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Book II
Dialectic of pure practical reason

Chapter I
On a dialectic of pure practical reason in general

Pure reason always has its dialectic, whether it is considered in its speculative or in its practical use; for it requires the absolute totality of conditions for a given conditioned, and this can be found only in things in themselves. Since, however, all concepts of things must be referred to intuitions which, for us human beings cannot be other than sensible and hence do not let objects be cognized as things in themselves but only as appearances, in whose series of the conditioned and conditions the unconditioned can never be found, an unavoidable illusion[x] arises from the application of this rational idea of the totality of conditions (and so of the unconditioned) to appearances as if they were things in themselves (for, in the absence of a warning critique they are always held to be such), an illusion which, however, would never be noticed as deceptive if it were not revealed by a *conflict* of reason with itself in the application to appearance of its basic principle of presupposing the unconditioned for everything conditioned. By this, however, reason is forced to investigate this illusion – whence it arises and how it can be removed – and this can be done only through a complete critical examination of the whole pure faculty of reason; thus the antinomy of pure reason, which becomes evident in its dialectic, is in fact the most beneficial error into which human reason could ever have fallen, inasmuch as it finally drives us to search for the key to escape from this labyrinth; and when this key is found, it further discovers what we did not seek and yet need, namely a view into a higher, immutable order of things in which we already are and
5:108 in which we can henceforth be directed, by determinate precepts, to carry on our existence in accordance with the highest vocation of reason.

How that natural dialectic in the speculative use of pure reason is to be resolved and how the error arising from an otherwise natural illusion is to be avoided can be found in detail in the *Critique* of that faculty. But reason in its practical use is no better off. As pure practical reason it likewise seeks the unconditioned for the practically conditioned (which rests on inclinations and natural needs), not indeed as the determining ground of the will, but even when this is given (in the moral law), it seeks the

[x] *Schein*

good may be the whole *object* of a pure practical reason, that is, of a pure will, it is not on that account to be taken as its *determining ground*, and the moral law alone must be viewed as the ground for making the highest good and its realization or promotion the object. This reminder is important in so delicate a case as the determination of moral principles, where even the slightest misinterpretation corrupts dispositions. For, it will have been seen from the Analytic that if one assumes any object under the name of a good as a determining ground of the will prior to the moral law and then derives from it the supreme practical principle, this would always produce heteronomy and supplant the moral principle.

It is, however, evident that if the moral law is already included as supreme condition in the concept of the highest good, the highest good is then not merely *object:* the concept of it and the representation of its existence as possible by our practical reason are at the same time the
5:110 *determining ground* of the pure will because in that case the moral law, already included and thought in this concept, and no other object, in fact determines the will in accordance with the principle of autonomy. This order of concepts of the determination of the will must not be lost sight of, since otherwise we misunderstand ourselves and believe that we are contradicting ourselves even where everything stands together in the most perfect harmony.

Chapter II
On the dialectic of pure reason in determining the concept of the highest good

The concept of the *highest* already contains an ambiguity[4] that, if not attended to, can occasion needless disputes. The highest can mean either the supreme *(supremum)* or the complete *(consummatum).* The first is that condition which is itself unconditioned, that is, not subordinate to any other *(originarium);* the second is that whole which is not part of a still greater whole of the same kind *(perfectissimum).* That *virtue* (as worthiness to be happy) is the *supreme condition* of whatever can even seem to us desirable and hence of all our pursuit of happiness and that it is therefore the *supreme* good has been proved in the Analytic. But it is not yet, on that account, the whole and complete good as the object of the faculty of desire of rational finite beings; for this, *happiness* is also required, and that not merely in the partial eyes of a person who makes himself an end but even in the judgment of an impartial reason, which regards a person in the world generally as an end in itself. For, to need happiness, to be also

[4] *Zweideutigkeit*

would require so complete a transformation of the doctrines assumed in the rest of the philosophic system, that they are afraid to penetrate deeply into the real difference and prefer to treat it as a diversity merely in formulae.

While both schools tried to search out the sameness of the practical principles of virtue and happiness, they were not agreed as to how they would force this identity but separated infinitely from each other inasmuch as one put its principle on the aesthetic side[a] and the other on the logical side, the former in consciousness of sensible need, the other in the independence of practical reason from all sensible determining grounds. According to the Epicurean the concept of virtue was already present in the maxim of promoting one's own happiness; according to the Stoic, on the other hand, the feeling of happiness was already contained in consciousness of one's virtue. What is contained in another concept, however, is indeed identical with a part of the concept containing it but not identical with the whole, and two wholes can, moreover, be specifically different from each other although they consist of the same material,[b] if, namely, the two parts are combined into a whole in quite different ways. The Stoic maintained that virtue is the *whole highest good*, and happiness only the consciousness of this possession as belonging to the state of the subject. The Epicurean maintained that happiness is the *whole highest good*, and virtue only the form of the maxim for seeking to obtain it, namely, the rational use of means to it.

Now, it is clear from the Analytic that the maxims of virtue and those of one's own happiness are quite heterogeneous with respect to their supreme practical principle; and, even though they belong to one highest good, so as to make it possible, yet they are so far from coinciding that they greatly restrict and infringe upon each other in the same subject. Thus the question, *how is the highest good practically possible?* still remains an unsolved problem despite all the *attempts at coalition* that have hitherto been made. The Analytic has, however, shown what it is that makes the problem difficult to solve, namely that happiness and morality are two specifically quite *different elements* of the highest good and that, accordingly, their combination cannot be cognized *analytically* (as if someone who seeks his own happiness should find, by mere resolution[c] of his concepts, that in so acting he is virtuous, or as if someone who follows virtue should in the consciousness of such conduct find that he is already happy *ipso facto*); it must instead be a *synthesis* of concepts. But because this combination is cognized as a priori – thus as practically necessary and not as derived from experience –

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[a] *ästhetischen . . . Seite*, i.e., on the side of feeling. See *The Metaphysics of Morals* (6:399–403,471).
[b] *Stoffe*
[c] *Auflösung*

events and even the world in which they occur are regarded (and they should also be so regarded) merely as appearances; for, one and the same acting being as *appearance* (even to his own inner sense) has a causality in the world of sense that always conforms to the mechanism of nature, but with respect to the same event, insofar as the acting person regards himself at the same time as *noumenon* (as pure intelligence, in his existence that cannot be temporally determined), he can contain a determining ground of that causality in accordance with laws of nature which is itself free from all laws of nature.

It is just the same with the foregoing antinomy of pure practical reason. The first of the two propositions, that the endeavor after happiness produces a ground for a virtuous disposition, is *absolutely false;* but the second, that a virtuous disposition necessarily produces happiness, is false *not absolutely* but only insofar as this disposition is regarded as the form of causality in the sensible world, and consequently false only if I assume existence in the sensible world to be the only kind of existence of a rational being; it is thus only *conditionally false.* But since I am not only warranted in thinking of my existence also as a noumenon in a world of
5:115 the understanding but even have in the moral law a purely intellectual determining ground of my causality (in the sensible world), it is not possible that morality of disposition should have a connection, and indeed a necessary connection,[‘] as cause with happiness as effect in the sensible world, if not immediately yet mediately (by means of an intelligible author of nature), a connection which, in a nature that is merely an object of the senses, can never occur except contingently and cannot suffice for the highest good.

Thus, despite this seeming conflict of a practical reason with itself, the highest good is the necessary highest end of a morally determined will and is a true object of that will; for it is practically possible, and the maxims of such a will, which refer to it as regards their matter, have objective reality, which at first was threatened by that antinomy in the combination of morality with happiness in accordance with a universal law, but only from a misinterpretation, because the relation between appearances was held to be a relation of things in themselves to those appearances.

When we find ourselves compelled to go so far, namely to the connection with an intelligible world, to seek the possibility of the highest good which reason points out to all rational beings as the goal of all their moral wishes, it must seem strange that philosophers both of ancient and modern times could nevertheless have found happiness in precise proportion to virtue already in *this life* (in the sensible world), or persuaded themselves that they were conscious of it. For, Epicurus as well as the Stoics extolled above all the happiness that arises from consciousness of living

[‘] *einen . . . Zusammenhang . . . habe*

nation of the will directly by reason alone is the ground of the feeling of pleasure, and this remains a pure practical, not aesthetic, determination of the faculty of desire. Now, since this determination has exactly the same inward effect, that of an impulse to activity, as a feeling of the agreeableness expected from the desired action would have produced, we easily
5:117 look upon what we ourselves do as something that we merely passively feel and take the moral incentive for a sensible impulse, just as always happens in so-called illusion of the senses (in this case, inner sense). It is something very sublime in human nature to be determined to actions directly by a pure rational law, and even the illusion that takes the subjective side of this intellectual determinability of the will as something aesthetic and the effect of a special sensible feeling (for an intellectual feeling would be a contradiction) is sublime. It is also of great importance to take notice of this property of our personality and to cultivate as much as possible the effect of reason on this feeling. But one must also be on guard against demeaning and deforming the real and genuine incentive, the law itself – as it were, by means of a false foil – by such spurious praise of the moral determining ground as incentive as would base it on feelings of particular joys (which are nevertheless only results). Respect, and not the gratification or enjoyment of happiness, is thus something for which there can be no feeling *antecedent* to reason and underlying it (for this would always be aesthetic and pathological): respect as consciousness of direct necessitation of the will by the law is hardly an analogue of the feeling of pleasure, although in relation to the faculty of desire it does the same thing but from different sources; only by this way of representing things, however, can one attain what one seeks, namely that actions be done not merely in conformity with duty (as a result of pleasant feelings) but from duty, which must be the true end of all moral cultivation.

Have we not, however, a word that does not denote enjoyment, as the word happiness does, but that nevertheless indicates a satisfaction with one's existence, an analogue of happiness that must necessarily accompany consciousness of virtue? Yes! This word is *contentment with oneself*,[1] which in its strict meaning always designates only a negative satisfaction with one's existence, in which one is conscious of needing nothing. Freedom, and the consciousness of freedom as an ability to follow the moral law with an unyielding disposition, is *independence from the inclinations*, at least as motives determining (even if not as *affecting*) our desire, and so far as I am conscious of this freedom in following my moral maxims, it is the sole source of an unchangeable contentment, necessarily combined with it
5:118 and resting on no special feeling, and this can be called intellectual contentment. Aesthetic contentment (improperly so called), which rests on satisfaction of the inclinations, however refined they may be made out to

[1] *Selbstzufriedenheit*

that, accordingly, the *supreme* good (as the first condition of the highest good) is morality, whereas happiness constitutes its second element but in such a way that it is only the morally conditioned yet necessary result of the former. Only with this subordination is the *highest good* the whole object of pure practical reason, which must necessarily represent it as possible since it commands us to contribute everything possible to its production. But since the possibility of such a connection of the conditioned with its condition belongs wholly to the supersensible relation of things and cannot be given in accordance with the laws of the sensible world, although the practical results of this idea – namely actions that aim at realizing the highest good – belong to the sensible world, we shall try to set forth the grounds of that possibility, first with respect to what is *immediately* within our power and then, secondly, in that which is not in our power but which reason presents to us, as the supplement to our inability, for the possibility of the highest good (which is necessary in accordance with practical principles).

III.
ON THE PRIMACY OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON IN ITS CONNECTION WITH SPECULATIVE REASON

By primacy among two or more things connected by reason I understand the prerogative of one to be the first determining ground of the connection with all the rest. In a narrower practical sense it signifies the prerogative of the interest of one insofar as the interest of the others is subordinated to it (and it cannot be inferior to any other). To every faculty of the mind one can attribute an *interest*, that is, a principle that contains the condition under which alone its exercise is promoted. Reason, as the
5:120 faculty of principles, determines the interest of all the powers of the mind but itself determines its own. The interest of its speculative use consists in the *cognition* of the object up to the highest a priori principles; that of its practical use consists in the determination of the *will* with respect to the final and complete end. That which is required for the possibility of any use of reason as such, namely, that its principles and affirmations must not contradict one another, constitutes no part of its interest but is instead the condition of having reason at all; only its extension, not mere consistency with itself, is reckoned as its interest.

If practical reason may not assume and think as given anything further than what *speculative* reason of itself could offer it from its insight, the latter has primacy. Supposing, however, that practical reason has of itself original a priori principles with which certain theoretical positions are inseparably connected, while these are withdrawn from any possible insight of speculative reason (although they must not contradict it): then the

the latter into its domain, while the latter would extend its boundaries over everything and, when its need required, would try to include the former within them. But one cannot require pure practical reason to be subordinate to speculative reason and so reverse the order, since all interest is ultimately practical and even that of speculative reason is only conditional and is complete in practical use alone.

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IV.
THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL AS A POSTULATE OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON

The production of the highest good in the world is the necessary object of a will determinable by the moral law. But in such a will the *complete conformity*[1] of dispositions with the moral law is the supreme condition of the highest good. This conformity must therefore be just as possible as its object is, since it is contained in the same command to promote the object. Complete conformity of the will with the moral law is, however, *holiness*, a perfection of which no rational being of the sensible world is capable at any moment[2] of his existence. Since it is nevertheless required as practically necessary, it can only be found in an *endless progress*[3] toward that complete conformity, and in accordance with principles of pure practical reason it is necessary to assume such a practical progress as the real object of our will.

This endless progress is, however, possible only on the presupposition of the *existence* and personality of the same rational being continuing *endlessly* (which is called the immortality of the soul). Hence the highest good is practically possible only on the presupposition of the immortality of the soul, so that this, as inseparably connected with the moral law, is a **postulate** of pure practical reason (by which I understand a *theoretical* proposition, though one not demonstrable as such, insofar as it is attached inseparably to an a priori unconditionally valid *practical* law).

The proposition about the moral vocation of our nature, that only in an endless progress can we attain complete conformity with the moral law, is of the greatest usefulness, not merely in regard to the present supplement to the incapacity of speculative reason but also with respect to religion. In default of it, one either quite degrades the moral law from its *holiness* by making it out to be *lenient* (indulgent) and thus conformed to our convenience, or else strains ones's calling as well as ones's expectation to an unattainable vocation, namely to a hoped-for full acquisition of holiness of

[1] or "fitness," *Angemessenheit*
[2] *Zeitpunkte*
[3] Or "a progress to infinity," *ins Unendliche gehend*

highest good, **morality**; and, since this can be fully accomplished 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, namely **happiness** proportioned to that morality, and must do so as disinterestedly as before, solely from impartial reason; in other words, it must lead to the supposition of the existence of a cause adequate to this effect, that is, it must postulate the *existence of God* as belonging necessarily to the possibility of the highest good (which object of our will is necessarily connected with the moral lawgiving of pure reason). We shall present this connection in a convincing manner.

Happiness is the state of a rational being in the world in the whole of whose existence *everything goes according to his wish and will*, and rests, therefore, on the harmony of nature with his whole end as well as with the essential determining ground of his will. Now, the moral law as a law of freedom commands through determining grounds that are to be quite independent of nature and of its harmony with our faculty of desire (as incentives); the acting rational being in the world is, however, not also the cause of the world and of nature itself. Consequently, there is not the least ground in the moral law for a necessary connection" between the morality and the proportionate happiness of a being belonging to the world as part of it and hence dependent upon it, who for that reason cannot by his will be a cause of this nature and, as far as his happiness is concerned, cannot by his own powers make it harmonize thoroughly with his practical principles. Nevertheless, in the practical task of pure reason, that is, in the 5:125
necessary pursuit of the highest good, such a connection is postulated as necessary: we *ought* to strive to promote the highest good (which must therefore be possible). Accordingly, the existence of a cause of all nature, distinct from nature, which contains the ground of this connection, namely of the exact correspondence of happiness with morality, is also *postulated*. However, this supreme cause is to contain the ground of the correspondence of nature not merely with a law of the will of rational beings but with the representation of this *law*, so far as they make it the *supreme determining ground of the will*, and consequently not merely with morals in their form but also with their morality as their determining ground, that is, with their moral disposition. Therefore, the highest good in the world is possible only insofar as a supreme cause of nature having a causality in keeping with the moral disposition is assumed. Now, a being capable of actions in accordance with the representation of laws is *an intelligence* (a rational being), and the causality of such a being in accordance with this representation of laws is his *will*. Therefore the supreme cause of nature, insofar as it must be presupposed for the highest good, is a being that is the cause of nature by *understanding* and *will* (hence its

" *Zusammenhang*

the meanness of their principle, and expecting no greater happiness than can be acquired by human prudence (including temperance and moderation of the inclinations), which,[z] as we know, has to be paltry enough and turn out very differently according to circumstances, not to mention the exceptions which their maxims had to constantly admit and which made them unfit for laws. The Stoics, on the contrary, had chosen their supreme practical principle quite correctly, namely virtue, as the condition of the highest good; but inasmuch as they represented the degree of virtue
5:127 required by its pure law as fully attainable in this life, they not only strained the moral capacity of the *human being*, under the name of a *sage*, far beyond all the limits of his nature and assumed something that contradicts all cognition of the human being, but also and above all they would not let the second *component* of the highest good, namely happiness, hold as a special object of the human faculty of desire but made their *sage*, like a divinity in his consciousness of the excellence of his person, quite independent of nature (with respect to his own contentment), exposing him indeed to the ills of life but not subjecting him to them (at the same time representing him as also free from evil); and thus they really left out the second element of the highest good, namely one's own happiness, placing it solely in acting and in contentment with one's personal worth and so including it in consciousness of one's moral cast of mind – though in this they could have been sufficiently refuted by the voice of their own nature.

The doctrine of Christianity,* even if it is not regarded as a religious

*It is commonly held that the Christian precept of morals has no advantage with respect to its purity over the moral concepts of the Stoics; but the difference between them is nonetheless very obvious. The Stoic system made consciousness of strength of soul the pivot on which all moral dispositions were to turn; and although its disciples spoke of duties and even determined them quite well, yet they put the incentive and proper determining ground of the will in an elevation of one's cast of mind above the lower incentives of the senses, which have power only through weakness of soul. With them therefore, virtue was a certain heroism of the *sage*, who, raising himself above the animal nature of the human being, is sufficient to himself, and through the discourses on duties to others is himself raised above them and is not subject to any temptation to transgress the moral law. All this, however, they could not have done if they had represented this law in all its purity and strictness, as the precept of the Gospel does. If I understand by an *idea* a perfection to which nothing adequate can be given in experience, the moral ideas are not, on that account, something transcendent, that is, something of which we cannot even determine the concept sufficiently or of which it is uncertain whether there is any object corresponding to it at all, as is the case with the ideas of speculative reason; instead, the moral ideas, as archetypes of practical perfection, serve as the indispensable rule of moral conduct and also as the *standard of comparison*. Now, if I consider *Christian morals* on their philosophic side, then, compared with the ideas of the Greek schools they would appear as follows: the ideas of the *Cynics*, the *Epicureans*, the *Stoics*, and the *Christians* are *natural simplicity*, *prudence*, *wisdom*, and *holiness*. With respect to the path for attaining them, what distinguished the Greek schools from one another was that the Cynics found *common human understanding* sufficient, the others the path of *science* alone; but

[z] It is not clear whether *die* refers to "happiness" or to "prudence."

as the object and final end of pure practical reason, *to religion, that is, to the recognition*[a] *of all duties as divine commands, not as sanctions – that is, chosen and in themselves contingent ordinances of another's will* – but as essential *laws* of every free will in itself, which must nevertheless be regarded as commands of the supreme being because only from a will that is morally perfect (holy and beneficent[b]) and at the same time all-powerful, and so through harmony with this will, can we hope to attain the highest good, which the moral law makes it our duty to take as the object of our endeavors. Here again, then, everything remains disinterested and grounded only on duty, and there is no need to base it on incentives of fear and hope, which if they became principles would destroy the whole moral worth of actions. The moral law commands me to make the highest possible good in a world the final object of all my conduct. But I cannot hope to produce this except by the harmony of my will with that of a holy and beneficent author of the world; and although in the concept of the highest good, as that of a whole in which the greatest happiness is represented as connected in the most exact
5:130 proportion with the greatest degree of moral perfection (possible in creatures), *my own happiness* is included, this is nevertheless not the determining ground of the will that is directed to promote the highest good; it is instead the moral law (which, on the contrary, limits by strict conditions my unbounded craving for happiness).

For this reason, again, morals[c] is not properly the doctrine of how we are to *make* ourselves happy but of how we are to become *worthy* of happiness. Only if religion is added to it does there also enter the hope of some day participating in happiness to the degree that we have been intent upon not being unworthy of it.

Someone is *worthy* of possessing a thing or a state when it harmonizes with the highest good that he is in possession of it. It can now be readily seen that all worthiness depends upon moral conduct, since in the concept of the highest good this constitutes the condition of the rest (which belongs to one's state), namely, of one's share of happiness. Now, from this it follows that *morals* in itself must never be treated as a *doctrine of happiness*, that is, as instruction in how to become happy; for morals has to do solely with the rational condition *(conditio sine qua non)* of happiness and not with the means of acquiring it. But when morals (which merely imposes duties and does not provide rules for selfish wishes) has been set forth completely, then – after the moral wish, based on a law, to promote the highest good (to bring the kingdom of God to us) has been awakened, which could not previously have arisen in any selfish soul, and for the sake of this wish the step to religion has been taken – then for the first time can this

[a] *Erkenntnis*
[b] *gütigen*
[c] Or "moral philosophy," *die Moral*

be *holy*[h] to ourselves: for he is the *subject of the moral law* and so of that
5:132 which is holy in itself, on account of which and in agreement with which alone can anything be called holy. For, this moral law is based on the autonomy of his will, as a free will which, in accordance with its universal laws, must necessarily be able at the same time *to agree* to that to which it is to *subject* itself.

VI.
ON THE POSTULATES OF PURE PRACTICAL REASON IN GENERAL

All of them proceed from the principle of morality, which is not a postulate but a law by which reason determines the will immediately; and this will, just because it is so determined as a pure will, requires these necessary conditions for observance of its precept. These postulates are not theoretical dogmas but *presuppositions* having a necessarily practical reference[i] and thus, although they do not indeed extend speculative cognition, they give objective reality to the ideas of speculative reason in *general* (by means of their reference to what is practical) and justify its holding concepts even the possibility of which it could not otherwise presume to affirm.

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 the *existence of God*. The *first* flows from the practically necessary condition of a duration befitting the complete fulfillment of the moral law; the *second* from the necessary presupposition of independence from the sensible world and of the capacity to determine one's will by the law of an intelligible world, that is, the law of freedom; the *third* from the necessity of the condition for such an intelligible world to be the highest good, through the presupposition of the highest independent good, that is, of the existence of God.

Aiming at the highest good, made necessary by respect for the moral law, and the presupposition flowing from this of its objective reality lead through the postulates of practical reason to concepts that speculative reason could indeed present as problems but could never solve. Thus it
5:133 leads to 1: the problem in the solution of which speculative reason could do nothing but commit *paralogisms* (namely, the problem of immortality) because it lacked the mark of permanence by which to supplement the psychological concept of an ultimate subject, necessarily ascribed to the soul in self-consciousness, so as to make it the real representation of a substance; this mark practical reason furnishes by the postulate of a duration required for conformity with the moral law in the highest good as the

[h] Or "sacred," *heilig*
[i] *in notwendig praktischer Rucksicht*

immediately (a categorical imperative), and in this case that is the *highest good.* This, however, is not possible without presupposing three theoretical concepts (for which, because they are only pure rational concepts, no corresponding intuition can be found and consequently, by the theoretical path, no objective reality): namely, freedom, immortality, and God. Thus by the practical law that commands the existence of the highest good possible in a world, the possibility of those objects of pure speculative reason, the objective reality which the latter could not assure them, is postulated; by this the theoretical cognition of pure reason certainly receives an increment, but it consists only in this: that those concepts, otherwise problematic (merely thinkable) for it, are now declared[k] assertorically to be concepts to which real objects belong, because practical reason unavoidably requires the existence of them for the possibility of its object, the highest good, which is absolutely necessary practically, and theoretical reason is thereby justified in assuming them. But this extension of theoretical reason is no extension of speculation, that is, no positive use can now be made of it for *theoretical purposes.* For, since nothing further is accomplished in this by practical reason than that those concepts are real and really have their (possible) objects, but nothing is thereby given us by way of intuition of them (which can also not be demanded), no synthetic proposition is possible by this reality granted them. Hence this disclosure does not help us in the least for speculative purposes, although with respect to the practical use of pure reason it does
5:135 help us to extend this cognition of ours.[l] The above three ideas of speculative reason are in themselves still not cognitions; nevertheless they are (transcendent) *thoughts* in which there is nothing impossible. Now they receive objective reality through an apodictic practical law, as necessary conditions of the possibility of what it commands us *to make an object,* that is, we are instructed by it *that they have objects,* although we are not able to show how their concept refers to an object, and this is not yet cognition *of these objects;* for one cannot thereby judge synthetically about them at all or determine their application theoretically; hence one can make no theoretical rational use[m] of them at all, in which use all speculative cognition of reason properly consists. Nevertheless, theoretical cognition, *not indeed of these objects* but of reason in general, is extended by this insofar as *objects were given* to those ideas by the practical postulates, a merely problematic thought having by this means first received objective reality. There was therefore no extension of the cognition *of given supersensible objects,* but there was nevertheless an extension of theoretical reason and of its cognition with respect to the supersensible in general, inasmuch as theoretical

[k] *erklärt werden*

[l] It is not clear from the text whether the phrase *zur Erweiterung dieses unseres Erkenntnisses* should be placed here or after *in spekulativer Absicht.*

[m] *keinen theoretischen Gebrauch der Vernunft machen*

good, without, however, effecting by this increment the least extension of cognition in accordance with theoretical principles.

5:137 If these ideas of God, of an intelligible world (the kingdom of God), and of immortality are determined more closely by predicates drawn from our own nature, this determination cannot be regarded as either a *sensualizing*[a] of those pure rational ideas (anthropomorphism) or as a transcendent cognition of *supersensible* objects; for these predicates are no others than understanding and will, considered moreover in the relation to each other in which they must be though in the moral law, and hence only to the extent that a pure practical use is made of them. As for all the rest that is added to these concepts psychologically – that is, insofar as we observe these faculties of ours empirically *in their exercise* (for example, that human understanding is discursive so that its representations are not intuitions but thoughts, that these follow one another in time, that the human will is always dependent for its satisfaction upon the existence of its object, and so forth, which cannot be the case in the supreme being) – this is abstracted from in that case, and then what remains of the concepts by which we think of a pure intelligence[a] is nothing more than what is required for the possibility of thinking of a moral law; thus there is indeed a cognition of God but only with practical reference, and if we attempt to extend it to a theoretical cognition we find an understanding that does not think but *intuits*, a will that is directed to objects upon the existence of which its satisfaction does not in the least depend (not to mention the transcendental predicates, as, e.g., a magnitude of existence, i.e., duration, which, however, is not in time, the only possible means we have of representing existence as magnitude). All of these are attributes of which we can form no concept fit for *cognition* of the object, and we learn from this that they can never be used for a *theory* of supersensible beings, so that on this side they are quite unable to ground a speculative cognition and their use is, instead, limited solely to the practice of the moral law.

This last is so obvious, and can be proved so clearly by fact, that one can confidently challenge all supposed *natural theologians*[b] (a singular name)* to cite (over and above the merely ontological predicates) even

*'*Learning*' is, strictly speaking, only the sum total of the *historical* sciences. Consequently only the teacher of revealed theology can be called a theologian. If, however, one wants to call someone who is in possession of the rational sciences (mathematics and philosophy) *learned*, even though this could conflict with the meaning of the word (which always counts as learning only that which must be *taught*' and which, therefore, one cannot of oneself discover by reason), the philosopher, with his cognition of God as a positive science, would cut too poor a figure to let himself be called on that account a *learned* man.

[a] *Versinnlichung*
[a] *Verstandeswesen*
[b] *Gottesgelehrten*
[c] *Gelehrsamkeit*
[c] *gelehrt*

problem, namely that of the necessary direction of the will to the highest good, there is shown not only the necessity of assuming such an original being in relation to the possibility of this good in the world but – what is most remarkable – something that was quite lacking in the progress of reason on the path of nature, *a precisely determined concept of this original being.* Since we can know only a small part of this world and can still less compare it with all possible worlds, we can well infer from its order, purposiveness, and magnitude a *wise, beneficent, powerful,* and so forth author of it, but not his *omniscience, all-beneficence, omnipotence,* and so forth. It may even very well be granted that one is authorized[a] to supplement this unavoidable defect by a permitted, quite reasonable hypothesis, namely, that when wisdom, beneficence and so forth are displayed in all the parts that offer themselves to our closer cognition, it is just the same in all the rest, and that it would therefore be reasonable to ascribe all possible perfection to the author of the world; but these are not *inferences* in which we can pride ourselves on our insight, but only liberties[b] which can be overlooked but still need further recommendation before we can make use of them. Thus the concept of God always remains, on the path of empirical inquiry (physics), a concept of the perfection of the first being not determined precisely enough to be held adequate to the concept of a deity (but with metaphysics in its transcendental part nothing at all is to be accomplished.)

5:140 When I now try to bring this concept into relation with the object of practical reason, I find that the moral principle admits it as possible only on the presupposition of an author of the world possessed of the *highest perfection.* He must be *omniscient* in order to cognize my conduct even to my inmost disposition in all possible cases and throughout the future, *omnipotent* in order to bestow results appropriate to it, and so too *omnipresent, eternal,* and so forth. Thus the moral law, by means of the concept of the highest good as the object of a pure practical reason, determines the concept of the original being as the *supreme being,* something that the physical (and, pursued higher, the metaphysical) and so the whole speculative course of reason could not effect. The concept of God, then, is one belonging originally not to physics, that is, to speculative reason, but to morals, and the same can be said of the other concepts of reason which we treated above as postulates of reason in its practical use.

If in the history of Greek philosophy we find no clear traces of a pure rational theology earlier than Anaxagoras, the reason is not that the older philosophers had not enough understanding or insight to raise themselves to it by the path of speculation, at least with the aid of a quite reasonable

[a] *befugt*
[b] *Befugnisse*

through science; but it is not till science is completed that we can be convinced that it leads to that goal.

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VIII.
ON ASSENT[x] FROM A NEED OF PURE REASON

A need of pure reason in its speculative use leads only to hypotheses, that of pure practical reason, however, to postulates; for in the first case I ascend from the derived as high *as I will* in the series of grounds and do not need an original ground[y] in order to give objective reality to what is derived (e.g., to the causal connection of things and changes in the world), but only in order to satisfy completely my inquiring reason with respect to it. Thus I see before me order and purposiveness in nature, and need not proceed to speculation in order to assure myself of their *reality;* instead, it is only in order *to explain* them that I need *to presuppose a Deity* as their cause; but, since an inference from an effect to a determined cause, especially to a cause so precise and so completely determined as we have to think in God, is always uncertain and doubtful, such a presupposition cannot be brought further than the degree of being the most reasonable opinion for us human beings.* On the other hand, a need *of pure practical* reason is based on a *duty,* that of making something (the highest good) the object of my will so as to promote it with all my powers; and thus I must suppose its possibility and so too the conditions for this, namely God, freedom, and immortality, because I cannot prove these by my speculative reason, although I can also not refute them. This duty is based on something that is indeed quite independent of these suppositions and of itself apodictically certain, namely the moral law; and so far it needs no further
5:143 support by theoretical opinions as to the inner character of things, the secret aim of the order of the world,[z] or a ruler presiding over it, in order to bind us most perfectly to actions unconditionally conformed to the law. But the subjective effect of this law, namely the disposition conformed with it and also made necessary by it to promote the practically possible highest good, nevertheless presupposes at least that the latter is *possible;* in the contrary case it would be practically impossible to strive for the object

*But even here we could not allege a need *of reason* if we had not before our eyes a problematic but yet unavoidable concept of reason, namely that of an absolutely necessary being. This concept now wants to be determined, and this, when the drive toward extension is added, is the objective ground of a need of speculative reason, namely, to determine more closely the concept of a necessary being that is to serve as the original ground of others and so to make this recognizable by some means. Without such prior necessary problems there are no *needs,* at least *not of pure reason;* the rest are needs of inclination.

[x] *Fürwahrhalten,* literally "holding to be true"

[y] *Urgrund*

[z] *Abzweckung der Weltordnung*

preceding explanation what is required to be assumed in the concept of the highest good, one will become aware that the assumption of this possibility cannot be commanded, and that no practical disposition requires one to *grant* it but that speculative reason must concede it without being asked, since no one can want to maintain that a worthiness of rational beings in the world to be happy in conformity with the moral law combined with a possession of this happiness proportioned to it is *impossible* in itself. Now, with respect to the first element of the highest good, namely that which concerns morality, the moral law gives merely a command, and to doubt that possibility of that component would be tantamount to calling in question the moral law itself. But as for what concerns the second part of that object, namely happiness in thorough conformity with that worthiness, there is no need of a command to grant its possibility in general, since theoretical reason has nothing to say against it; but *the*
5:145 *way* in which *we* are to think such a harmony of the laws of nature with those of freedom has in it something with respect to which we have a *choice*, since theoretical reason decides nothing with apodictic certainty about it, and with respect to this there can be a moral interest which turns the scale.

I said above that in accordance with a mere course of nature in the world happiness in exact conformity with moral worth is not to be expected and is to be held impossible, and that therefore the possibility of the highest good on this side can be granted only on the presupposition of a moral author of the world. I deliberately postponed the restricting of this judgment to the subjective conditions of our reason so as not to make use of it until the manner of its assent had been determined more closely. In fact, the impossibility referred to is *merely subjective*, that is, our reason finds it *impossible for it* to conceive, in the mere course of nature, a connection so exactly proportioned and so thoroughly purposive[a] between events occurring in the world in accordance with such different laws, although, as with everything else in nature that is purposive, it nevertheless cannot prove – that is, set forth sufficiently on objective grounds – the impossibility of it in accordance with universal laws of nature.

Now, however, a deciding ground of a different kind comes into play so as to turn the scale in this irresolution of speculative reason. The command to promote the highest good is based objectively (in practical reason); its possibility in general is likewise objectively based (in theoretical reason, which has nothing against it). But as for the way we are to represent this possibility, whether in accordance with universal laws of nature without a wise author presiding over nature or only on the supposition of such an author, reason cannot decide this objectively. Now a *subjective* condition of reason enters into this, the only way in which it is theoreti-

[a] *zweckmäßig*

word, would first demand their satisfaction and, combined with reasonable reflection, their greatest possible and most lasting satisfaction under the name of *happiness;* the moral law would afterward speak, in order to keep them within their proper limits and even to subject them all to a higher end which has no regard to inclination. But instead of the conflict that the moral disposition now has to carry on with the inclinations, in which, though after some defeats, moral strength of soul is to be gradually acquired, *God and eternity with their awful majesty* would stand unceasingly *before our eyes* (for what we can prove perfectly holds as much certainty for us as what we are assured of by our sight). Transgression of the law would, no doubt, be avoided: what is commanded would be done; but because the *disposition* from which actions ought to be done cannot be instilled by any command, and because the spur to activity in this case would be promptly at hand and *external,* reason would have no need to work itself up so as to gather strength to resist the inclinations by a lively representation of the dignity of the law: hence most actions conforming to the law would be done from fear, only a few from hope, and none at all from duty, and the moral worth of actions, on which alone in the eyes of supreme wisdom the worth of the person and even that of the world depends, would not exist at all. As long as human nature remains as it is, human conduct would thus be changed into mere mechanism in which, as in a puppet show, everything would *gesticulate* well but there would be *no life* in the figures. Now, when it is quite otherwise with us; when with all the effort of our reason we have only a very obscure and ambiguous view into the future; when the governor of the world allows us only to conjecture his existence and his grandeur, not to behold them or prove them clearly; when, on the other hand, the moral law within us, without promising or threatening anything with certainty, demands of us disinterested respect; and when, finally, this respect alone, become active and ruling, first allows us a view into the realm of the supersensible, though only with weak glances; then there can be a truly moral disposition, devoted immediately to the moral law, and a rational creature can become worthy of the highest good in conformity with the moral worth of his person and not merely
5:148 with his actions. Thus what the study of nature and of the human being teaches us sufficiently elsewhere may well be true here also: that the inscrutable wisdom by which we exist is not less worthy of veneration in what it has denied us than in what it has granted us.

by means of its own advantage or to alarm it by fear of harm; but as soon as this machinery, these leading strings have had even some effect, the pure moral motive must be brought to bear on the soul, the motive which – not only because it is the only one that can ground a character (a consistent practical cast of mind in accordance with unchangeable maxims) but also because it teaches the human being to feel his own dignity – gives his mind power, unexpected even by himself, to tear himself away from all sensible attachments so far as they want to rule over him and to find a rich compensation for the sacrifice he makes in the independence of his rational nature and the greatness of soul to which he sees that he is called. We will therefore show, by observations anyone can make, that this property of our minds, this receptivity to a pure moral interest and hence the moving force of the pure representation of virtue, when it is duly brought to bear on the human heart is the most powerful incentive to the good and the only one when an enduring and meticulous observance of
5:153 moral maxims is in question. It must, however, be remembered that if these observations show only the reality of such a feeling but not any moral improvement brought about by it, this takes nothing away from[h] the only method there is for making the objectively practical laws of pure reason subjectively practical merely through the pure representation of duty, as if it were an empty fantasy. For, since this method has never yet been widely practiced experience can say nothing of its result; instead one can only ask for proofs of the receptivity to such incentives, which I will now present briefly and then sketch in a few words the method of founding and cultivating genuine moral dispositions.

If one attends to the course of conversation in mixed companies consisting not merely of scholars and subtle reasoners but also of business people or women, one notices that their entertainment includes, besides storytelling and jesting, arguing; for storytelling, if it is to have novelty and with it interest, is soon exhausted and jesting easily becomes insipid. Now, of all arguments there are none that more excite the participation of persons who are otherwise soon bored with subtle reasoning and that bring a certain liveliness into the company than arguments about the *moral worth* of this or that action by which the character of some person is to be made out. Those for whom anything subtle and refined in theoretical questions is dry and irksome soon join in when it is a question of how to make out the moral import of a good or evil action that has been related, and to an extent one does not otherwise expect of them on any object of speculation they are precise, refined, and subtle in thinking out everything that could lesson or even just make suspect the purity of purpose and consequently the degree of virtue in it. In these appraisals one can often see revealed the character of the person himself who judges others: some, in exercising

[h] *keinen Abbruch tue*

duty and to the worth that a human being can and must give himself in his own eyes by consciousness of not having transgressed it; for, whatever runs up into empty wishes and longings for inaccessible perfection produces mere heroes of romance who, while they pride themselves on their feeling for extravagant greatness, release themselves in return from the observance of common and everyday obligation,[k] which then seems to them insignificant and petty.*

But if one asks: What, then, really is *pure* morality, by which as a touchstone one must test the moral content of every action? I must admit that only philosophers can make the decision of this question doubtful, for it is long since decided in common human reason, not indeed by abstract general formulae but by habitual use, like the difference between the right and the left hand. We will, accordingly, first show in an example the mark by which pure virtue is tested and, representing it as set before, say, a ten-year-old boy for his appraisal, see whether he must necessarily judge so of himself, without being directed to it by a teacher. One tells him the story of an honest man whom someone wants to induce to join the calumniators of an innocent but otherwise powerless person (say, Anne Boleyn, accused by Henry VIII of England). He is offered gain, that is, great gifts or high rank; he rejects them. This will produce mere approval and applause in
5:156 the listener's soul, because it is gain. Now threats of loss begin. Among these calumniators are his best friends, who now refuse him their friendship; close relatives, who threaten to disinherit him (he is not wealthy); powerful people, who can pursue and hurt him in all places and circumstances; a prince who threatens him with loss of freedom and even of life itself. But, so that the measure of suffering may be full and he may also feel the pain that only a morally good heart can feel very deeply, represent his family, threatened with extreme distress and poverty, as *imploring him to yield* and himself, though upright, yet with a heart not hard or insensible" either to compassion or to his own distress; represent him at a moment when he wishes that he had never lived to see the day that exposed him to such unutterable pain and yet remains firm in his resolu-

*It is quite advisable to praise actions in which a great, unselfish, sympathetic disposition or humanity is manifested. But in this case one must call attention not so much to the *elevation of soul*, which is very fleeting and transitory, as to the *subjection of the heart* to *duty*, from which a more lasting impression can be expected, because this brings principles with it (but the former, only ebullitions).[l] One need only reflect a little and one will always find a debt that he has somehow incurred with respect to the human race (even if it were only that, by the inequality of human beings in the civil constitution, one enjoys advantages on account of which others must all the more do without), which will prevent the self-complacent image of *merit* from supplanting the thought of *duty*.

[k] *Schuldigkeit*

[l] *Aufwallungen*

" *doch eben nicht von festen, unempfindlichen Organen das Gefühl*

applied that indeed stimulated it but nothing that strengthened it. *Principles* must be built on concepts; on any other foundation there can be only seizures, which can give a person no moral worth and not even confidence in himself, without which the consciousness of one's moral disposition and of a character of this kind, the highest good in human beings, cannot come to exist. Now, if these concepts are to become subjectively practical they must stop short with objective laws or morality, to be admired and esteemed with reference to humanity: the representation of them must be considered in relation to human beings and to the individual human
5:158 being; for then this law appears in a form that, though indeed highly deserving of respect, is not so pleasing as if it belonged to the element to which he is naturally accustomed but instead as it constrains him to leave this element, often not without self-denial, and to go to a higher element in which he can maintain himself only with effort and with unceasing apprehension of relapsing. In a word, the moral law demands obedience from duty and not from a predilection that cannot and ought not to be presupposed at all.

Let us now see in an example whether there is more subjective moving force as an incentive if an action is represented as a noble and magnanimous one than if it is represented merely as duty in relation to the earnest moral law. The action by which someone tries with extreme danger to his life to rescue people from a shipwreck, finally losing his own life in the attempt, will indeed be reckoned, on one side, as duty but on the other and even for the most part as a meritorious action; but our esteem for it will be greatly weakened by the concept of *duty to himself*, which seems in this case to suffer some infringement. More decisive is someone's magnanimous sacrifice of his life for the preservation of his country; and yet there still remains some scruple as to whether it is so perfect a duty to devote oneself to this purpose of one's own accord and unbidden, and the action has not in itself the full force of a model and impulse to imitation. But if it is an essential" duty, transgression of which violates the moral law in itself and without regard to human welfare and, as it were, tramples on its holiness (such as are usually called duties to God because in him we think the ideal of holiness in a substance), then we give the most perfect esteem to compliance with it at the sacrifice of everything that could ever have value for our dearest inclinations, and we find our soul strengthened and elevated by such an example when we can convince ourselves, in it, that human nature is capable of so great an elevation above every incentive that nature can oppose to it. Juvenal presents such an example in a climax that makes the reader feel vividly the force of the incentive present in the pure law of duty, as duty:

" *unerlaßliche*

in such an order of things can reason, with its capacity to determine a priori in accordance with principles what ought to be done, find satisfaction. Even an observer of nature finally comes to like objects that at first offended his senses when he discovers in them the great purposiveness of their organization, so that his reason delights in contemplating them, and Leibniz spared an insect that he had carefully examined with a microscope and replaced it on its leaf because he had found himself instructed by his view of it and had, as it were, received a benefit from it.

But this employment of the faculty of judgment, which lets us feel our own cognitive powers, is not yet interest in actions and in their morality itself. It merely brings someone to like to entertain himself with such an appraisal and gives to virtue or the cast of mind according to moral laws a form of beauty, which is admired but not yet on that account sought *(laudatur et alget);*[1] it is the same with everything whose contemplation produces subjectively a consciousness of the harmony of our powers of representation and in which we feel our entire cognitive faculty (understanding and imagination) strengthened: it produces a satisfaction that can also be communicated to others, while nevertheless the existence of the object remains indifferent to us, inasmuch as the object is viewed only as the occasion of our becoming aware of the tendency of talents[1] in us which are elevated above animality. Now, however, the *second* exercise begins its work, namely to draw attention, in the lively presentation of the moral disposition in examples, to the purity of will, first only as a negative perfection of the will insofar as in an action from duty no incentives of inclination have any influence on it as determining grounds; by this, however, the pupil's attention is fixed on the consciousness of his *freedom* and, although this renunciation excites an initial feeling of pain, nevertheless, by its withdrawing the pupil from the constraint of even true needs, there is made known to him at the same time a deliverance from the manifold dissatisfaction in which all those needs entangle him and his
5:161 mind is made receptive to the feeling of satisfaction from other sources. The heart is freed and relieved of a burden that always secretly presses upon it, when in pure moral resolutions, examples of which are set before him, there is revealed to the human being an inner capacity not otherwise correctly known by himself, the *inner freedom* to release himself from the impetuous importunity of inclinations so that none of them, not even the dearest, has any influence on a resolution for which we are now to make use of our reason. In a case where *I alone* know that the wrong is on my side and, although a free confession of it and an offer of satisfaction are strongly opposed by vanity, selfishness, and even an otherwise not illegitimate antipathy to him whose right I have detracted from, I am neverthe-

[1] [Honesty] is praised and starves. (Juvenal *Satire* 1.74).
[1] *Anlage der Talente*

personality, in which the moral law reveals to me a life independent of animality and even of the whole sensible world, at least so far as this may be inferred from the purposive determination[a] of my existence by this law, a determination not restricted to the conditions and boundaries of this life but reaching into the infinite.

But though admiration and respect can indeed excite to inquiry, they cannot supply the want of it. What, then, is to be done in order to enter upon inquiry in a way that is useful and befitting the sublimity of the object? Examples may serve in this for warning but also for imitation. Consideration of the world began from the noblest spectacle that can ever be presented to the human senses and that our understanding can bear to follow in its broad extent, and it ended – in astrology. Morals began with the noblest property of human nature, the development and cultivation of which looked to infinite use, and it ended – in enthusiasm or in superstition. So it is with all crude attempts in which the principal part of the business depends upon the use of reason, which does not come of itself,
5:163 like the use of the feet, by frequent exercise, especially when it has to do with properties that cannot be directly exhibited in common experience. But after there had come into vogue, though late, the maxim of carefully reflecting beforehand on all the steps that reason proposed to take and not letting it proceed otherwise than on the track of a previously well-considered method, then appraisal of the structure of the universe obtained quite a different direction and along with it an incomparably happier outcome. The fall of a stone, the motion of a sling, resolved into their elements and the forces manifested in them and treated mathematically, produced at last that clear and henceforth unchangeable insight into the structure of the world which, with continued observation, one can hope will always be extended while one need never fear having to retreat.

This example can recommend that we take the same path in treating of the moral predispositions[b] of our nature and can give us hope of a similarly good outcome. We have at hand examples of reason judging morally. We can analyze them into their elementary concepts and, in default of *mathematics*, adopt a procedure similar to that of *chemistry* – the *separation*, by repeated experiments on common human understanding, of the empirical from the rational that may be found in them – and come to know both of them *pure* and what each can accomplish of itself; and in this way we can prevent on the one hand the errors of a still *crude*, unpracticed appraisal and on the other hand (what is far more necessary) the *leaps of genius* by which, as happens with the adepts of the philosopher's stone, without any methodical study or knowledge of nature visionary treasures are promised and true ones are thrown away. In a word, science (critically

[a] *zweckmäßigen Bestimmung*
[b] *Anlagen*