

# **The Nature of Practical Reason: A Philosophical Understanding**

Abstract

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## **Abstract**

In my Ph.D. thesis my aim is to analyse the nature of practical reason that is recognised by most of the Western ethical thinkers as the source of moral decision. This metaethical discussion revolves around the questions like what is the ground of making a moral decision, what do we do when we decide our duty? The whole historical epoch has witnessed a significant transformation in the nature of practical reason. Analysing the views of different philosophers I would like to point out the changes appear in the nature of practical reason. Discussion starts from the Greek philosopher Aristotle who thinks practical wisdom is connected with the capacity to deliberate. To get a complete picture discussion continues with the modern philosopher Immanuel Kant, who believes in the purity of practical reason. In both the views a pre-dominance of reason over the psychological aspects of the agent is observed. I have not included the moral views of middle age as practical reason denies the hegemony of divine power. I finish my journey discussing the contemporary era in contrast to the ancient and modern period. I have included three contemporary philosophers who in spite of having their own uniqueness define practical reason in a quite similar manner. Alan Gewirth, Bernard Williams and Jonathan Dancy are incorporating agent's rational and social desires along with prescriptions of reason to decide the ground of moral decision making. Shift of focus from rational capacity to social responsibility introduces the pragmatic dimension in morality. The dichotomy of reason and subjectivity becomes blurred in the contemporary period. In present period practical reason is not giving a prescription or a command to follow; rather it helps to constitute our moral knowledge that enhances our capacity to justify the decisions taken on the demands of rationality along with particular being's subjectivity in responding practical situations.

Keywords: Metaethics, wisdom (excellence), pure practical reason, principle of generic consistency, dialectically necessary method, internal reason, moral particularism, reasons holism.