

1. 'Moral dialogue takes place ... between an I and a thou' (10/191). Discuss.

Moral dialogue is the very important process that happens when we try to think about what we should or should not do. This process may happen when I try to make a decision before I cut a tree down. I may ask myself: 'How bad will the result be if I destroy this tree?' 'How will this tree suffer?' I may remind myself that I really need to do this because the tree is invading my house. This whole process occurs before I physically take any action. This moral dialogue will happen within me to balance my own benefit with that of the tree, i.e., 'a thou' benefit. On the other hand, if my wife and I argue about what colour is better suited for our house, I can be 'a thou' in my wife's moral dialogue, and there will be two moral dialogues at the same time.

It would be good to know the perfect or guaranteed way to find the 'rightness' of a decision. In other words, to find the truth of that case. Stress levels will reduce when I make the decision. We may feel sorry for the victim because we have sympathy for others. But we will never feel hurt in the same way as the victim, because we are unique and different subjective units. We are separate from the victim and we have our own identity. The 'thou' may seem to listen and understand my suffering. But they may never have the same experience as I have right now. Therefore, my trouble is my own. They will never suffer like I do. It is me who has to face a hard time alone.

It is stressful to have to choose to act in a moral dilemma, when I'm not sure what to do. Should I offer my seat on the bus to the woman, or continue sitting in shame? Whatever I choose, stress is always there. When we have to make a decision or are in the process of choosing, our own sake always influences our decision. Will my family have food on the table tomorrow? Is my job still safe? The issue concerned will always be in our mind when we are in the process of moral dialogue before making a decision.

Why is it so difficult to choose? Can we not just make a random choice and hope for luck? But the point is, we are the only ones who will face the consequences of that choice. In a direct or indirect way, we have to take it as our responsibility. For example, I could be the judge who tries to make the decision for a man on trial. Does this man go to the execution room or go home? It's not my body, is it? It's his body. Why do I have to worry? It's not me who will go to the execution room. But what will happen to me after I make this decision is important. Can I forget this man's face for the rest of my life or

even in my dreams? Perhaps it could affect whether the rest of my life is going to be happy or full of suffering. It is the circumstance that I have to face after my decision. Can I always choose the way that puts me in the safe zone? Can I always take the least risky choice in my life? Maybe I can.

In the relationship between us and everyone else in society, of course we perform our own moral dialogue in a pretty subjective or selfish way. If we want to avoid a selfish society, we can try to make another choice. At least, we can try to do our best to be able to live together in peace. I should be able to see harm in that original way of moral dialogue. The moral dialogue that I may have with my 'thou' is extremely selfish and based on my own sake alone. We can learn to understand and be careful about the results of our decisions and the effect on our society. I can't keep arguing and trying to win with my wife for 100 percent of the time and destroy our family.

In that 'I and thou' moment, I may try to process a very complex method of finding the best solution for the situation that I find myself in. But underlying this process may be the goal of my own long-term benefit; a goal that is for my own sake. I may want to get a PhD in Philosophy in four years. Every step of my moral dialogue from now on will depend on how the issue that I decide on will support or stop me from getting my PhD in future.

Even I feel isolated from everyone else, I still share many feelings and effects of social events as others. I may feel proud when my country's football team wins a match. We have to sacrifice and give up some of our own beliefs or benefits to our society to be able to continue peacefully.

To me, the steps of moral dialogue in our minds seem like a natural mechanism, like other physical processes that prevent us from danger. We blink our eyes automatically to protect our weak eyeballs. We perform a moral dialogue before making a decision to protect ourselves from dangerous consequences.