

16:7 (“Morals, Virtue, and Personality”)

© 2010, 2011, 2014 Matthew Block

This chart is a revision of the ones posted on 13 November 2010 and 21 December 2011.

Source for 16:7

(1) **Schoen**, Dr. Max, “A Scientific Basis for Moral Action,” *The Scientific Monthly*, Vol. 48, No. 3 (March 1939)

Key

- (a) **Green** indicates where a source author first appears, or where he/she reappears.
- (b) **Yellow** highlights most parallelisms.
- (c) **Tan** highlights parallelisms not occurring on the same row, or parallelisms separated by yellowed parallelisms.
- (d) An underlined word or words indicates where the source and the UB writer pointedly differ from each other.
- (e) **Blue** indicates original (or “revealed”) information, or UB-specific terminology and concepts. (What to highlight in this regard is debatable; the highlights are tentative.)

Matthew Block
20 September 2014

Work-in-progress Version 13 nov. 2010

© 2010, 2011, 2014 Matthew Block

Revised 21 Dec. 2011 and 20 Sept. 2014

PAPER 16 — THE SEVEN MASTER SPIRITS

7. MORALS, VIRTUE, AND PERSONALITY

“A SCIENTIFIC BASIS FOR MORAL
ACTION” (Schoen 246)

It is the mental stature of man that makes
of him a moral being.

In other words, it is the moral action that
distinguishes man from infra-human
organisms, and moral action is
synonymous with action that is indicative
of the operation of human intelligence.
To define morality scientifically,
therefore, all that is needed is a definition
of human intelligence (S 248).

16:7.1 Intelligence alone cannot
explain the moral nature.

Morality, virtue, is indigenous to human
personality. Moral intuition, the real-
ization of duty, is a component of human
mind endowment and is associated with
the other inalienables of human nature:
scientific curiosity and spiritual insight.

Man’s mentality far transcends that of his
animal cousins,

but it is his moral and religious natures
that especially distinguish him from the
animal world.

Man is the most intelligent of animals because of the degree of selective behavior of which he is capable. The selective behavior of an animal is on a motor level. When a situation presents itself the animal will react to it either by an established habit or it will engage in a series of exploratory movements which will result in the setting up of an habitual response.

Even the alleged learning by insight of some of Köhler's apes was on a motor level,

in that the insight took place only, if it took place at all, after the motor trial and error had failed.

Man is capable of dispensing entirely with motor exploration and to engage only in selective activity that is the fruit of mental exploration, or thinking proper (S 248).

[T]his ability for what we may call delayed behavior by thought lifts man to the pinnacle of selective behavior, namely, knowing what he is doing, because he can deliberately proceed to know before he does (S 248).

[contd] This ability of man to look before he leaps, and thereby learn by looking rather than by leaping, assumes two forms.

16:7.2 The selective response of an animal is limited to the motor level of behavior.

The supposed insight of the higher animals is on a motor level

and usually appears only after the experience of motor trial and error.

Man is able to exercise scientific, moral, and spiritual insight prior to all exploration or experimentation.

16:7.3 Only a personality can know what it is doing before it does it;

only personalities possess insight in advance of experience.

A personality can look before it leaps and can therefore learn from looking as well as from leaping.

A nonpersonal animal ordinarily learns only by leaping.

16:7.4 As a result of experience an animal becomes able to examine the different ways of

Human selective activity can be either activity that consists of discriminated means for the accomplishment of unconsidered ends, or of discriminated ends that necessarily also imply considered means. In other words, the thought problem before the person may be only that of determining the most expedient way of **accomplishing a goal** that appears desirable,

or it may consist of an examination of the desirability of the **goal itself**.

And it is these two forms of human selective activity that lead to an identification of morality with human intelligence. Moral action can not consist in the **pursuit of indiscriminate ends by discriminate means**, for such action invariably and inevitably leads to a rationalization of the ends pursued, and rationalization is humanly unintelligent, since the need for it arises from the failure to use human intelligence in its complete form. Furthermore, even if some animals do learn by mental manipulation, its fruit is always the selection of means, never of ends, and consequently, **a human being acting in that manner is living on the level of animal and not of human intelligence** (S 248-49).

attaining a goal and to select an approach based on accumulated experience.

But a personality can also examine the **goal itself** and pass judgment on its worth-whileness, its value.

Intelligence alone can **discriminate as to the best means of attaining indiscriminate ends**,

but a moral being possesses an insight which enables him to discriminate between ends as well as between means. And a moral being in choosing virtue is nonetheless intelligent.

To be moral is to know **what** you are doing, and to be responsible for what you are doing, because you know **where** you are going, **why** you are going there and **how** you are to get there (S 249).

[Virtue is righteousness, conformity to the law of the moral Governor (*Homiletic Review*, 1885).]

[According to the Socratic conception of virtue as knowledge, as expounded in the Protagoras:] If virtue is like the parts of gold it can be defined, its nature can be determined, in which case it becomes knowledge and can be taught. On the other hand, if virtue is like the parts of the face the virtues can only be **named**, and enumeration is **not a definition** or knowledge (S 246).

After Socrates [in the Protagoras] has shown that knowledge lies not in enumeration and specification, but in generalization, that virtue must be defined as we would define gold rather than a face, he proceeds to the main issue, namely, if **virtue is knowledge**, it must lie in the knowledge of something. What, then, is this something knowledge of which is a virtue? (S 247)

He knows **what** he is doing, **why** he is doing it, **where** he is going, and **how** he will get there.

16:7.5 When man fails to discriminate the ends of his mortal striving, he finds himself functioning on the animal level of existence.

He has failed to avail himself of the superior advantages of that material acumen, moral discrimination, and spiritual insight which are an integral part of his cosmic-mind endowment as a personal being.

16:7.6 Virtue is righteousness—conformity with the cosmos.

To **name** virtues is **not to define** them,

but to live them is to know them.

Virtue is not mere knowledge

nor yet wisdom but rather the reality of progressive experience in the attainment of ascending levels of cosmic achievement. In the day-by-day life of mortal man, virtue is realized by the consistent choosing of good rather than evil, and such choosing ability is evidence of the possession of a moral nature.

16:7.7 Man's choosing between good and evil is influenced, not only by the keenness of his moral nature, but also by such influences as ignorance, immaturity, and delusion. A sense of proportion is also concerned in the exercise of virtue because evil may be perpetrated when

The implication throughout [the Protagoras] is that at any and every occasion one does that which one knows, and if the action results in evil it is not because evil was chosen but because the knowledge was defective. Now in what way can a man's knowledge about his behavior be defective? The answer is that he can mistake the lesser for the greater, the immediate for the remote, or, in other words, he can act impulsively or habitually instead of by choice, discrimination or deliberation. When a person acts in the former manner he is acting inferior to himself, in that his action is below his capabilities. And it is action in which something is mistaken for something else, a case of mistaken identity, that leads to evil, since a person is acting under a delusion, and brings about consequences that are harmful to him (S 247).

The inferiority of a man to himself arises out of ignorance, while the knowledge that spells virtue is the knowledge of magnitudes, of lesser and greater,

the lesser is chosen in the place of the greater as a result of distortion or deception.

The art of relative estimation or comparative measurement enters into the practice of the virtues of the moral realm.

and the art of virtue is therefore the art of measurement, of discrimination (S 247).

16:7.8 Man's moral nature would be impotent without the art of measurement, the discrimination embodied in his ability to scrutinize meanings.

Likewise would moral choosing be futile without that cosmic insight which yields the consciousness of spiritual values. From the standpoint of intelligence, man ascends to the level of a moral being because he is endowed with personality.

The fact ... that a moral principle has to be defended, in other words, rationalized, is an indication that it is a false principle, and that is the reason why it calls for force to be put in operation. And the application of such an arbitrary principle to a material by force can only produce a distortion of the material (S 251).

16:7.9 Morality can never be advanced by law or by force.

It is a personal and freewill matter and must be disseminated by the contagion of the contact of morally fragrant persons with those who are less morally responsive, but who are also in some measure desirous of doing the Father's will.

A moral act, then, for a human being, is an act in which human intelligence is operating in its complete form, an act for which the person assumes full responsibility, an act performed in full knowledge of what it is all about,

16:7.10 Moral acts are those human performances which are characterized by the highest intelligence,

and such an act is realized only when the chosen means are prompted by chosen ends (S 249).

directed by selective discrimination in the choice of superior ends as well as in the selection of moral means to attain these ends.

Such conduct is virtuous. Supreme virtue, then, is wholeheartedly to choose to do the will of the Father in heaven.