved beneficial to others raised alongside them. Their wickedness starts so early and continues increasing into adulthood that they are considered born villains and completely beyond reform [AA V 100] in their way of thinking. Yet we judge their acts and omissions just as we judge anyone else's, [A 179] and reproach them for their crimes as their own fault. Even these children themselves find the reproaches entirely justified, as though they remained as responsible as anyone else despite the hopeless natural condition of mind attributed to them. This would be impossible unless we assumed that everything arising from a person's choice—as every deliberately committed action undoubtedly does—rests on a free causality. From early youth, that causality expresses its character in its appearances, its actions. The uniformity of the person's behavior reveals a natural connection among them. But that connection does not make the will's bad character necessary. Rather, it results from evil and unchanging principles freely adopted. These only make the person still more blameworthy and deserving of punishment.

But another difficulty still faces freedom insofar as it is to be united with natural mechanism in a being belonging to the world of sense. Even after everything said so far has been conceded, this difficulty still threatens freedom with complete destruction. Yet one circumstance in this danger also offers hope of an outcome favorable to freedom. The same difficulty weighs much more heavily—in [A 180] fact, as we shall soon see, exclusively—on the system that treats existence determinable in time and space as the existence of things in themselves. It therefore does not force us to abandon our main assumption: the ide-

ality of time as a mere form of sensible intuition, and thus as merely a way of representing things peculiar to the subject as a member of the world of sense. We need only reconcile the difficulty with this idea.

Suppose we are granted that the intelligible subject can still be free regarding a given action, although as a subject also belonging to the world of sense it is mechanically conditioned regarding that same action. Still, as soon as we assume that God, as the universal original being, is also *the cause of the existence of substance*, a problem seems to follow. We must never abandon that proposition without also abandoning the concept of God as the being of all beings and so his complete sufficiency, on which everything in theology depends. But it seems that we must then also concede that human actions have their [AA V 101] determining ground in *what is entirely outside the person's control*: the causality of a supreme being distinct from them, on whom their existence and the entire determination of their causality wholly depend. Indeed, if [A 181] human actions, as determinations of a person in time, were not mere determinations of the person as an appearance but as a thing in itself, freedom could not be saved. A human being would be a marionette or a Vaucanson automaton, built and wound up by the supreme maker of all works of art. Self-consciousness would indeed make it a thinking automaton. But its consciousness of its own spontaneity would be sheer illusion if taken for freedom. That spontaneity deserves the name only comparatively. The nearest determining causes of its motion, and a long series extending upward toward their determining causes, would indeed be internal. But the final and highest cause would still lie entirely in another's hand. So I do not see how those who still insist on treating time and space as determinations belonging to the existence of things in themselves intend to avoid fatalism about actions here. Or suppose they simply grant—as the otherwise acute *Mendelssohn* did—that both are necessary conditions only of the existence of finite and derivative beings, not of the infinite original being. How can they justify their authority to make such a distinction? How can they even avoid the contradiction [A 182] they commit? They treat existence in time as a determination necessarily attached to finite things in themselves. Yet God is the cause of this existence, although he cannot be the

cause of time or space itself, since these must be presupposed *a priori* as necessary conditions of things' existence. His causality with respect to the existence of these things must therefore itself be conditioned by time. All the contradictions with the concepts of his infinity and independence must then inevitably arise. By contrast, we can very easily distinguish the determination of divine existence as independent of all conditions of time from that of a being in the world of sense. It is the distinction between the *existence of a being in itself* and that of a *thing in appearance*. Hence, unless we accept the ideality of time and space, [AA V 102] only *Spinozism* remains. In it, space and time are essential determinations of the original being itself. Things dependent on it—including ourselves—are not substances, but merely accidents inherent in it. For if these things exist merely as its effects *in time*, which would be the condition of their existence in themselves, then the actions of these beings must also be merely its actions, performed somewhere and sometime. Thus, despite the absurdity of its basic idea, [A 183] Spinozism reasons far more consistently than a theory of creation can if the latter assumes substances that are *beings existing in themselves in time*, treats them as effects of a supreme cause, yet regards them not as belonging to that cause and its action but as substances in their own right.

The difficulty just mentioned can be resolved briefly and clearly as follows. Suppose existence *in time* is merely a sensible way in which thinking beings in the world represent things, and therefore does not concern them as things in themselves. Then the creation of these beings is a creation of things in themselves. For the concept of creation does not belong to the sensible way of representing existence and causality; it can refer only to noumena. Thus, when I say of beings in the world of sense that they are created, I am considering them in this respect as noumena. It would be a contradiction to say that God is a creator of appearances. Likewise, it is a contradiction to say that, as creator, he is the cause of actions in the world of sense, and thus of actions as appearances, even though he is the cause of the existence of the acting beings as noumena. Now suppose we can affirm freedom without impairing the natural mechanism [A 184] of actions as appearances, by taking existence in time to apply only to appearances, not to things in themselves. Then the fact that the acting beings

are creatures cannot change this in the least. For creation concerns their intelligible, not their sensible, existence. It therefore cannot be regarded as a determining ground of appearances. The outcome would be entirely different, however, if beings in the world existed *in time* as things in themselves. In that case the creator of the substance would also be the author of the whole mechanism in that substance.

That is how important it is to separate time, as well as space, from the existence of things in themselves, as was done in the Critique of Pure Speculative [AA V 103] Reason.

Someone may object that the solution to the difficulty presented here still contains much that is hard and scarcely allows a clear presentation. But is any other solution that has been or might be tried easier and more understandable? We might sooner say that the dogmatic teachers of metaphysics have shown more cunning than honesty by keeping this difficult point out of sight as much as possible. They hope that, if they say nothing about it, scarcely anyone will think of it either. If a science is to be helped, all its difficulties must be *exposed*. Even those that stand in its way [A 185] most secretly must be *sought out*. For each calls for a remedy that cannot be found without adding to the science, either in scope or in precision. Thus even obstacles become means of making the science more thorough. But if difficulties are deliberately concealed or removed only by temporary remedies, sooner or later they develop into incurable evils that destroy the science through complete skepticism.

Among all the ideas of pure speculative reason, it is really the concept of freedom alone that provides so great an extension into the supersensible, even if only for practical cognition. So I ask myself: *why has this concept alone proved so fruitful*, while the others merely mark an empty place for possible pure beings of the understanding, without being able to determine their concept in any way? I soon see that, since I cannot think anything without a category, I must first look for the category in reason's idea of freedom, which is what concerns me here. This is the category of *causality*. No corresponding intuition can be supplied [A 186] for the *rational concept* of freedom, since it goes beyond experience. Yet a sensible intuition must first be given for the *concept of the under-*

standing, causality, for whose synthesis *that rational concept* demands the unconditioned. This first secures causality's objective reality. [AA V 104] Now all categories are divided into two classes: the *mathematical*, which concern only the unity of synthesis in representing objects, and the *dynamical*, which concern that unity in representing the existence of objects. The first class, quantity and quality, always involves a synthesis of *homogeneous elements*. In such a synthesis, the unconditioned for what is given as conditioned in sensible intuition in space and time cannot be found at all. For it too would have to belong to space and time, and so would always be conditioned in turn. That is why, in the Dialectic of Pure Theoretical Reason, both opposed ways of finding the unconditioned and the totality of conditions for these categories were false. The categories of the second class, causality and the necessity of a thing, did not require this homogeneity between the conditioned and its condition in the synthesis. Here we were not to represent how intuition is composed from the manifold within it. We were to represent only how the existence of the conditioned object corresponding to it is added to the existence of the condition, [A 187] as connected with it in the understanding. Here we were allowed to locate the unconditioned, though otherwise undetermined, in the intelligible world for what is thoroughly conditioned in the world of sense—both regarding causality and regarding the contingent existence of things themselves—and to make the synthesis transcendent. Hence the Dialectic of Pure Speculative Reason found that the two apparently opposed ways of finding the unconditioned for the conditioned did not actually contradict each other. For example, in the synthesis of causality, one could think a causality not itself sensibly conditioned for what is conditioned in the series of causes and effects in the world of sense. The same action that, as belonging to the world of sense, is always sensibly conditioned and thus mechanically necessary could also have a sensibly unconditioned causality as its basis, insofar as it belongs to the causality of the acting being as a member of the intelligible world. Thus it could be thought as free. What remained was simply to turn this *possibility* into *actuality*. In other words, in an actual case we had to prove, as though by a fact, that certain actions presuppose such a causality—an intellectual causality unconditioned

by sense—whether these actions are actual or merely commanded, that is, objectively necessary in practice. We could not hope to find this connection in actions actually given in experience as events in the world of sense. [A 188] [AA V 105] For causality through freedom must always be sought outside the world of sense, in the intelligible. But no things other than sensible beings are given to us for perception and observation. Only one possibility therefore remained: to find an indisputable and objective principle of causality that excludes every sensible condition from its determination. In such a principle, reason would not appeal to anything *else* as a determining ground of causality. Rather, through that principle it would already contain that ground itself, and would thus itself be practical as *pure reason*. This principle needs neither searching for nor inventing. It has long existed in everyone's reason and is incorporated into reason's nature: it is the principle of *morality*. Thus that unconditioned causality and the capacity for it, freedom, are not merely *thought* in an undetermined and problematic way. Nor is the being possessing them—myself, belonging to the world of sense yet also to the intelligible world—merely thought in that way, which speculative reason could already establish as possible. Rather, they are *determined* with *regard to the law* of their causality and *cognized* as actual. In this way the reality of the intelligible world has been given to us, and *determined* in a practical respect. This determination, [A 189] which would be *transcendent*, going beyond bounds, for theoretical purposes, is *immanent*, staying within bounds, for practical purposes. But we could not take such a step regarding the second dynamical idea, that of a *necessary being*. We could not rise to it from the world of sense without the mediation of the first dynamical idea. For to try would have meant daring to leap away from everything given to us toward something of which nothing is given that could connect such an intelligible being with the world of sense. For the necessary being was to be cognized as given *outside us*. By contrast, as what we have just shown makes clear, such a connection is entirely possible concerning *our own* subject. Through the moral law, it determines itself *on one side* as an intelligible being, through freedom, and *on the other side* cognizes itself as acting in the world of sense in accordance with this determination. The concept of freedom alone lets us find the uncon-

ditioned and intelligible for the conditioned and sensible without going outside ourselves. For it is our reason [AA V 106] itself that, through the highest and unconditioned practical law, cognizes itself and the being conscious of this law—our own person—as belonging to the pure world of the understanding. It even determines the way [A 190] in which that being can act as such. This makes it understandable why, in the whole faculty of reason, *only the practical* can take us beyond the world of sense and supply cognitions of a supersensible order and connection. But for that very reason, these cognitions can extend only as far as pure practical purposes strictly require.

Let me draw attention to just one more point on this occasion. Every step taken with pure reason, even in the practical field where subtle *speculation* is disregarded entirely, nevertheless fits every aspect of the critique of theoretical reason so exactly, and so spontaneously, that each step seems carefully planned solely to confirm that critique. This exact agreement between the most important propositions of practical reason and the remarks in the critique of speculative reason, which often seem too subtle and unnecessary, is surprising and astonishing. It is not sought in any way; it emerges by itself. Anyone can verify this simply by pursuing moral investigations back to their principles. It reinforces a maxim others have already recognized and praised: in every scientific investigation, proceed steadily with all possible precision and openness. Do not worry [A 191] about what it might conflict with outside its own field. Instead, carry it out on its own as truthfully and completely as possible. Repeated observation has convinced me of this. Halfway through such work, something sometimes seemed very doubtful to me in view of other doctrines outside it. But if I put that concern out of sight for the time being and attended only to my work until it was finished, the result finally agreed perfectly, in an unexpected way, with what had emerged on its own, without the slightest regard for those doctrines and without bias or preference for them. Writers would spare themselves many errors and much wasted effort—effort based on illusion—if only they could resolve to work with somewhat more openness.

Book II, Chapter I: A dialectic of pure practical reason in general



Book II. [A 192] [AA V 107] Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason.

Chapter I. On a Dialectic of Pure Practical Reason in General.

Pure reason always has its dialectic, whether we consider its speculative or its practical use. For it demands the absolute totality of conditions for something given as conditioned, and this can be found only in things in themselves. But all concepts of things must be related to intuitions. For us human beings, these can never be anything but sensible. They therefore let us cognize objects not as things in themselves, but only as appearances. In the series of what is conditioned and its conditions among appearances, the unconditioned can never be found. An unavoidable illusion therefore arises when reason's idea of the [A 193] totality of conditions, and thus of the unconditioned, is applied to appearances as though they were things in themselves. Without a critique to warn us, that is how they are always regarded. This illusion would never be recognized as deceptive if reason did not betray it through a *conflict* with itself when applying to appearances its principle of presupposing the unconditioned for everything conditioned. This forces reason to trace the illusion to its source and discover how it can be removed. That can be done only through a complete

critique of the entire faculty of pure reason. Thus the antinomy of pure reason revealed in its dialectic is actually the most beneficial error human reason could ever have fallen into. It finally drives us to seek the key for getting out of this labyrinth. Once found, that key also reveals something we were not seeking but still need: a view into a higher, unchanging order of things in which we already exist. We can now receive definite instructions for continuing our existence within it in accordance with reason's highest vocation. [AA V 108]

The critique of that faculty explains at length how to resolve this natural [A 194] dialectic in the speculative use of pure reason and prevent error arising from an otherwise natural illusion. But reason fares no better in its practical use. As pure practical reason, it likewise seeks the unconditioned for what is practically conditioned—what rests on inclinations and natural need. It seeks this not as the determining ground of the will, but, even after that ground has been given in the moral law, as the unconditioned totality of the *object* of pure practical reason, under the name of the *highest good*.

To determine this idea adequately for practice—that is, for the maxim of our rational conduct—is the task of the *doctrine of wisdom*. This doctrine, in turn, considered as a *science*, is *philosophy* in the sense in which the ancients understood the word. For them, it was guidance toward a concept of what the highest good consists in, and toward the conduct by which it can be acquired. It would be good to leave this word its old meaning: a *doctrine of the highest good*, insofar as reason strives to make it a *science*. For one thing, the restrictive condition added here would fit the Greek expression, which means love of *wisdom*. At the same time, it would suffice to include under the name of philosophy the love of *science*, and thus of all [A 195] speculative rational cognition, insofar as reason finds this useful both for that concept and for the practical determining ground. Yet it would keep us from losing sight of the chief aim, the only reason philosophy can be called a doctrine of wisdom. For another thing, it would do no harm to discourage the conceit of someone who dared claim the title of philosopher for themselves. The very definition would hold up a standard for self-assessment that would greatly lower their claims. For to be a *teacher of wisdom* presumably means something more than being a student who has not yet

advanced far enough to guide even themselves, much less others, with a confident expectation of reaching so high an aim. It would mean being a *master in the knowledge of wisdom*. That is more than a modest person will claim for themselves. Philosophy, like [AA V 109] wisdom itself, would always remain an ideal. Objectively, it is represented completely in reason alone. Subjectively, for the individual, it is only the goal of unceasing effort. Only someone who can also present in their own person an example of wisdom's unfailing effect is entitled to claim possession of it under the self-assumed name of philosopher. That effect consists in self-mastery and the unquestionable interest they take, above all, [A 196] in the general good. The ancients too required this for someone to deserve that honorable name.

We need add only one preliminary reminder concerning the dialectic of pure practical reason on the determination of the concept of *the highest good*. If we succeed in resolving it, we can expect the same highly beneficial result as from resolving theoretical reason's dialectic. For when the contradictions of pure practical reason with itself are honestly presented rather than concealed, they require a complete critique of its own capacity.

The moral law is the sole determining ground of the pure will. But it is merely formal: it requires only that the maxim have the form of universal legislation. As a determining ground, it therefore abstracts from all matter, and thus from every object of willing. So although the highest good may be the whole *object* of pure practical reason, that is, of a pure will, it must not on that account be taken as the will's *determining ground*. The moral law alone must be regarded as the ground for making the highest good, and its production or promotion, our object. This reminder matters in so delicate a case as the determination of moral [A 197] principles, where even the smallest misinterpretation corrupts dispositions. For the Analytic has shown that if, before the moral law, we assume any object called a good as the determining ground of the will, and then derive the supreme practical principle from it, this will always introduce heteronomy and displace the moral principle.

But it goes without saying that if the concept of the highest good already includes the moral law as its supreme condition, then the highest good is not merely an *object*. Its concept, and the representation of its existence [AA V 110] as possible through our practical reason, are also the *determining ground* of the pure will. For in that case, what actually determines the will, according to the principle of autonomy, is the moral law already included and thought in this concept, and no other object. We must not lose sight of this order among concepts concerning the determination of the will. Otherwise we misunderstand ourselves and think we are contradicting ourselves where everything actually fits together in perfect harmony.

Book II, Chapter II: The dialectic of pure reason in determining the highest good



Chapter II. [A 198] The Dialectic of Pure Reason in Determining the Concept of the Highest Good.

The concept of the *highest* already contains an ambiguity. Unless we notice it, it can cause needless disputes. The highest can mean either the *supreme* or the *complete*. The first is a condition that is itself unconditional, that is, subordinate to no other condition: the *original condition*. The second is a whole that is not part of any greater whole of the same kind: the *most perfect whole*. The Analytic proved that virtue, as worthiness to be happy, is the *supreme condition* of everything that can seem desirable to us. It is therefore also the supreme condition of all our efforts to gain happiness, and so the *supreme* good. But that does not yet make it the whole and complete good as an object of the faculty of desire of finite rational beings. For that, *happiness* is also needed. This is true not just in the partial view of a person who makes himself his end [A 199], but even in the judgment of impartial reason, which regards that person in the world in general as an end in himself. For to need happiness and even to deserve it, yet have no share in it, cannot possibly agree with the perfect willing of a rational being who also had all power, even if we only imagine such a being as

an experiment. Virtue and happiness together, then, constitute a person's possession of the highest good. And when happiness is distributed in exact proportion to morality—to the person's worth and worthiness to be happy—these two together constitute the *highest good* of a possible world. Here this means the [AA V 111] whole, the complete good. Within it, however, virtue, as the condition, is always the supreme good, since it has no further condition above it. Happiness is always something pleasant for its possessor, but it is not by itself unconditionally good in every respect. It always presupposes morally lawful conduct as its condition.

Two determinations that are *necessarily* united in one concept must be connected as ground and consequence. This *unity* must be regarded either as *analytic*, a logical connection under the law of identity, or as *synthetic*, a real connection under the law of [A 200] causality. The connection between virtue and happiness can therefore be understood in either of two ways. Striving to be virtuous and rationally seeking happiness might be not two different actions but entirely identical actions. In that case the first would need no maxim other than the one underlying the second. Or their connection is taken to mean that virtue produces happiness as something distinct from the consciousness of virtue, as a cause produces an effect.

Among the ancient Greek schools, only two really followed the same method in determining the concept of the highest good in this respect: they did not accept virtue and happiness as two different elements of the highest good. They therefore sought the unity of their principle under the rule of identity. But they differed in which of the two they chose as the basic concept. The *Epicurean* said: being conscious of your maxim that leads to happiness is virtue. The *Stoic* said: being conscious of your virtue is happiness. For the first, *prudence* amounted to morality. For the second, who chose a higher name for virtue, *morality* alone was true wisdom.

We must regret that these men's ingenuity was misapplied [A 201] in trying to discover identity between such extremely different concepts as happiness and virtue. Yet we must also admire them for having tried every conceivable path of philosophical discovery so early. Their effort suited the dialectical spirit of their

times. Even now this sometimes tempts subtle thinkers to remove essential differences between principles—differences that can never be reconciled—by trying to turn them into disputes about words. In this way they manufacture an apparent unity of concept under [AA V 112] different names. This usually happens when the union of unlike grounds lies so deep or so high, or would require such a complete change in the other doctrines accepted in a philosophical system, that people hesitate to examine the real difference thoroughly. They prefer to treat it as a disagreement over mere formalities.

Both schools tried to establish that the practical principles of virtue and happiness were identical. But they did not agree on how to force this identity. Instead, they diverged enormously. One placed its principle on the side of feeling, the other on the side of logic. The first placed it in consciousness of sensible need; the second in practical reason's independence [A 202] from all sensible determining grounds. According to the *Epicurean*, the concept of virtue was already contained in the maxim of promoting one's own happiness. According to the *Stoic*, by contrast, the feeling of happiness was already contained in consciousness of one's virtue. But what is contained in another concept is identical with part of what contains it, not with the whole. Moreover, two wholes can differ in kind even when they consist of exactly the same material, if their parts are combined into wholes in entirely different ways. The Stoic claimed that virtue was the *entire highest good*. Happiness was only consciousness of possessing virtue, as belonging to the subject's condition. The Epicurean claimed that happiness was the *entire highest good*. Virtue was only the form of the maxim for pursuing it, namely, the rational use of the means to it.

But the Analytic makes it clear that the maxims of virtue and those of personal happiness are entirely different in their supreme practical principle. Far from agreeing, they severely limit and interfere with each other within the same subject, even though they belong to one highest good and make it possible. So the question, *how is the highest good practically [A 203] possible?*, remains unsolved despite all previous *attempts to combine them*. The Analytic has given us what makes this problem difficult: happiness and morality are two *elements of*

entirely different kinds in the highest good. Their connection therefore *cannot be cognized analytically* [AA V 113]. Merely analyzing his concepts will not show someone who pursues happiness that he is virtuous in doing so; nor will someone who follows virtue find himself already happy *by that very fact* in being conscious of such conduct. Instead, their connection is a *synthesis* of concepts. But this connection is cognized as *a priori*, and thus as practically necessary, not as derived from experience. The possibility of the highest good therefore rests on no empirical principles. So the *deduction* of this concept will have to be *transcendental*. It is *a priori* morally necessary *to bring about the highest good through freedom of the will*. The condition of its possibility must therefore also rest entirely on *a priori* grounds of cognition.

I. [A 204] The antinomy of practical reason.

In the highest good that is practical for us—that is, that our will is to make real—virtue and happiness are thought of as necessarily connected. Pure practical reason cannot accept one without the other also belonging to it. Now this connection, like any connection, is either *analytic* or *synthetic*. As we just showed, this particular connection cannot be analytic. It must therefore be thought of as synthetic, specifically as a connection of cause and effect, since it concerns a practical good, something possible through action. So either the desire for happiness must motivate maxims of virtue, or the maxim of virtue must be the effective cause of happiness. The first is *absolutely* impossible. As the Analytic proved, maxims that place the will's determining ground in the desire for one's happiness are not moral at all and cannot establish virtue. But the second is *also impossible*. Every practical connection between causes and effects in the world that results from the determination of the will depends not on [A 205] the will's moral disposition, but on knowledge of natural laws and the physical ability to use them for one's purposes. Consequently, even the most exact [AA V 114] observance of moral laws cannot be expected to produce a necessary connection between happiness and virtue in the world sufficient for the highest good. Now promoting the highest good, whose concept contains this connection, is an *a priori* necessary object of our will. It is inseparably connected with the moral law. So the impossibility of promoting it must also prove the moral

law false. If the highest good is impossible under practical rules, then the moral law that commands us to promote it must also be fanciful and directed toward empty, imaginary ends. It must therefore be false in itself.

II. Critical resolution of the antinomy of practical reason.

The antinomy of pure speculative reason contains a similar conflict between natural necessity and freedom in the causality of events in the world. This was resolved by proving that there is no real conflict if we regard events [A 206], and even the world in which they occur, only as appearances—as we should. One and the same acting being, *as an appearance*, even to its own inner sense, has a causality in the sensible world that always follows nature's mechanism. Yet with regard to the same event, insofar as the acting person also regards himself as a *noumenon*—as a pure intelligence whose existence cannot be determined in time—he can contain a determining ground of that causality under natural laws which is itself free from every natural law.

The present antinomy of pure practical reason works in exactly the same way. The first of its two propositions, that striving for happiness produces a ground for a virtuous disposition, is *absolutely false*. But the second, that a virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness, is *not absolutely false*. It is false only insofar as virtue is regarded as the form of causality in the sensible world, and thus if I take existence in that world to be the only kind of existence a rational being has. It is therefore false only *conditionally*. But I am entitled to think of my existence also as a noumenon in a world of understanding. I even [AA V 115] have in the moral law a purely intellectual determining ground of my causality in the sensible world. So it is not impossible [A 207] for the morality of my disposition, as cause, to have a necessary connection with happiness, as effect, in the sensible world. This connection might be, if not direct, at least indirect, through an intelligible author of nature. In a nature that is merely an object of the senses, this connection can never be anything but contingent, and cannot suffice for the highest good.

So despite this apparent conflict of practical reason with itself, the highest good is the necessary supreme end of a morally determined will and a genuine object of that reason. For it is practically possible. The maxims of that will, whose

content concerns the highest good, have objective reality. At first, the antinomy seemed to threaten this reality by challenging the connection of morality with happiness under a universal law. But that was only a misunderstanding: a relation between appearances was taken to be a relation of things in themselves to those appearances.

We find ourselves forced to seek the possibility of the highest good so far afield: in its connection with an intelligible world. This is the goal reason sets before all rational beings for all their moral wishes. It must therefore seem strange [A 208] that ancient and modern philosophers alike could nevertheless believe they found happiness proportioned quite properly to virtue already *in this life*, in the sensible world, or persuade themselves that they were conscious of it. Both *Epicurus* and the *Stoics* praised above everything the happiness that arose in life from consciousness of virtue. In his practical rules, Epicurus was not as base-minded as one might infer from the principles of his theory, which he used to explain things, not to guide action. Nor was he as many interpreted him to be, misled by the expression sensual pleasure instead of contentment. He counted the most unselfish practice of good among the ways of enjoying the deepest joy. Contentment with little and restraint of inclinations, as demanding as the strictest moral philosopher could require, belonged to his plan for pleasure. By pleasure he meant a heart that is always cheerful. His main difference from the Stoics here was that he made this pleasure the motive. They refused to do so, and rightly. For, on the one hand, [AA V 116] the virtuous Epicurus made a mistake also made today by many men of good moral disposition who have not thought deeply enough about their principles. He already assumed a virtuous *disposition* in the people for whom he wanted to identify the initial incentive to virtue. Indeed, an upright person cannot find himself happy [A 209] unless he is first conscious of his uprightness. This is because, with that disposition, his own way of thinking would force him to reproach himself for his transgressions. Moral self-condemnation would rob him of all enjoyment of whatever comforts his situation might otherwise contain. But the question is: what first makes such a disposition possible, and such a way of thinking when assessing the worth of one's existence? Before it, the subject

would have no feeling for moral worth at all. Certainly, if a person is virtuous, he will not enjoy life without being conscious of his uprightness in every action, however fortunate his physical condition may be. But to make him virtuous in the first place, before he values the moral worth of his existence so highly, can we really recommend the peace of mind that will arise from consciousness of an uprightness for which he has no feeling?

On the other hand, there is always a basis here for a mistake of *illicit substitution*, something like an optical illusion in our consciousness of what we *do*, as distinct from what we *feel*. Even the most experienced person cannot entirely avoid it [A 210]. A moral disposition necessarily includes consciousness that the will is determined *directly by the law*. Now consciousness of a determination of the faculty of desire is always the ground for taking satisfaction in the action it produces. But this pleasure, this satisfaction in itself, is not the action's determining ground. Instead, the direct determination of the will by reason alone is the ground of the feeling of pleasure. That determination remains a purely practical determination of the faculty of desire, not one based on feeling. Inwardly, this determination has exactly the same effect of prompting activity that would have been produced by a feeling of pleasantness expected from the desired action. So we easily mistake what we ourselves do for something we merely passively feel. We take the moral [AA V 117] incentive for a sensible impulse. This is what usually happens in so-called illusions of the senses, here the inner sense. There is something very sublime in human nature's being determined to act directly by a pure law of reason, and even in the illusion of taking the subjective aspect of this intellectual determinability of the will for something belonging to feeling, the effect of a special sensible feeling. An intellectual feeling would be a contradiction. It is also very important to draw attention to this feature of our personality [A 211] and to cultivate reason's effect on this feeling as much as possible. But we must also guard against falsely praising this moral determining ground as an incentive by supplying it with feelings of special joys as its grounds. Those feelings are only its results. Such praise would degrade and distort the real, genuine incentive, the law itself, as if by putting it against a false background. Respect, then—not pleasure or the enjoyment of

happiness—is something for which no *prior* feeling underlying reason is possible. Such a feeling would always be sensible and dependent on our susceptibility to being affected. Respect, as consciousness of the will's direct constraint by law, is barely an analogue of the feeling of pleasure. In relation to the faculty of desire it does exactly the same thing, but from different sources. Yet only this way of representing the matter can achieve what we seek: actions performed not merely in conformity with duty, as a result of pleasant feelings, but from duty. That must be the true aim of all moral education.

But do we have a word that does not mean enjoyment, as happiness does, yet indicates satisfaction with one's existence—an analogue of happiness that must necessarily accompany consciousness of virtue? Yes: the word is *self-contentment* [A 212]. In its proper meaning it always indicates only a negative satisfaction with one's existence, in which one is conscious of needing nothing. Freedom, and consciousness of it as an ability to follow the moral law with an overriding disposition, is *independence from inclinations*. At least, it is independence from them as determining motives of our desire, though not as motives that *affect* us. Insofar as I am conscious of this freedom in following my moral maxims, it is the only source of an unchanging [AA V 118] contentment necessarily connected with it, resting on no particular feeling. This can be called intellectual contentment. Contentment based on feeling, which is called contentment only improperly, rests on satisfying inclinations, however subtly these may be devised. It can never match what we imagine it to be. Inclinations change, grow as we indulge them, and always leave a still greater emptiness than the one we intended to fill. So they are always *burdensome* to a rational being. Even if it cannot put them aside, they force it to wish it were rid of them. Even an inclination toward what accords with duty—for example, toward helping others—can greatly ease the effectiveness of *moral* maxims, but cannot produce any. [A 213] In these maxims everything must be based on the representation of the law as the determining ground, if the action is to contain not merely *legality* but also *morality*. Inclination is blind and servile, whether it is good-natured or not. Where morality is concerned, reason must not merely act as its guardian. As pure practical reason, it must attend entirely to its own interest,

without regard to inclination. Even the feeling of pity and tender sympathy is burdensome to well-meaning people themselves if it comes before reflection on what duty requires and becomes the determining ground. It confuses their considered maxims and makes them wish to be rid of it and subject to lawgiving reason alone.

This helps us understand how awareness of this capacity of pure practical reason, put into action through virtue, can produce awareness of mastery over one's inclinations. That also means awareness of independence from them, and thus from the discontent that always accompanies them. It can therefore produce a negative satisfaction with one's condition, that is, *contentment*. At its source, this is contentment with oneself as a person. In this way, indirectly, freedom itself becomes capable of enjoyment. This cannot be called happiness, because it [A 214] does not depend on the positive addition of a feeling. Strictly speaking, it cannot be called *bliss* either, since it does not include complete independence from inclinations and needs. Yet it resembles bliss insofar as at least the determination of one's will can remain free of their influence. So at least in its origin it is analogous to the self-sufficiency that can be attributed only to the highest being.

[AA V 119] From this resolution of the antinomy of pure practical reason, it follows that practical principles allow us at least to think of a natural and necessary connection between consciousness of morality and the expectation of happiness proportioned to it, as its consequence. That does not yet mean that we can cognize or understand this connection. In contrast, principles for pursuing happiness cannot possibly produce morality. So morality constitutes the *supreme* good, as the first condition of the highest good. Happiness constitutes its second element, but only as the morally conditioned, yet necessary, consequence of morality. Only with this subordination is the *highest good* the whole object of pure practical reason. Reason must necessarily represent it as possible, since reason commands us to contribute everything we can to producing it. But the possibility of such a connection [A 215] between what is conditioned and its condition belongs entirely to the supersensible relation of things. It cannot be given at all under the laws of the sensible world. Nevertheless, the practical

consequence of this idea—the actions aimed at making the highest good real—belongs to the sensible world. We will therefore try to set out the grounds of that possibility, first with regard to what is directly within our power, and then with regard to what is not within our power. Reason offers the latter as a supplement to our inability, necessary under practical principles for making the highest good possible.

III. The primacy of pure practical reason in its connection with speculative reason.

By primacy among two or more things connected by reason, I mean the priority one has in being the first determining ground of its connection with all the rest. In the narrower, practical sense, it means the priority of the interest of one, to which the interest of the others is subordinate, while that first interest cannot be placed below any other. Each faculty of the mind can [A 216] be assigned an *interest*: a principle containing the condition under which alone its exercise is promoted. Reason, as the faculty of principles, determines the interest of all [AA V 120] powers of the mind, but determines its own interest for itself. The interest of its speculative use consists in *cognition* of the object up to the highest *a priori* principles. The interest of its practical use consists in determining the *will* with regard to the final and complete end. What is needed for any use of reason—that its principles and assertions must not contradict one another—is no part of its interest. It is the condition for having reason at all. Only extending its reach counts as its interest, not mere agreement with itself.

If practical reason may assume and think of as given nothing beyond what *speculative* reason can supply from its own insight, then speculative reason has primacy. But suppose practical reason had original *a priori* principles of its own, inseparably connected with certain theoretical positions. These positions might escape every possible insight of speculative reason, though they need not contradict it either. Then the question is which interest is supreme [A 217], not which must yield, since one does not necessarily conflict with the other. Must speculative reason, which knows nothing of all that practical reason offers it to accept, take up these propositions? Must it try to unite them with its concepts as a foreign possession transferred to it, even though they go beyond its reach?

Or is it entitled to stubbornly follow its own separate interest and, under *Epicurus's* canon, reject as empty quibbling everything that cannot establish its objective reality through clear examples presented in experience? May it do so even if these propositions are closely interwoven with the interest of the pure practical use of reason and do not themselves contradict theoretical reason? Its sole reason would be that they really do damage speculative reason's interest to this extent: they remove the limits it has set for itself and expose it to every kind of nonsense or delusion of the imagination.

Indeed, if we took practical reason as dependent on our susceptibility to feelings—that is, as merely managing the interest of inclinations under the sensible principle of happiness—we could not make this demand on speculative reason at all. *Muhammad's* paradise, or the melting union with the deity imagined by *theosophists* and *mystics*, each according to his taste, would force their [AA V 121] monstrous creations on reason. It would be just as good to have no reason as [A 218] to expose it to every fantasy in this way. But if pure reason can be practical on its own, and actually is, as consciousness of the moral law shows, then it is still always one and the same reason that judges by *a priori* principles, whether for theoretical or practical purposes. Clearly, then, even if its theoretical capacity is insufficient to establish certain propositions positively, yet they do not contradict it, reason must accept these very propositions as soon as they *belong inseparably to the practical interest* of pure reason. They come as a foreign offering, not grown on its own soil, but sufficiently authenticated nonetheless. It must try to compare and connect them with everything within its power as speculative reason. But it must recognize that these are not its own insights. They extend its use for another purpose, a practical one. This does not in any way conflict with its interest in restricting speculative overreach.

So when pure speculative and pure practical reason are united in one cognition, practical reason has *primacy*. This assumes that their connection is not *contingent* and optional, but grounded *a priori* in reason itself, and therefore *necessary* [A 219]. Without this subordination, reason would come into conflict with itself. If the two were merely placed side by side as equals, speculative reason would strictly close its boundaries and admit nothing from practical reason

into its territory. Practical reason, however, would still extend its boundaries over everything and, wherever its need required, would try to include speculative reason within them. We cannot ask pure practical reason to be subordinate to speculative reason and so reverse the order. For all interest is ultimately practical. Even the interest of speculative reason is only conditional, and is complete only in practical use.

IV. [AA V 122] The immortality of the soul as a postulate of pure practical reason.

Bringing about the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will that can be determined by the moral law. Within this highest good, the supreme condition is *complete conformity* of dispositions with the moral law. So this conformity must be just as possible as its object, since it is included in the very command to [A 220] promote that object. Complete conformity of the will with the moral law, however, is *holiness*. No rational being in the sensible world is capable of this perfection at any moment of its existence. Yet it is required as practically necessary. So it can be found only in a *progress* toward that complete conformity extending to *infinity*. Under principles of pure practical reason, we must accept such practical progress as the real object of our will.

But this infinite progress is possible only if we presuppose the *existence* and personality of the same rational being continuing to *infinity*. This is called the immortality of the soul. So the highest good is practically possible only if we presuppose the soul's immortality. Thus immortality, as inseparably connected with the moral law, is a *postulate* of pure practical reason. By this I mean a *theoretical* proposition that cannot be proved as such, insofar as it is inseparably attached to a *practical* law that holds unconditionally *a priori*.

The proposition that our nature's moral destiny is to reach complete conformity with the moral law only through progress extending to infinity is extremely useful [A 221]. This is true not only for the present supplement to speculative reason's incapacity, but also for religion. Without it, either we entirely strip the moral law of its *holiness* by contriving to make it *lenient* and thus suited to our convenience, or we stretch our calling and our expectations

toward an unattainable destiny: the hoped-for complete achievement of holiness of will [AA V 123]. We then lose ourselves in fanatical *theosophical* dreams that completely contradict self-knowledge. Both approaches only obstruct our unceasing *effort* to follow, exactly and throughout, a strict and unyielding command of reason. That command is nevertheless not an imaginary ideal, but a real command. For a rational but finite being, only infinite progress from lower to higher degrees of moral perfection is possible. The *Infinite*, for whom the condition of time is nothing, sees in this series, endless for us, the whole of conformity with the moral law. The holiness that his command unrelentingly demands, in order to agree with his justice in the share of the highest good he assigns to each, is fully present in one intellectual intuition of rational beings' existence. [A 222] As for the creature, all it can have concerning the hope of this share is consciousness of its tested disposition. From its past progress from worse to morally better, and from the unchanging resolve it has come to know through this progress, it can hope for further uninterrupted continuation of that progress, however far its existence may extend, even beyond this life¹². Thus it can hope to be fully adequate to God's will—not here or at any foreseeable future [A 223] moment of its existence, but only in the infinity of its continued existence, which God alone can survey [AA V 124]. This involves no leniency or remission, which cannot be reconciled with justice.

V. The existence of God as a postulate of pure practical reason.

In the preceding analysis, the moral law led to a practical task prescribed by pure reason alone, without any contribution from sensible incentives. This task was the necessary completion of the first and foremost part of the highest good, *morality*. Since this task can be fully achieved only in an eternity, it led to the postulate of *immortality*. The same law must also lead to the possibility of the second element of the highest good: *happiness* adequate to that morality. It must do so just as unselfishly as [A 224] before, from impartial reason alone, by presupposing the existence of a cause adequate to this effect. That is, it must postulate the *existence of God* as necessarily belonging to the possibility of the

highest good, which as an object of our will is necessarily connected with pure reason's moral legislation. We want to demonstrate this connection convincingly.

Happiness is the condition of a rational being in the world for whom, throughout its existence, *everything goes according to its wishes and will*. It therefore rests on nature's agreement with its whole end, and also with the essential determining ground of its will. Now the moral law, as a law of freedom, commands through determining grounds that are to be entirely independent of nature and of nature's agreement with our faculty of desire as incentives. But the acting rational being in the world is not also the cause of the world and nature itself. So the moral law contains not the slightest ground for a necessary connection between morality and happiness proportioned to it in a being that belongs to the world as a part and therefore depends on it. Precisely for this reason, that being cannot through its will be the cause of nature, or by its own powers make nature agree throughout [A 225] [AA V 125] with its practical principles where its happiness is concerned. Nevertheless, pure reason's practical task—the necessary work toward the highest good—postulates such a connection as necessary. We *ought* to try to promote the highest good, which must therefore be possible. So we also *postulate* the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature, which contains the ground of this connection: the exact agreement of happiness with morality. But this supreme cause must contain the ground of nature's agreement not merely with a law of rational beings' will, but with the representation of this *law*, insofar as they make it their *will's supreme determining ground*. Thus nature must agree not merely with the form of their conduct, but also with its morality as their motive—that is, with their moral disposition. So the highest good in the world is possible only if we assume a supreme cause of nature whose causality accords with moral disposition. Now a being capable of acting according to the representation of laws is an *intelligence*, a rational being. The causality of such a being according to this representation of laws is its *will*. So the supreme cause of nature, insofar as it must be presupposed for the highest good, is a being that [A 226] is the cause, and thus the author, of nature through *understanding* and *will*: *God*. Consequently, the

postulate of the possibility of the *highest derived good*, the best world, is also the postulate of the reality of a *highest original good*, namely, God's existence. Now it was our duty to promote the highest good. So we have not only permission but also a necessity, connected with duty as a need, to presuppose that this highest good is possible. Since it is possible only on the condition of God's existence, this inseparably connects the presupposition of his existence with duty. In other words, it is morally necessary to assume God's existence.

We must carefully note here that this moral necessity is *subjective*, a need, and not *objective*, itself a duty. There can be no duty to assume that a thing exists, since that concerns only the theoretical use of reason. Nor does this mean that assuming God's existence is necessary *as a ground of all obligation in general*. As we have sufficiently proved, that ground rests solely on the [AA V 126] autonomy of reason itself. The only duty here is to work to produce and promote the highest good in the world. We may therefore postulate its possibility. But our reason [A 227] finds that possibility thinkable only if it presupposes a supreme intelligence. So assuming the existence of this intelligence is connected with consciousness of our duty, although this assumption itself belongs to theoretical reason. With regard to theoretical reason alone, considered as a ground of explanation, it can be called a *hypothesis*. But with regard to the intelligibility of an object assigned to us by the moral law—the highest good—and thus to a need for practical purposes, it can be called *belief*, specifically pure *rational belief*. For pure reason alone, in both its theoretical and its practical use, is the source from which it arises.

This *deduction* now makes it understandable why the *Greek* schools could never solve their problem of the practical possibility of the highest good. They always made the rule governing the human will's use of freedom its sole and independently sufficient ground. They did not think God's existence was needed for it. They were right to establish the principle of morals on its own, independently of this postulate, from the relation of reason alone to the will. They were therefore right to make it the *supreme* practical condition of the highest good. But that did not make it the *whole* condition of its possibility. The *Epicureans* [A 228] had accepted an entirely false principle of morals as

supreme, the principle of happiness. They substituted for a law a maxim of arbitrary choice according to each person's inclination. Yet they were *consistent* enough in lowering their highest good in proportion to the low level of their principle. They expected no greater happiness than human prudence can acquire, including abstinence and moderation of inclinations. As we know, this happiness must turn out meager enough and vary greatly with circumstances. That is not even counting the exceptions their maxims constantly had to allow, which make them unfit to be laws. The *Stoics*, in contrast, quite correctly chose their supreme practical principle, virtue, as the condition of the highest good. But they represented the degree of virtue required by its pure [AA V 127] law as fully attainable in this life. In doing so, they not only stretched the moral capacity of a *human being*, under the name of a sage, beyond all the limits of human nature, assuming something that contradicts all knowledge of humanity. Above all, they also refused to recognize the second *component* of the highest good, happiness, as a distinct object of the human faculty of desire. Instead, they made their [A 229] *sage*, like a deity, entirely independent of nature as far as his contentment was concerned, through consciousness of his personal excellence. They exposed him to life's troubles but did not subject him to them, and also represented him as free from evil. Thus they actually omitted the second element of the highest good, personal happiness. They placed it merely in action and contentment with one's personal worth, and so included it in consciousness of a moral way of thinking. But the voice of their own nature could have refuted them well enough on this point.

The teaching of Christianity¹³, even before we regard it as religious teaching, provides on this point a concept of the highest [A 230] [AA V 128] good—the kingdom of God—that alone satisfies the strictest demand of practical [A 231] reason. The moral law is holy, allowing no leniency, and requires holiness of conduct. Yet all the moral perfection a human being can reach is always only virtue: a disposition conforming to law out of *respect* for the law. This means consciousness of a continuing tendency to transgress, or at least of impurity: the admixture of many spurious, nonmoral motives in following the law. It therefore means self-assessment joined with humility. So, with regard to the

holiness demanded by the Christian law, it leaves the creature nothing but progress to infinity. For that very reason, however, it also entitles the creature to hope for its continued existence to infinity. The *worth* of a disposition *fully* adequate to the moral law is infinite. For in the judgment of a wise and all-powerful distributor of happiness, all possible happiness has no limit except rational beings' lack of conformity with their duty. But the moral law by itself *promises* no happiness. Under concepts of an order of nature in general, happiness is not necessarily connected with following that law. Christian moral teaching supplies this lack—the second indispensable component of the highest good—by representing a world in which rational beings devote themselves wholeheartedly to the moral law as a *kingdom of God*. In it, nature [A 232] and morals are brought into a harmony foreign to each of them on its own by a holy author who makes the derived highest good possible. The *holiness* of conduct is assigned to them as their [AA V 129] guide already in this life. But the well-being proportioned to it, *bliss*, is represented as attainable only in an eternity. For *holiness* must always be the model of their conduct in every condition, and progress toward it is possible and necessary already in this life. *Bliss*, however, under the name of happiness, cannot be attained in this world as far as our own power is concerned. It is therefore made solely an object of hope. Despite this, the Christian principle of *morality* itself is not theological, and thus not heteronomy. It is the autonomy of pure practical reason on its own. For it makes cognition of God and his will the ground not of these laws, but only of reaching the highest good on condition of following them. It even places the real *incentive* to follow these laws not in their desired consequences, but in the representation of duty alone. For only in faithfully observing duty does worthiness to acquire that highest good consist.

In this way, through the concept of the [A 233] highest good as the object and final end of pure practical reason, the moral law leads to *religion*. That is, it leads to *cognition of all duties as divine commands, not as decrees—that is, arbitrary ordinances of an alien will, contingent in themselves*—but as essential laws of every free will in itself. Nevertheless, they must be regarded as commands of the highest being. For only from a morally perfect will, holy and good, that is

also all-powerful can we hope for the highest good. The moral law makes it our duty to set that good as the object of our efforts. So we can hope to reach it only through agreement with this will. Here too, therefore, everything remains unselfish and grounded solely on duty. Neither fear nor hope may be made underlying incentives. If they become principles, they destroy the entire moral worth of actions. The moral law commands me to make the highest possible good in a world the ultimate object of all my conduct. But I can hope to bring this about only through agreement of my will with that of a holy and good author of the world. The concept of the highest good is that of a whole in which the greatest happiness is represented as joined in the most exact proportion to the greatest degree of moral perfection possible in creatures [A 234]. It therefore includes [AA V 130] *my own happiness*. Nevertheless, happiness is not the determining ground of the will directed to promote the highest good. The moral law is. Indeed, that law strictly limits my unlimited desire for happiness by imposing conditions on it.

So morality is not really the teaching of how we are to *make ourselves* happy, but of how we are to become *worthy* of happiness. Only when religion is added does the hope also arise of someday sharing in happiness to the extent that we have taken care not to be unworthy of it.

Someone is *worthy* to possess a thing or a condition when that person's possession of it agrees with the highest good. We can now easily see that all worthiness depends on moral conduct. For in the concept of the highest good, this conduct is the condition of the rest, which belongs to one's condition: a share in happiness. It follows that *morality* in itself must never be treated as a *teaching about happiness*, that is, as guidance for coming to share in happiness. It concerns only the rational *condition without which happiness is impossible* [A 235], not a means of acquiring it. But suppose morality has been presented completely. It merely imposes duties and does not supply measures for satisfying selfish wishes. Suppose, then, that the law-based moral wish to promote the highest good—to bring the kingdom of God to us—has been awakened, a wish that could not previously arise in any selfish soul, and that the step to religion has

been taken to support it. Only then can this moral teaching also be called a teaching about happiness. For only with religion does the *hope* for happiness first begin.

We can also see from this that if we ask about *God's ultimate end* in creating the world, the answer must not be the *happiness* of rational beings in it, but *the highest good*. This adds a condition to those beings' wish for happiness: worthiness to be happy, that is, the *morality* of those same rational beings. Morality alone provides the standard by which they can hope to share in happiness at the hand of a *wise* author. For *wisdom*, considered theoretically, means *cognition of the highest good*, and practically, *the [AA V 131] will's conformity with the highest good*. So we cannot assign to a supreme, independent wisdom an end grounded merely on *goodness*. For the effect of this goodness, in [A 236] regard to rational beings' happiness, can be thought adequate to the highest original good only under the limiting conditions of agreement with the *holiness*¹⁴ of his will. Those who placed creation's end in the glory of God therefore chose perhaps the best expression, provided we do not think of this in human terms as an inclination to be praised. For nothing honors God more than what is most valuable in the world: respect for his command and observance of the holy duty his law imposes on us, when his magnificent arrangement [A 237] crowns such a beautiful order with appropriate happiness. If the latter, speaking in human terms, makes him lovable, the former makes him an object of worship. Even human beings can earn love through doing good, but never respect through that alone. So even the greatest generosity brings them honor only by being exercised according to worthiness.

It now follows by itself that in the order of ends, a human being, and with him every rational being, is an *end in itself*. No one, not even God, can ever use him merely as a means without his also being an end at the same time. Thus the *humanity* in our person must be *holy* to us. For a human being is the *subject of the moral law*, and thus of what is holy in itself [AA V 132]. Only for the sake of this law and in agreement with it can anything at all be called holy. For this moral law rests on the autonomy of his will as a free will. Under its universal laws, that will must necessarily also be able to *agree* to what it is to *submit* to.

VI. [A 238] The postulates of pure practical reason in general.

They all start from the principle of morality. This is not a postulate but a law through which reason directly determines the will. Precisely because it is determined in this way, the will, as a pure will, requires these necessary conditions for following its prescription. These postulates are not theoretical dogmas, but *presuppositions* from a necessarily practical standpoint. They therefore do not extend speculative cognition. But through their relation to the practical, they give objective reality to the ideas of speculative reason *in general*. They entitle reason to concepts whose very possibility it otherwise could not presume to assert.

These postulates are those of *immortality*, of *freedom* considered positively as the causality of a being insofar as it belongs to the intelligible world, and of *God's existence*. The *first* follows from the practically necessary condition that duration be adequate to the complete fulfillment of the moral law. The *second* follows from the necessary presupposition of independence from the sensible world and the capacity to determine one's will according to the law of an [A 239] intelligible world, that is, freedom. The *third* follows from the necessity of the condition that enables such an intelligible world to be the highest good, by presupposing the highest independent good, that is, God's existence.

Respect for the moral law makes it necessary to aim at the highest good. This aim, and the resulting presupposition of the highest good's objective reality, therefore lead through postulates of practical reason to concepts that speculative reason could present as problems but could not solve. Thus: 1. They lead to the problem in whose attempted solution [AA V 133] speculative reason could commit nothing but *paralogisms*, namely, immortality. For speculative reason lacked the mark of permanence needed to complete the psychological concept of an ultimate subject, necessarily attributed to the soul in self-consciousness, into the real representation of a substance. Practical reason achieves this through the postulate of a duration required for conformity with the moral law in the highest good, as the whole end of practical reason. 2. They lead to what speculative reason contained only as *antinomy*. Its solution could rest only on a concept thinkable as a possibility, but whose objective reality

speculative reason could neither prove nor determine: the *cosmological* idea of an intelligible world and consciousness of our [A 240] existence in it. Practical reason does this through the postulate of freedom. It establishes freedom's reality through the moral law, and with it the law of an intelligible world. Speculative reason could only point to that world, not determine its concept. 3. They give meaning to what speculative reason could think, but had to leave undetermined as a mere transcendental *ideal*: the *theological* concept of the original being. This meaning is practical: the being is a condition for the possibility of the object of a will determined by that law. Through its authoritative moral legislation in an intelligible world, it is the supreme principle of the highest good in that world.

But is our cognition really extended in this way by pure practical reason? Does what was *transcendent* for speculative reason become *immanent* in practical reason? Certainly, but *only for practical purposes*. For this does not give us cognition of our soul's nature, the intelligible world, or the highest being as they are in themselves. We have only united the concepts of them in the *practical* concept of the *highest good*, as the object of our will. We have done so entirely *a priori* through pure reason, but only through the moral law and solely in relation to it, with regard to the object it commands. We gain no insight into even how freedom [A 241] is possible, or how we should represent this kind of causality theoretically and positively. Only that such a causality exists is postulated through the moral law and for its sake. The same holds for the other ideas. No human understanding will ever fathom their possibility. Yet no sophistry will ever tear from even the most ordinary person's conviction the belief that they are [AA V 134] true concepts.

VII. How is it possible to think of an extension of pure reason for practical purposes without also extending its cognition as speculative reason?

To avoid becoming too abstract, we will answer this question at once by applying it to the case before us.—To extend pure cognition *practically*, a *purpose* must be given *a priori*. That means an end as an object of the will, represented as practically necessary independently of all theoretical principles through an imperative that directly determines the will, a categorical imperative. Here that

end is the *highest good*. But this is not possible without presupposing three theoretical concepts: freedom, immortality, and God. Since these are mere pure concepts of reason, no corresponding intuition can be found for them, and thus no objective reality by a theoretical [A 242] route. So the practical law commanding the existence of the highest good possible in a world postulates the possibility of those objects of pure speculative reason—the objective reality that speculative reason could not secure for them. This does indeed add to pure reason’s theoretical cognition. But the addition consists solely in this: those concepts, otherwise problematic for it, merely thinkable, are now positively declared to have actual objects corresponding to them. For practical reason inevitably needs their existence for the possibility of its own absolutely necessary practical object, the highest good. Theoretical reason is thereby entitled to presuppose them. But this extension of theoretical reason is no extension of speculation that would now allow positive use of them *for theoretical purposes*. Practical reason has accomplished nothing more here than establishing that those concepts are real and actually have their possible objects. It gives us no intuition of them, nor can one be required. So no synthetic proposition is possible through this concession of their reality. Consequently, [A 243] this disclosure does not help us in the least for speculative purposes. It does help extend this cognition of ours [AA V 135] with regard to the practical use of pure reason. The three ideas of speculative reason mentioned above are not yet cognitions in themselves. Yet they are transcendent *thoughts* containing nothing impossible. Now, through an apodictic practical law, they acquire objective reality as necessary conditions for the possibility of what that law commands us *to make our object*. That is, the law directs us to recognize *that they have objects*, although we cannot indicate how their concept relates to an object. This is still not cognition *of these objects*. For through it we can make no synthetic judgment about them, nor determine their application theoretically. So we can make no theoretical use of reason concerning them, which is what all speculative cognition of them really consists in. Nevertheless, theoretical cognition, *not of these objects*, but of reason in general, was extended to this extent: through the practical postulates, *objects were given* to those ideas. A merely problematic

thought thereby first acquired objective reality. So this was not an extension of cognition of *given supersensible objects*. But it was an extension of theoretical reason and its [A 244] cognition with regard to the supersensible in general. For reason was compelled to admit *that there are such objects*, though it could not determine them more closely or extend this cognition of the objects themselves. They were now given to it on practical grounds and only for practical use. Pure theoretical reason, for which all those ideas are transcendent and without an object, thus owes this addition solely to its pure practical capacity. Here the ideas become *immanent* and *constitutive*, since they are grounds of the possibility of *making real* the *necessary object* of pure practical reason, the highest good. Without this, they are *transcendent* and merely *regulative* principles of speculative reason. They do not require it to assume a new object beyond experience, but only to bring its use within experience closer to completeness. Once reason possesses this addition, however, as speculative reason it will work negatively with these ideas, really only to secure its practical use. It will not extend them but purify them. On one side, it will ward off *anthropomorphism* as the source of *superstition* [AA V 136], or the apparent extension of those concepts through supposed experience. On the other, it will ward off *fanaticism*, which promises such extension through supersensible intuition or similar feelings. All these are obstacles [A 245] to the practical use of pure reason. Warding them off therefore certainly belongs to extending our cognition for practical purposes. This does not contradict admitting at the same time that reason has gained absolutely nothing thereby for speculative purposes.

Every use of reason concerning an object requires pure concepts of the understanding, or *categories*. Without them no object can be thought. These can be applied to reason's theoretical use, that is, to cognition of this kind, only insofar as intuition, which is always sensible, is also supplied as their basis. So they serve only to represent through them an object of possible experience. But here what I would have to think through categories in order to cognize it consists of *ideas* of reason that cannot be given in any experience. Yet our concern here is not theoretical cognition of the objects of these ideas, but only that they have objects at all. Pure practical reason supplies this reality. Here theoretical reason

need only *think* those objects through categories. As we have clearly shown elsewhere, this can certainly be done without requiring any intuition, sensible or supersensible. For the categories have their seat and origin in the [A 246] pure understanding independently of, and before, all intuition, simply as the faculty of thinking. They always mean only an object in general, *however it may be given to us*. Now insofar as the categories are to be applied to those ideas, no object can be given to them in intuition. Nevertheless, an object that practical reason unquestionably supplies in the concept of the highest good sufficiently secures *the reality of the concepts* required for the possibility of the highest good. It secures *that such an object actually exists*, and that the category, as a mere form of thought, is therefore not empty here but has meaning. Yet this addition produces not the slightest extension of cognition according to theoretical principles.

[AA V 137] Next, when these ideas of God, an intelligible world—the kingdom of God—and immortality are determined by predicates taken from our own nature, we must not regard this determination as either *rendering sensible* those pure ideas of reason, through anthropomorphisms, or as cognition of *supersensible* objects beyond our reach. For these predicates are nothing but understanding and will, considered in their relation to each other [A 247] as they must be thought in the moral law, and therefore only insofar as we make a pure practical use of them. We then abstract from everything else psychologically attached to these concepts, that is, everything we observe empirically in the *exercise* of our faculties. For example, human understanding proceeds through concepts, so its representations are thoughts, not intuitions; these follow one another in time; and our will always carries with it a dependence of contentment on the existence of its object, and so on. These things cannot apply to the highest being in that way. So nothing remains of the concepts through which we think a pure being of understanding except precisely what is needed to make it possible to think a moral law. This is indeed cognition of God, but only in a practical relation. If we try to extend it into theoretical cognition, we arrive at an understanding of his that does not think but *intuits*, and a will directed toward objects whose existence does not in the least affect his

contentment. I will not even mention transcendental predicates, such as a magnitude of existence, or duration, that does not occur in time, although time is our only possible means of representing existence as a magnitude. These are all attributes of which we can form no [A 248] concept fit for *cognition* of the object. This teaches us that they can never be used for a *theory* of supersensible beings. So they cannot establish speculative cognition on this side at all. They restrict their use solely to putting the moral law into practice.

This last point is so evident and can be so clearly demonstrated in practice that we can confidently challenge all supposed *natural theologians*—a strange name¹⁵—to name even one attribute determining [AA V 138] their object beyond merely ontological predicates, such as an attribute of understanding or will, for which we could not conclusively prove the following. Once everything [A 249] anthropomorphic is removed from it, only the bare word remains for us. We cannot connect it with the slightest concept from which we might hope to extend theoretical cognition. In practical matters, however, the attributes of an understanding and a will still leave us the concept of a relation. The practical law, which determines precisely this relation of understanding to will *a priori*, gives that concept objective reality. Once this has happened, reality is also given to the concept of the object of a morally determined will, the highest good, and with it to the conditions of its possibility: the ideas of God, freedom, and immortality. But this is always only in relation to putting the moral law into practice, never for any speculative purpose.

After these reminders, the answer to an important question is now easy to find: *does the concept of God belong to physics*—and therefore also to metaphysics, which contains only physics' pure *a priori* principles in a general sense—or *does it belong to morality*? If we resort to God as author of all things to *explain* arrangements in nature or their changes, that is at least no physical explanation. It is always an admission that we have reached the end of our philosophy. For we are forced to assume something of which we otherwise have no concept in itself, in order to form a concept of the [A 250] possibility of what we see before us. Nor can metaphysics take us from knowledge of *this* world to the concept of God and proof of his existence *through reliable inferences*. For we

would have to cognize this world as the most perfect possible whole. To do that, we would have to cognize all possible worlds so we could compare them with this one. We would therefore have to be omniscient [AA V 139] to say that this world was possible only through a *God*, in the sense in which we must think this concept. Moreover, cognizing this being's existence from mere concepts is absolutely impossible. Every existential proposition—a proposition saying that a being of which I form a concept exists—is synthetic. It goes beyond that concept and says more about it than was thought in the concept: that an object *outside the understanding* is posited as corresponding to this concept *in the understanding*. Clearly, no inference can establish this. So only one procedure remains for reason to reach this cognition. As pure reason, it must determine its object by starting from the supreme principle of its pure practical use. This use is in any case directed solely toward the *existence* of something as a consequence of reason. In reason's unavoidable task, the necessary direction of the will toward the highest good, there appears not only [A 251] the necessity of assuming such an original being in relation to the possibility of this good in the world. Most remarkably, there also appears something wholly missing from reason's progress along the path of nature: *a precisely determined concept of this original being*. We know only a small part of this world, and can still less compare it with all possible worlds. So from its order, purposiveness, and size we may infer a *wise, good, powerful* author, and so on, but not his *omniscience, universal goodness, omnipotence*, and so on. We can readily grant that we are entitled to fill this unavoidable gap with a permissible and entirely reasonable hypothesis. If wisdom, goodness, and so on shine out in as many parts as our closer knowledge reaches, they will do so in all the rest as well. It is therefore reasonable to attribute every possible perfection to the world's author. But these are not *inferences* on which we can pride ourselves for our insight. They are only permissions that can be granted to us, and they still need another recommendation to justify using them. On the empirical path of physics, then, the concept of God always remains an *insufficiently determined* [A 252] *concept*

of the first being's perfection to be considered adequate to the concept of a deity. And metaphysics in its transcendental part can accomplish nothing at all here.

[AA V 140] I now try to compare this concept with the object of practical reason. I find that the moral principle allows this object as possible only if we presuppose an author of the world of *supreme perfection*. He must be *omniscient*, to know my conduct down to my deepest disposition in every possible case and for all the future; *omnipotent*, to give it the appropriate consequences; and likewise *omnipresent*, *eternal*, and so on. So through the concept of the highest good as the object of pure practical reason, the moral law determines the concept of the original being *as the highest being*. The physical path of reason, or the metaphysical path that takes it further—and thus the whole speculative path—could not accomplish this. So the concept of God originally belongs not to physics, that is, to speculative reason, but to morality. The same can be said of the other concepts of reason that we discussed above as postulates of reason in its practical use.

In the history of Greek philosophy, we find no clear traces of a pure rational theology before [A 253] *Anaxagoras*. This was not because earlier philosophers lacked the understanding and insight to rise to it through speculation, at least with the help of an entirely reasonable hypothesis. What could be easier or more natural than the thought that suggests itself to everyone: instead of various causes of the world with indefinite degrees of perfection, assume a single rational cause possessing *all perfection*? But the evils in the world seemed far too serious as objections for them to consider themselves entitled to such a hypothesis. So they showed understanding and insight precisely by not allowing themselves that assumption. Instead, they searched among natural causes to see whether they might find in them the character and capacity required of an original being. But this perceptive people advanced so far in their inquiries that they treated even moral subjects philosophically, subjects about which other peoples had never done more than chatter. Only then did they discover a new need, a practical one, which unfailingly gave them a determinate concept of the original being. Speculative reason could only watch. At most, it had the further

merit of embellishing a concept that had not grown on its own soil. With a train [A 254] [AA V 141] of confirmations from the study of nature, which only then came forward, it promoted not the concept's authority, which was already established, but rather only its display of supposed theoretical rational insight.

These reminders will fully convince a reader of the Critique of Pure Speculative Reason how necessary that laborious *deduction* of the categories was, and how beneficial for theology and morality. For only through it can we prevent either of two errors. If we place the categories in the pure understanding, we might with *Plato* regard them as innate, and base on them overreaching presumptions in theories of the supersensible whose end cannot be seen. This would turn theology into a magic-lantern show of phantoms. If we regard them as acquired, we might with *Epicurus* restrict every use of them, even for practical purposes, solely to objects and determining grounds of the senses. But in that deduction, the Critique *first* proved that they are not empirical in origin, but have their seat and source *a priori* in the pure understanding. *Second*, it proved that, since they refer to *objects in general* independently of their intuition, they produce *theoretical cognition* only when applied [A 255] to *empirical* objects. Yet, applied to an object given by pure practical reason, they also serve for *determinate thought of the supersensible*. This holds only insofar as the supersensible is determined solely by predicates necessarily belonging to the pure *practical purpose* given *a priori* and to its possibility. Restricting pure reason speculatively and extending it practically first bring it into that *balanced relation* in which reason in general can be used purposively. This example proves better than any other that for us human beings the path to *wisdom* must inevitably pass through science, if it is to be secure rather than impassable or misleading. But only after completing that science can we be convinced that it leads to this goal. VIII. [AA V 142] Assent arising from a need of pure reason.

A *need* of pure reason in its speculative use leads only to *hypotheses*, but a need of pure practical reason leads to [A 256] *postulates*. For in the first case I ascend from what is derived as high in the series of grounds *as I choose*. I need an original ground not to give objective reality to what is derived—for example, the

causal connection of things and changes in the world—but only to satisfy my inquiring reason completely concerning it. Thus I see order and purposiveness in nature before me. I do not need to move into speculation to assure myself of their *reality*, but only to *explain them* by *presupposing a deity* as their cause. Now an inference from an effect to a determinate cause is always uncertain and precarious, especially to a cause determined as precisely and completely as we must think God to be. So such a presupposition can never be raised beyond the level of the most reasonable opinion possible for us human beings.¹⁶ By contrast, [A 257] a need of pure *practical* reason rests on a *duty* to make something, the highest good, the object of my will, in order to promote it with all my powers. But in doing so I must presuppose its possibility, and thus also its conditions: God, freedom, and immortality. For my speculative reason can neither prove nor refute these. This duty rests on a law entirely independent of these last presuppositions, a law apodictically certain in itself: the moral law. To that extent, it needs no further support [AA V 143] from theoretical opinion about the inner constitution of things, the hidden purpose of the world's order, or a ruler presiding over it, in order to bind us completely to unconditionally lawful actions. But the subjective effect of this law—the *disposition* that agrees with it and that it makes necessary, to promote the practically possible highest good—at least presupposes that the highest good is *possible*. Otherwise it would be practically impossible to strive for the object of a concept that was fundamentally empty and without an object. Now the postulates above concern only [A 258] the physical or metaphysical conditions—in a word, the conditions lying in the nature of things—for the *possibility* of the highest good. But they do so not for some optional speculative purpose, but for a practically necessary end of the pure rational will. Here the will does not *choose* but *obeys* an unrelenting command of reason. This command has its ground *objectively* in the constitution of things as they must be universally judged by pure reason. It does not rest on *inclination*. Inclination is in no way entitled, for the sake of what we *wish* on merely *subjective* grounds, to assume at once that the means to it are possible, or even that the object is real. So this is a *need for an absolutely necessary purpose*. It justifies its presupposition not merely as a permissible

hypothesis, but as a postulate for practical purposes. Granted that the pure moral law unrelentingly binds everyone as a command, not as a rule of prudence, an upright person may well say: “I *will* that there be a God; that my existence in this world be, beyond the natural connection, also an existence in a pure world of understanding; and finally, that my duration be endless. I insist on this and will not let this belief be taken from me. For this is the one case in which my interest inevitably determines my judgment, since I *may* not give up any part of that interest. I pay no attention [A 259] to specious arguments, however unable I may be to answer them or counter them with more plausible ones.”¹⁷

[AA V 144] To prevent misinterpretations in using so unfamiliar a concept as pure practical rational belief, [A 260] let me add one more remark.—It might almost seem that this rational belief is itself being announced here as a *command*: to assume that the highest good is possible. But a commanded belief is an absurdity. Recall, however, the explanation above of what the concept of the highest good requires us to assume. We will then see that assuming this possibility need not be commanded at all. No practical dispositions are needed to *concede* it; speculative reason must grant it without being asked. For surely no one would claim that the connection of rational beings’ worthiness to be happy in the world, in conformity with the moral law, with a proportionate possession of happiness is *impossible* in itself. Concerning the first part of the highest good, morality, the moral law gives us only a command. Doubting the possibility of that component would amount to doubting the moral law itself. As for the second part of that object, happiness fully adequate to that worthiness, conceding its possibility in general needs no command either. Theoretical reason itself has no objection. Only *the way in which* we are to think of such a harmony of the laws of nature with those [A 261] [AA V 145] of freedom leaves something in respect of which we have a choice. For theoretical reason decides nothing about this with apodictic certainty. Regarding this choice, there can be a moral interest that turns the balance.

Above, I said that happiness exactly proportioned to moral worth is not to be expected from the mere course of nature in the world, and must be regarded as impossible. From this side, then, the possibility of the highest good can be conceded only if we presuppose a moral author of the world. I deliberately held back the qualification that restricts this judgment to the *subjective* conditions of our reason. I wanted to use it only when the kind of assent involved was to be determined more closely. In fact, this impossibility is *merely subjective*. That is, our reason finds it *impossible for itself* to make comprehensible, through the mere course of nature, such an exactly proportioned and thoroughly purposive connection between two events in the world occurring under such different laws. Yet, as with everything else purposive in nature, it also cannot prove that this connection is impossible under universal natural laws. It cannot sufficiently demonstrate this from objective [A 262] grounds.

But now a different kind of ground for deciding comes into play, to turn the balance when speculative reason wavers. The command to promote the highest good is objectively grounded in practical reason. Its possibility in general is likewise objectively grounded in theoretical reason, which has no objection to it. But reason cannot objectively decide how we are to represent this possibility: under universal natural laws without a wise author presiding over nature, or only by presupposing such an author. Here a *subjective* condition of reason enters. This is the only way theoretically possible for it, and also the only way helpful to morality, which stands under an *objective* law of reason, to think the exact agreement of the kingdom of nature with the kingdom of morals as a condition for the possibility of the highest good. Now promoting that good, and therefore presupposing its possibility, is *objectively* necessary, though only according to practical reason. At the same time, the manner in which we choose to think it possible is up to us. In this choice, a free interest of [AA V 146] pure practical reason decides in favor of assuming a wise author of the world. So the principle determining our judgment here is indeed [A 263] *subjective*, as a need. But as a means of promoting what is *objectively*, practically necessary, it is also the ground of a *maxim* of assent for moral purposes: a *pure practical rational belief*. This belief, then, is not commanded. It springs from

the moral disposition itself as a voluntary determination of our judgment to assume that existence and make it the basis of reason's further use. This determination supports the commanded moral purpose and also agrees with reason's theoretical need. So even in well-disposed people it may sometimes waver, but can never turn into unbelief.

IX. How the proportion of human cognitive faculties is wisely suited to our practical destiny.

If human nature is destined to strive for the highest good, then the measure of its cognitive faculties, especially their relation to one another, must also be assumed suitable for this end. But the Critique of Pure *Speculative* Reason proves reason's extreme inadequacy for solving its most important problems [A 264] in a way suited to that end. It does not fail to recognize the natural hints of that same reason, which cannot be overlooked, or the great steps reason can take to approach the great goal set before it. Yet reason can never reach that goal on its own, even with the help of the greatest knowledge of nature. So nature seems here to have treated us *like a neglectful stepmother* in supplying us with a faculty needed for our end.

Now suppose nature had granted our wish here and given us the power of insight or enlightenment we would like to possess, or that some even *imagine* they actually possess. What would probably follow? Unless our whole nature were changed at the same time, the *inclinations*, which always speak first, would initially [AA V 147] demand satisfaction. Combined with rational reflection, they would demand their greatest possible lasting satisfaction under the name of *happiness*. The moral law would speak afterward, to keep them within their proper limits and even subject them all to a higher end that takes no account of inclination. But instead of the struggle that the moral disposition now has to wage against inclinations—a struggle in which, after some defeats, the soul's moral strength can nevertheless [A 265] gradually be acquired—*God* and *eternity*, with their *terrifying majesty*, would stand constantly *before our eyes*. For what we can prove completely has as much certainty for us as what we establish by seeing it. Transgression of the law would of course be avoided, and what is commanded would be done. But no command

can instill the *disposition* from which actions ought to be done. Here the spur to activity is immediately at hand and *external*. Reason therefore does not first have to work its way upward, to gather strength to resist inclinations through a vivid representation of the law's dignity. So most lawful actions would be done from fear, a few from hope, and none from duty. There would be no moral worth in actions at all. Yet this alone determines the worth of the person, and even of the world, in the eyes of the highest wisdom. As long as human nature remained as it is now, human conduct would therefore be transformed into a mere mechanism. As in a puppet show, everything would *move properly*, but there would be *no life* in the figures. As things are, our situation is quite different. With all our reason's effort, we have only a very obscure and ambiguous [A 266] view of the future. The world's ruler lets us conjecture his existence and glory, but not see or clearly prove them. In contrast, the moral law within us demands unselfish respect without promising or threatening anything with certainty. Only when this respect has become active and dominant, and only through it, does the law permit prospects into the kingdom of the supersensible, and even then only faint glimpses. In these circumstances a genuinely moral disposition, directly devoted to the law, can exist. The rational creature can become worthy of a share in the highest good proportioned to the moral worth of its person, not merely its actions [AA V 148]. So here too, what the study of nature and humanity otherwise sufficiently teaches us may well be right: the unfathomable wisdom through which we exist is no less worthy of reverence in what it denied us than in what it granted us.

- ¹² Yet *conviction* that one's disposition is unchanging in progress toward the good seems impossible for a creature on its own. For this reason Christian religious teaching derives it only from the same spirit that brings about sanctification: this firm resolve and, with it, consciousness of perseverance in moral progress. But even in the natural way, someone conscious of having continued to progress toward the better for a long part of his life right to its end, and from genuine moral motives, may reasonably have a comforting hope, though not certainty. He may hope that he will persevere in these principles also in an exis-

tence continued beyond this life. In his own eyes he is never justified here. Nor may he ever hope to be justified as his natural perfection increases in the future, as he hopes it will, since his duties will increase with it. Nevertheless, in this progress he can have a prospect of a *blessed* future. Although the progress concerns a goal postponed to infinity, it counts for God as possession of that goal. For this is the expression reason uses to describe complete *well-being* independent of all contingent causes in the world. Like *holiness*, this is an idea that can be contained only in an infinite progress and its totality, and so is never fully attained by the creature.

- 13 People commonly think that the Christian moral prescription has no advantage in purity over the Stoics' moral concept. But the difference between the two is quite visible. The Stoic system made consciousness of strength of soul the pivot around which all moral dispositions were to turn. Its followers spoke of duties and defined them quite well. Yet they placed the incentive and the will's actual determining ground in raising one's way of thinking above the low incentives of the senses, which gain power only through weakness of soul. For them, then, virtue was a kind of heroism of the *sage*, who rises above human animal nature and is sufficient to himself. He prescribes duties to others but is himself above them and subject to no temptation to transgress the moral law. But they could not have done all this if they had represented that law in the purity and strictness with which the Gospel prescribes it. If by an *idea* I understand a perfection for which nothing adequate can be given in experience, moral ideas are not therefore beyond our reach. They are not like speculative reason's ideas, whose very concepts we cannot sufficiently determine, or for which it is uncertain whether any object corresponds to them at all. Instead, as models of practical perfection, they serve as an indispensable guide to moral conduct and also as a *standard of comparison*. If I now consider *Christian morality* from its philosophical side, it would appear as follows in comparison with the ideas of the Greek schools. The ideas of the *Cynics*, *Epicureans*, *Stoics*, and *Christians* are, respectively, *natural simplicity*, *prudence*, *wisdom*, and *holiness*. Concerning the path to reach these, the Greek philosophers differed in this way: the Cynics

considered *ordinary human understanding* sufficient, the others only the path of *science*. So both considered the mere *use of natural powers* sufficient. Christian morality makes its prescription so pure and unyielding, as indeed it must, that it takes away people's confidence in being fully adequate to it, at least here in life. But it also restores that confidence in this way: if we act as well as is within our *power*, we can hope that what is not within our power will come to our aid from elsewhere, whether or not we know how. *Aristotle* and *Plato* differed only concerning the *origin* of our moral concepts.

- ¹⁴ Here, to make the distinctive character of these concepts clear, I add only this remark. We attribute various properties to God whose quality we also find appropriate to creatures, except that in God they are raised to the highest degree. For example, power, knowledge, presence, goodness, and so on become omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, universal goodness, and so on. Yet there are three properties attributed exclusively to God, without any added indication of magnitude, and all are moral: he is *the only holy one, the only blessed one, the only wise one*. For these concepts already include unlimitedness. In their order, he is therefore also the *holy lawgiver* and creator, the *good ruler* and preserver, and the *just judge*. These three properties contain everything through which God becomes the object of religion. The metaphysical perfections fitting them then add themselves in reason of their own accord.
- ¹⁵ *Learning* properly means only the body of *historical* sciences. Consequently, only a teacher of revealed theology can be called a *scholar of God*, a theologian. Suppose, however, we also wanted to call someone who possesses rational sciences, mathematics and philosophy, a scholar. This would already contradict the meaning of the word, which always counts as learning only what one must be *taught*, and thus cannot discover on one's own through reason. Even so, a philosopher with his cognition of God as a positive science might cut too poor a figure to let himself be called a *scholar* on that account.

- ¹⁶ But even here we could not invoke a need *of reason* if we did not have before us a problematic yet unavoidable concept of reason: that of an absolutely necessary being. This concept calls for determination. When the drive to extend cognition is added, this is the objective ground of a need of speculative reason: to determine more closely the concept of a necessary being that is to serve as the original ground of others, and so to identify that ultimate being by some characteristic. Without such prior necessary problems, there are no *needs*, at least none of *pure reason*. The others are needs of *inclination*.
- ¹⁷ In the Deutsches Museum, Feb. 1787, there is an essay by a very perceptive and clear thinker, the late *Wizenmann*, whose early death is regrettable. He disputes our right to infer from a need the objective reality of its object. He illustrates his point with the example of a *person in love* who became infatuated with an idea of beauty that was merely a creation of his imagination, and then wanted to infer that such an object actually existed somewhere. I agree with him completely in every case where the need rests on *inclination*. Even for the person troubled by it, inclination cannot postulate its object's existence as necessary, much less contain a demand valid for everyone. It is therefore a merely *subjective* ground of wishes. But here we have a *need of reason*, arising from an *objective* determining ground of the will: the moral law. This law necessarily binds every rational being. It therefore entitles us *a priori* to presuppose conditions in nature adequate to it, and makes those conditions inseparable from the complete practical use of reason. It is a duty to make the highest good real to the utmost of our ability. So it must also be possible. Consequently, every rational being in the world must inevitably presuppose what is necessary for its objective possibility. This presupposition is as necessary as the moral law, and it is valid only in relation to that law.

PART II

Doctrine of the method of pure practical reason



Of the [A 267] [AA V 149] Critique of Practical Reason

Part II. Doctrine of the Method of Pure Practical Reason.

[AA V 151] The *doctrine of method* of pure *practical* reason cannot [A 269] mean a way of handling pure practical principles, either in thought or in presentation, for the sake of *scientific* cognition of them. That is what alone is usually called method in the *theoretical* field. For popular cognition needs a *manner* of presentation, whereas science needs a *method*: a procedure *according to principles* of reason, through which alone the various elements of cognition can become a *system*. Instead, this doctrine of method means a way of giving the laws of pure practical reason *access* to the human mind and *influence* over its maxims. In other words, it concerns how to make objectively practical reason practical *subjectively* as well.

Now it is clear that the determining grounds of the will that alone make maxims genuinely moral and give them moral worth must be presented as the real incentives of actions. These grounds are the direct representation of the law and the objectively necessary observance of it as duty. Otherwise we would produce *legality* in actions, but not *morality* in dispositions. [A 270] But another point is less clear. Indeed, at first glance everyone must find it quite unlikely: even subjectively, this presentation of pure virtue can have *more power* over the

human mind and supply a much stronger incentive than all the attractions offered by promised pleasures and everything we may count as happiness, [AA V 152] or all the threats of pain and evil. It can more effectively produce even that legality of actions, and stronger resolutions to prefer the law to every other consideration out of pure respect for it. Yet this is really how things stand. If human nature were not constituted this way, then no indirect presentation of the law, no means of recommending it, could ever produce morality of disposition. Everything would be sheer hypocrisy. The law would be hated or even despised, yet followed for one's own advantage. The letter of the law, legality, would appear in our actions, but its spirit, morality, would be entirely absent from our dispositions. And since all our efforts cannot completely free our judgment from reason, we would inevitably have to appear in our own eyes as worthless, contemptible people. We might indeed [A 271] try to compensate for this humiliation before our inner tribunal by enjoying the pleasures that, in our delusion, some natural or divine law we had adopted supposedly attached to its machinery of enforcement. But such enforcement would attend only to what people do, without caring about their motives for doing it.

Admittedly, to bring an as yet untrained mind, or one that has run wild, onto the path of moral goodness initially requires some preparatory guidance. We must attract it through its own advantage or frighten it through harm. But as soon as this machinery, this leading string, has had any effect, the pure moral motive must without fail be brought before the soul. It is the only motive that establishes a character: a practically consistent way of thinking according to unchanging maxims. It also teaches a person to feel their own dignity. For both reasons, it gives the mind a strength it did not expect in itself: the strength to break free of every attachment to sense insofar as that attachment tries to dominate. In the independence of their intelligible nature and the greatness of soul to which they see themselves called, people find [A 272] ample compensation for the sacrifices they make. We therefore intend to establish this property of our mind—its receptivity to a pure moral interest, and thus the motivating force of the pure representation of virtue when properly brought home to the human heart—through observations anyone can make. We will show it to be

the strongest incentive to good, [AA V 153] and the only one when lasting and precise observance of moral maxims is at issue. At the same time, we must remember something. These observations may prove only the reality of such a feeling, not any moral improvement it has brought about. But that does not discredit, as empty fantasy, the only method of making the objectively practical laws of pure reason subjectively practical through the mere pure representation of duty. For this method has never yet been put into practice, so experience cannot yet show anything about its success. We can demand only evidence of receptivity to such incentives. I will now briefly present that evidence, and then sketch in a few words the method of establishing and cultivating genuine moral dispositions.

Pay attention to the course of conversation in mixed company, made up not just of scholars and people fond of argument but also of people [A 273] in business or women. You will notice another kind of entertainment alongside storytelling and joking: reasoning. It finds a place there because stories soon run out if they are to bring novelty and the interest that goes with it, while jokes easily grow stale. But no reasoning draws in people who otherwise quickly find all such discussion boring, or brings a certain liveliness to the company, more than reasoning about the *moral worth* of this or that action, in order to establish someone's character. People who otherwise find every subtlety and close analysis in theoretical questions dry and tiresome soon join in when asked to determine the moral substance of a reported good or bad action. They are precise, searching, and subtle in thinking up everything that might diminish, or even cast suspicion on, the purity of its intention and thus its degree of virtue. No one would expect this of them on any other speculative subject. In these assessments, we can often glimpse the character of the people judging others. Some seem especially inclined, when exercising their office as judge chiefly over the dead, to defend the goodness reported of [A 274] this or that deed against every damaging objection that its motives were impure. Ultimately, they defend the person's entire moral worth against the charge of pretense and hidden malice. Others instead think more about accusations and charges [AA V 154] that challenge this worth. Yet we cannot always attribute to the latter an intention

to reason virtue entirely out of every human example and so make it an empty name. Often it is simply well-meant strictness in determining genuine moral substance by an uncompromising law. Comparing ourselves with this law, rather than with examples, greatly reduces moral conceit. Humility is not merely taught: everyone feels it under rigorous self-examination. Still, we can usually see why people defend the purity of intention in given examples. Where the presumption of integrity favors it, they would gladly wipe away even the smallest stain. Their motive is to prevent this outcome: if every example were denied authenticity, and all human virtue were denied purity, virtue might finally be thought a mere figment of the imagination. Every effort toward it would then be dismissed as empty affectation and deceptive conceit.

I do not know why educators of the young have not long since used this tendency [A 275] of reason to take pleasure in pursuing even the subtlest examination of practical questions put before it. After laying the foundation with a purely moral catechism, why have they not searched biographies from ancient and modern times to have examples of the duties presented ready to hand? These could engage their pupils' judgment, especially by comparing similar actions under different circumstances, so they can notice the lesser or greater moral substance in them. They would soon find even quite young children, otherwise still unready for any speculation, very perceptive here and considerably interested, because they feel their judgment advancing. Most importantly, educators could confidently hope for a lasting impression of esteem on one side and aversion on the other. This would come from repeatedly practicing how to recognize good conduct in its full purity and approve of it, while noticing even the smallest departure from it with regret or contempt. It might initially be pursued only as a game of judgment in which children compete with one another. Yet the mere habit of repeatedly regarding such actions as worthy of approval or blame would provide a good foundation for integrity in [A 276] [AA V 155] their future conduct. I wish only that educators would spare them examples of so-called *noble* actions, actions beyond the call of duty, which our sentimental writings scatter about so freely. They should base everything simply on duty and on the worth a person can and must give themselves in their

own eyes through the consciousness of not having violated it. For empty wishes and longings for unreachable perfection produce nothing but heroes of fiction. They pride themselves on their feeling for what is extravagantly great and, in return, excuse themselves from observing the ordinary, everyday obligations that then seem insignificantly small to them.¹⁸

But suppose someone asks what *pure* morality actually is: [A 277] the touchstone by which we must test every action's moral substance. I must admit that only philosophers can make the answer doubtful. Ordinary human reason settled it long ago, not through abstract general formulas, but through everyday use, much as it distinguishes the right hand from the left. Let us therefore first show the test of pure virtue through an example. Imagine it presented for assessment to a boy of about ten, and let us see whether he would necessarily make this judgment on his own, without his teacher directing him. Tell the story of an honest man whom people want to persuade to join the slanderers of an innocent but otherwise powerless person, such as Anne Boleyn under accusation by Henry VIII of England. They offer him gains: large gifts or high rank. He rejects them. This will produce mere approval and assent [AA V 156] in the listener's soul, because the issue is gain. Now they begin threatening him with losses. Among these slanderers [A 278] are his best friends, who now withdraw their friendship; close relatives, who threaten to disinherit him, a man without wealth; powerful people, who can persecute and hurt him wherever he goes and whatever his circumstances; and a sovereign, who threatens him with loss of freedom and even life itself. But to fill the measure of his suffering, let him also feel the pain that only a morally good heart can feel with true depth. Picture his family, threatened by extreme need and poverty, *begging him to give in*. Picture the man himself: honest, but by no means hard or insensitive either to compassion or to his own distress. At a moment when he wishes he had never lived to see the day that exposed him to such unspeakable pain, he nevertheless remains true to his resolve to be honest, without wavering or even doubting. My young listener will rise by degrees from mere approval to admiration, from there to astonishment, and finally to the greatest reverence and a lively wish to be such a man himself—though certainly not in that man's circumstances. Yet here

virtue is worth so much only because it costs so much, not because it brings any gain. All the admiration, and even the effort to resemble this character, rests entirely on the purity of the moral [A 279] principle. We can make that purity truly stand out only by removing from the action's incentives everything people might count as happiness. Thus morality must have more power over the human heart the more purely it is presented. It follows that if the moral law and the image of holiness and virtue are to influence our soul at all, they can do so only when brought home to the heart as a pure incentive, unmixed with aims directed at one's well-being. For morality shows itself most splendidly in suffering. But something whose removal strengthens a motivating force's effect must have been an obstacle. Consequently, mixing in any incentives drawn from one's own happiness obstructs the moral law's influence on the human heart.—I maintain further that even in the admired action just described, if the motive was esteem [AA V 157] for one's duty, this very respect for the law has the greatest power over the spectator's mind. It is not any claim to regard oneself as magnanimous or as possessing a noble and meritorious way of thinking. Thus duty, not merit, must have the most definite influence on the mind and, when presented in the right light as inviolable, [A 280] the most penetrating influence as well.

In our times, people hope to accomplish more with melting, tenderhearted feelings, or with soaring, inflated pretensions that weaken the heart rather than strengthen it, than through the dry and serious presentation of duty. Yet the latter is better suited to human imperfection and progress in goodness. Pointing out this method is therefore more necessary than ever. Holding up actions to children as noble, magnanimous, and meritorious models, in the belief that enthusiasm for them will win the children over, defeats the purpose altogether. For children are still so far behind in observing even the commonest duty, and even in judging it correctly, that this simply turns them into dreamers at an early age. But even among the more instructed and experienced, this supposed incentive has, if not a harmful effect on the heart, at least no genuinely moral effect—the very effect it was meant to bring about.

All *feelings*, especially those meant to produce unusual effort, must take effect while they are intense, before they subside. Otherwise they do nothing. For the heart naturally returns to its normal, moderate rhythm [A 281] of life and so falls back into its previous weakness. Something has been brought to it that excited it, but nothing that strengthened it. *Principles* must be built on concepts. Any other foundation can produce only passing impulses. These cannot give a person moral worth or even confidence in themselves. Without that confidence, consciousness of a moral disposition and such a character—the highest good within a human being—cannot exist at all. Now if these concepts are to become subjectively practical, they must not stop at the objective laws of morality, merely admiring them and esteeming them in relation to humanity. They must consider how those laws are represented in relation to the human being and to the particular individual. The law then appears in [AA V 158] a form that deserves the highest respect but is not so agreeable as though it belonged to the element in which the person naturally feels at home. Instead, it compels them to leave that element, often not without self-denial, and enter a higher one. There they can maintain themselves only with difficulty, in constant fear of falling back. In a word, the moral law demands observance from duty, not from preference, which neither can nor should be presupposed.

Let us now examine an example to see whether representing an action [A 282] as noble and magnanimous gives it more subjective motivating force as an incentive than representing it merely as duty in relation to the stern moral law. Suppose someone tries, at the greatest risk to their own life, to rescue people from a shipwreck, and ultimately loses their life doing so. On one side this action is counted as duty, but on the other, and for the most part, as meritorious. Yet our high esteem for it is greatly weakened by the concept of *duty to oneself*, which seems to suffer some harm here. A more decisive case is the magnanimous sacrifice of one's life to preserve one's country. Yet some doubt remains whether devoting oneself to that aim voluntarily and without orders is so fully a duty. The action therefore does not possess the full force of a model and an incentive to imitation. But suppose it is an indispensable duty, whose violation infringes the moral law in itself, regardless of human welfare, and virtually

tramples its holiness underfoot. Such duties are usually called duties to God, because in him we think the ideal of holiness embodied in a being. We then offer the most complete [A 283] respect to observance of that law at the sacrifice of everything that could have value for even our deepest inclination. We find our soul strengthened and uplifted by such an example, when it convinces us that human nature can rise so far above every incentive nature could possibly supply to the contrary. *Juvenal* presents such an example in an ascending sequence that makes the reader vividly feel the force of the incentive contained in the pure law of duty as duty:

*Be a good soldier, a good guardian, and also
An honest judge; if ever called as a witness in a doubtful
[AA V 159] And uncertain case, even if Phalaris orders you
To lie, and brings his bull to dictate perjury,
Count it the greatest wrong to prefer life to honor
And for life's sake lose the reasons for living.*

Whenever we can introduce something flattering about our action's merit, the incentive is already somewhat mixed with self-love, and so receives some help from sensibility. But to subordinate everything to the holiness of duty alone, and to become conscious that one *can* do so because our own reason recognizes this as its command and says we *ought* to do it, means rising, as it were, completely above the world of sense itself. In that very consciousness of the law, this is also inseparably connected with the law as an incentive of a faculty that *rules over sensibility*. It is not always [A 284] connected with an actual effect. Yet frequent attention to it and initially smaller attempts to use it offer hope of producing that effect, gradually arousing in us the greatest, but pure, moral interest in it.

The method therefore proceeds as follows. *First*, we need only make judgment according to moral laws a natural activity, almost a habit, accompanying all observation of our own free actions and those of others. We must sharpen this judgment by first asking whether the action objectively *conforms* to *the moral law*, and to which law. Here we direct attention to the difference between a law that merely supplies a *ground* of obligation and a law that actually *obligates*:

laws providing grounds of obligation as distinct from binding laws. An example is the difference between the law concerning what people's *need* demands of me and the law concerning what their *right* demands. The latter prescribes essential duties, the former only nonessential duties. In this way we teach how to distinguish the different duties that come together in one action. The other point requiring attention is whether the action was also done, subjectively, *for the sake of the moral law*. Does it therefore possess not only [A 285] moral correctness as a deed, but also moral worth as a disposition, in terms of its maxim? Now there is no doubt that this exercise, and the consciousness that it cultivates our reason's mere judgment about practical matters, must gradually produce a certain interest in the law [AA V 160] of reason itself, and so in morally good actions. For we finally come to love things whose contemplation makes us feel the expanded use of our cognitive powers. What we find morally correct especially promotes this use, because only in such an order of things can reason feel at home with its capacity to determine *a priori*, according to principles, what ought to happen. Even a student of nature eventually comes to love objects that initially offend the senses, on discovering the great purposiveness of their organization and thus delighting reason in their contemplation. Leibniz carefully returned an insect he had examined through a microscope to its leaf, because its appearance had taught him something and he had, as it were, received a benefit from it.

But this activity of judgment, which makes us feel our own cognitive powers, is not yet interest in actions [A 286] and their morality themselves. It merely makes us enjoy entertaining ourselves with such assessment. It gives virtue, or the way of thinking according to moral laws, a beautiful form that is admired, but not yet sought after: *it is praised and left in the cold*. Similarly, anything whose contemplation produces in us a subjective consciousness of harmony among our powers of representation, and makes us feel our entire cognitive faculty—understanding and imagination—strengthened, produces a pleasure that can also be shared with others. Yet the object's existence remains a matter of indifference to us. It is regarded only as an occasion for becoming aware of our capacity for talents, which rises above animal nature. But now the *second* exer-

cise begins. By vividly presenting moral disposition in examples, it makes the purity of the will noticeable. At first this is presented only as a negative perfection of the will: in an action from duty, no incentives of inclination influence it as determining grounds. This keeps the learner attentive to the consciousness of their *freedom*. Although this renunciation initially arouses a feeling of pain, it also removes the learner from the constraint even of genuine needs. It thus promises release from the many kinds of dissatisfaction in which all those needs entangle them, and makes the mind [A 287] receptive to a feeling of satisfaction from other sources. [AA V 161] The heart is freed and relieved of a burden that always secretly weighs on it when examples of pure moral resolves reveal an inner capacity in the person, one they had not otherwise even properly known: *inner freedom*. This is the capacity to free oneself from the forceful demands of inclinations so thoroughly that none, not even the most cherished, influences a decision for which we are now to use our reason. Consider a case where *I alone* know that I am in the wrong. Freely admitting it and offering redress meets strong opposition from vanity, self-interest, and even my otherwise not wrongful aversion to the person whose right I have infringed. Yet I can put all these reservations aside. This involves consciousness of independence from inclinations and fortunate circumstances, and of the possibility of being sufficient to myself. That consciousness benefits me in other respects everywhere as well. The law of duty now gains easier access through the *respect for ourselves* contained in the consciousness of our freedom, because of the positive worth its observance makes us feel. On this respect, when it is well grounded, [A 288] every good moral disposition can be grafted. This is so when a person fears nothing more than finding themselves contemptible and blameworthy in their own eyes during inner self-examination. For this is the best, indeed the only, guardian that can keep base and corrupting impulses from entering the mind.

Here I have meant only to point out the most general maxims of a doctrine of method for moral education and practice. The variety of duties would require further specific determinations for each kind, making this an extensive task. I

therefore hope to be excused for leaving it at these basic outlines in a work like this, which is only preparatory.

- ¹⁸ It is entirely advisable to praise actions that reveal a great, unselfish, sympathetic disposition and humanity. But here attention must be drawn less to the *uplifting of the soul*, which is very fleeting and temporary, than to the *heart's submission to duty*. We can expect a longer-lasting impression from the latter because it brings principles with it, whereas the former brings only bursts of feeling. We need only reflect a little to find some debt we have incurred toward the human race. It may be no more than the fact that inequality among people in civil society gives us advantages for which others must suffer greater deprivation. This reflection will keep a self-loving fancy about our *merit* from displacing the thought of *duty*.

Conclusion



Two things fill the mind with ever fresh and growing admiration and awe, the more often and steadily we reflect on them: *the starry sky above me and the moral law within me*. I do not need to search for either as though hidden in darkness [AA V 162] or beyond experience, outside my field of vision, and merely guess at their existence. I see them before me and connect them directly [A 289] with the consciousness of my existence. The first begins with the place I occupy in the external world of sense. It extends the connection in which I stand into an immeasurable vastness: worlds upon worlds, systems of systems, and also the boundless times of their periodic motion, its beginning and continuation. The second begins with my invisible self, my personality. It presents me in a world that has true infinity but is discernible only to the understanding. I recognize myself as connected with this world—and through it also with all those visible worlds—not merely contingently, as in the first case, but universally and necessarily. The first view, of a countless multitude of worlds, virtually wipes out my importance as an *animal creature*. After being endowed with vital force for a short time, no one knows how, this creature must return the matter from which it was made to the planet, itself a mere point in the universe. The second, by contrast, infinitely raises my worth as an *intelligence*, through my personality. In this personality the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animal nature and even of the entire world of sense. At least,

that much can be inferred from the purposive determination of my existence by this law: a determination not confined to the conditions and limits of this life, but extending to infinity. [A 290]

Yet admiration and respect can encourage investigation, but they cannot compensate for a lack of it. What, then, must we do to conduct that investigation usefully and in a way suited to the greatness of its object? Examples can serve both as warnings and as models. The study of the universe began with the most magnificent sight human senses could ever present and our understanding could ever manage to follow across its vast extent. It ended—in astrology. Morality began with the noblest property of human nature, whose development and cultivation promise endless benefit. It ended—in fanaticism or superstition. This is what happens to all still crude attempts in which the chief part of the task depends on the use of reason. Unlike the use of our feet, using reason does not come about by itself through repeated exercise, especially when it concerns properties [AA V 163] that cannot be presented so directly in ordinary experience. Eventually, though late, a maxim came into use: carefully consider in advance every step reason intends to take, and let it proceed only along the track of a method thought through beforehand. The assessment of the structure of the universe [A 291] then took an entirely different direction and, with it, reached an incomparably more successful outcome. A stone's fall and a sling's motion were broken down into their elements and the forces evident in them, then treated mathematically. This finally produced a clear insight into the universe's structure, unchanging for all future time. With continued observation, this insight can hope only to expand and need never fear having to retreat.

That example can recommend the same path in dealing with our nature's moral capacities, and give us hope of similarly good results. We do have examples of reason making moral judgments ready to hand. We can analyze these into their elementary concepts. In the absence of *mathematics*, we can adopt a procedure like *chemistry*: *separating* whatever empirical and rational elements may be found in them through repeated experiments on ordinary human understanding. This can make both elements known to us in their *purity*, and let us know

with certainty what each can accomplish on its own. It can thus prevent both the errors of still *crude*, unpracticed judgment and—what is far more necessary—the *flights of genius* that promise imaginary treasures and squander real ones, without any methodical investigation or knowledge of [A 292] nature, as would-be masters of the philosopher's stone tend to do. In a word, science, pursued critically and introduced methodically, is the narrow gate leading to the *doctrine of wisdom*. By this doctrine we mean not merely what one ought to *do*, but what ought to guide *teachers*: how to lay out clearly and soundly the path to wisdom that everyone should follow, and protect others from wrong turns. Philosophy must always remain the guardian of this science. The public need not take part in its subtle investigation, but it should take part in its *teachings*. Only after such work can those teachings become truly clear to it.