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## THE UTILITY OF VIRTUE

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*David Gilchrest*

Utilitarianism has often been criticized for failing to account for the way common sense views things like friendship and virtue. Given pleasure as the only reason to pursue any action under utilitarianism, virtue and friendship seem to represent special cases, in that they cannot truly be pursued for purely hedonistic ends. The special cases of friendship for Epicurus and virtue for Henry Sidgwick open their positions to a less purely hedonistic view more in line with common sense morality. In moving from the special case of friendship in Epicurean hedonism, to the place of virtue in Henry Sidgwick's utilitarianism, one arrives at the conclusion that the ultimate hedonistic end of greatest happiness is often best achieved through the pursuit of non-hedonistic ends such as virtue, friendship, benevolence, altruism, etc. The importance of the non-hedonistic ends such as virtue necessitates the inclusion of a sort of virtue ethic within, and subordinated to, utilitarianism.

### **Epicurean Hedonism and Friendship**

Utilitarianism, and particularly that of Henry Sidgwick (1838-1900,) can be seen as a modern evolution of the hedonistic principles espoused by Epicurus (341-270 BC.) Epicurus was a believer in hedonism, the non-moral ethical theory that greatest happiness, seen as the maximization of pleasure and minimization of pain, ought

to be the ultimate end of each individual's actions. Where Utilitarianism later universalizes hedonism to consider all affected by the action, Epicurus proposed an egoistic form of hedonism, which limited the ethical concern to the agent's happiness.

Epicurus's doctrine of hedonism was a departure from the virtue-based ethics of Aristotle. Nevertheless, Epicurus held to many of the same views concerning both the good life and the good for society. For Epicurus, there is a considerable good in being a virtuous person and in doing relatively selfless things for one's friends and neighbors. Hedonism generally holds that in pursuing virtue or friendship, what we are actually pursuing are the benefits such things bring us, but for Epicurus, even though friendship and the other virtues are beneficial to us, the full pleasure and benefit of these actions is only found when we pursue them as ends in themselves. In order to get the pleasure we are pursuing in friendship, we cannot pursue the friendship for the sake of pleasure. For Epicurus, it seems clear that friendship and the virtues are sources of considerable pleasure, but only when pursued as ends in themselves.

While it is clear that Epicurus' chief doctrine considers pleasure to be the ultimate end, to assume he did not realize the problematic nature of his claims about friendship belittles him as a philosopher. While Epicurus' hedonism was a departure from the virtue-based ethics of Aristotle, Epicurus nevertheless held to many of the same views on the good life and the good for society as Aristotle. For Epicurus, there is clearly a considerable good in being a virtuous person and in doing relatively selfless things for one's friends and neighbors. Egoistic hedonism is often

represented as asserting that friendship and virtue are only to be pursued for the pleasures they give us, but Epicurus finds that particular conception unsatisfying. For Epicurus, even though pursuit of friendship and the other virtues lead to pleasurable ends, the true pleasure and benefit of these actions is found in the pursuit of them as ends in themselves. Epicurus argues that much of the pleasure we get from friendship comes from the relationship and the affections it engenders, and not in fact from any direct benefit or pleasure brought on by the friendship.

In regarding Epicurus' ethical philosophy, it is useful to examine briefly his conceptions of pleasure and pain. Epicurean views on pleasure and pain have often, and mistakenly according to Peter Preuss, been represented as asserting that ideal pleasure is synonymous with an absence of pain. Preuss argues, in his book Epicurean Ethics, that much of the misunderstanding that has led to this mistaken conception arises from Epicurus' use of a medicinal metaphor to explain pleasure and pain.

The function of medicine is to restore health by removing sickness. If you ask a physician what he thinks health is, you will probably receive the reply that health is the natural state of an organism free from all sickness and deformity. This is not so much because he thinks that health is in its nature something negative, a mere absence of something, but because his professional involvement with people is with their diseases and injuries, which are the things

to which he addresses himself directly in treatment.<sup>1</sup>

The interpretation of this metaphor, which does depict pleasure as a state of zero pain in the same way that health is a state of zero illness, has been taken as representative of Epicurus' view of pleasure and pain. In speaking on Epicurean usage of this medical metaphor, Preuss writes,

This practical way of seeing the situation must not be translated into a theoretical doctrine of the nature of pleasure and pain, because it would generate misunderstanding of the theoretical foundation of Epicurean ethics and introduce confusion into important elaborations of the theory which build on that foundation<sup>2</sup>.

One cannot accept Epicurean statements that pleasure is the state without pain, without also considering his statements implying the opposite, such as "The time when we need pleasure is when we are in pain from the absence of pleasure."<sup>3</sup> Rather than taking either of these statements literally, one should keep in mind the metaphorical discussion of ethics as a therapeutic philosophy in Epicurus' teachings. In examining the writings of Epicurus, it seems clear that his conceptions of pleasure and pain, insofar as they relate to ethical decisions, are quite close to our current conceptions. Pain is thus seen as a negative force, while pleasure is seen as a positive force. Epicurus

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<sup>1</sup> Preuss, Peter. *Epicurean Ethics*. Edwin Mellen Press. New York. 1994. 95

<sup>2</sup> Preuss, 96

<sup>3</sup> Preuss, 100

goes back and forth between whether pleasure is limited, but for the purposes of this paper we will assume his conception of pleasure and pain to be identical to that of Sidgwick in the areas that concern us.

In seeking pleasure and happiness, Epicurus focuses particular attention on friendship, arguing that in genuine friendships we get much more pleasure from the relationship and the affections engendered between friends, than from the direct benefits that come from the friendship. For Epicurus, friendships are constant sources of pleasure through the affections and loyalties shared, in addition to being directly beneficial in terms of protection, food, company, etc. The Epicurean view holds that, "Friendship is both for the other's sake and for my sake, love is both fully altruistic and fully egoistic, if we insist on using those terms, but it would be better to drop them and understand that love is neither."<sup>4</sup> Friendship is a special case of relation, which creates a bond of affection between the friends that becomes the defining character of friendship. While a friendship is initially entered into for the positive benefit it gives the agent, Epicurus contends that in a genuine friendship, the initially self-interested association is replaced by mutual goodwill and affection, which are sources of happiness in themselves. Friendship is a chief good not only because it benefits us and protects us, but most importantly because the relationship itself is a continual and increasing source of considerable pleasure. Epicurus argues that the mere presence of a friend seems to bring us pleasure and make pleasurable activities even more so. Friendship and the other virtues are seen as

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<sup>4</sup> Preuss, 213

radically different from other sorts of pleasures. Where the pleasure from eating is limited to the transitory (kinetic) pleasure of the act of eating itself and the sustained (katastematic) pleasure of the satiation afterwards, the pleasures found in friendship continue to grow as the friendship does. Friendship not only promotes happiness in the pleasurable activities (kinetic pleasures), but also gives us sustaining pleasure through our relationship with the friend (katastematic pleasure.) Thus, while food can give us only temporary pleasure, friendship itself continually produces pleasure, and thus should be pursued as an end in itself.

Common sense here seems to agree with Epicurus that the relationship of friendship is a considerable good in and of itself. For Epicurus, the inclusion of virtue and friendship within hedonism was an obvious and necessary step. Where many critics have used the problematic nature of Friendship in Epicurus as reason to dismiss his views as inconsistent, with an inclusion of Henry Sidgwick's Utilitarianism, we will see that in following hedonistic maxims it is necessary to construct a system interior to those maxims which takes such special cases into account. I believe that in pursuing a Utilitarian virtue ethic based in the philosophy of Henry Sidgwick, a system develops that fully embraces friendship and virtue as necessary parts of a hedonistic approach.

The concern we find in Epicurus over how one can rationally choose ends such as friendship within a hedonistic system is further developed in Henry Sidgwick's Utilitarianism. The move from Epicurus to Sidgwick is one to which friendship provides an answer. A common critique of Epicurus is that his idea of genuine friendship

doesn't make sense within a system of egoistic hedonism, due to the egoistic limitations of his theory. Genuine caring friendships, it is argued, cannot truly exist under an egoistic system, given that the friendships would be entered into and exited according only to how each individual viewed it as beneficial for himself. In order to keep the concern over ends other than pleasure alive, it is necessary to move from egoistic hedonism, which limits its concern to individual happiness, to universalistic hedonism, which proposes universal happiness as the end of human action. Where many critics have used the problematic nature of friendship in Epicureanism as reason to dismiss his views as inconsistent, with an inclusion of Henry Sidgwick's Utilitarianism, we will see that in following hedonistic maxims it is necessary to construct a system interior to those maxims which takes such special cases into account.

### **Utilitarianism and Virtue**

Utilitarianism differs from Epicureanism primarily in its scope, accepting universal happiness as the proper end of action in place of egoistic or personal happiness. Henry Sidgwick's argument for universal, instead of egoistic, happiness is presented in its most simplistic form as, "Reason shows me that if my happiness is desirable and a good, the equal happiness of any other person must be equally desirable."<sup>5</sup> After noting several objections to egoistic hedonism, Sidgwick concludes that

Universal Happiness, seen as desirable  
consciousness or feeling for the innumerable

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<sup>5</sup> Sidgwick, Henry. The Method of Ethics. University of Chicago press, Chicago. 1962. 403



multitude of sentient beings, present and to come, seems an End that satisfies our imagination by its vastness, and sustains our resolution by its comparative security.<sup>6</sup>

Henry Sidgwick uses this conception of universal happiness when he defines utilitarianism as “The ethical theory, that the conduct which, under any given circumstances, is objectively right, is that which will produce the greatest amount of happiness on the whole; that is taking into account whose happiness is affected by the conduct.”<sup>7</sup> An act is thus good, insofar as it tends to produce happiness, and bad, insofar as it tends to produce pain. Sidgwick places a practical limit on the doctrine of universal happiness concerning to whom the agent has responsibility. This practical limitation of responsibility to concern only those affected by the action both follows our common sense intuitions and delineates the scope of one’s duty. In deciding whether or not to go out to dinner, it is thus ethically unnecessary to take the problem of malnutrition in Africa into account. While one’s strict ethical duty may be limited to not harming others, Sidgwick’s inclusion of the virtues as ends in them adds a layer beyond duty that one should aim for. It is thus a more virtuous, or morally better, act to send money to starving children than to go to dinner, precisely because aiding them does not directly benefit oneself. In his book, The Methods of Ethics, Sidgwick argues that the problematic natures of friendship and virtue in Epicurean doctrines, while considered in passing by many utilitarian philosophers,

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<sup>6</sup> Sidgwick, 404

<sup>7</sup> Sidgwick, 411

have never satisfactorily been dealt with. While the move from Epicureanism to Utilitarianism involved rejecting much of the science, physics, and cosmology of Epicurus, the core of his ethics remains relatively unchanged in utilitarianism.

Like Epicurus, Sidgwick rejects the proposal that the perfect state is that of zero pain. Instead, he conceives of pleasure and pain as a continuum with both positive and negative values. When Epicurus states that a wise man is happy even when on the rack, he implies that pleasure is possible even in states of pain, based on his conception of pain as disturbed bodily molecules. Sidgwick ignores this antiquated notion of how pain works, and calls on his theory of common sense. Sidgwick notes that since one can experience pleasure with pain involved, and that many pleasures require in some ways a risk of pain, the ratio of pleasure to pain seems to swing in both directions from a theoretical neutral point where pain is equal to pleasure.

What is remarkable about Utilitarianism in the Sidgwick tradition is its inherent sensibility. Sidgwick wishes his theory to reflect as closely as possible with common sense. Sidgwick writes that in book II of the *Ethics*, what Aristotle “gave us there was the Common Sense Morality of Greece, reduced to consistency by careful comparison: given not as something external to him [Aristotle] but as what “we” – he and others – think, ascertained by reflection.”<sup>8</sup> Sidgwick writes that when confronted by some of the practical imperfections of Utilitarianism, such as difficulties in hedonistic calculations, one should “make use of the guidance

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<sup>8</sup> Sidgwick pg xix

afforded by Common Sense... on the grounds of the general presumption which evolution afforded, that moral sentiments and opinions would point to conduct conducive to general happiness.”<sup>9</sup> Common sense is thus viewed as a sort of societal force that tends towards ultimate happiness. Sidgwick refers to common sense as a support for utilitarianism, but notes that common sense does not overrule utilitarian calculations.

Henry Sidgwick departs from a purely hedonistic view of utilitarianism in asserting the importance of virtue as a good to be sought as an end in itself. As Epicurus did with friendship, Sidgwick denies that virtue is only instrumentally useful in seeking pleasure. He writes, “I do not... think that the complete exclusion of an emotional element from the conception of Virtue would be really in harmony with the Common Sense of mankind.”<sup>10</sup> Sidgwick then lays out a fairly Aristotelian conception of virtue saying,

I consider Virtue as a quality manifested in the performance of duty (or good acts going beyond strict duty): it is indeed primarily attributed to the mind or character of the agent; but it is only known to us through its manifestations in feelings and acts.<sup>11</sup>

Sidgwick suggests that while virtue can only be expressed through our feelings and actions, it is in fact a sort of

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<sup>9</sup> Sidgwick pg xxi

<sup>10</sup> Sidgwick, 222.

<sup>11</sup> Sidgwick, 226

internal character developed by continuous choice of right conduct. Sidgwick writes

Virtue seems to be primarily a quality of the soul or mind, conceived as permanent in comparison with the transient acts and feelings in which it is manifested. As so conceived it is widely held to be a possession worth aiming at for its own sake; to be, in fact, a part of the Perfection of man which is by some regarded as the sole Ultimate Good.<sup>12</sup>

For Sidgwick, virtue, manifested in virtuous actions, is to be chosen for its own sake, because doing so contributes to the virtuous character of the agent.

Despite the argument by some hedonists that virtue is nothing more than conduct tending to produce the most happiness, Sidgwick clings to a more Common Sense notion of virtue and argues for it as an important aspect of Utilitarian life. "I do not... think that the complete exclusion of an emotional element from the conception of Virtue would be really in harmony with the common sense of mankind."<sup>13</sup> He goes on,

We recognize that benefits which spring from affection and are lovingly bestowed are more acceptable to the recipients than those conferred without affection, in the taste of which there is admittedly something harsh and dry: hence, in a certain way, the affection, if practical and steady, seems a higher excellence than the mere

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<sup>12</sup> Sidgwick, 222

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

beneficent disposition of the will, as resulting in more excellent acts.<sup>14</sup>

Affection, be it in the form of friendship, love, patriotism, benevolence, etc. is for Sidgwick one of the highest Virtues. Sidgwick lays out a fairly Aristotelian conception of Virtue saying, "I consider Virtue as a quality manifested in the performance of duty (or good acts going beyond strict duty): it is indeed primarily attributed to the mind or character of the agent; but it is only known to us through its manifestations in feelings and acts."<sup>15</sup> Sidgwick, like Aristotle, in conceiving of Virtue as a mental state conducive to good actions, feels that continued virtuous choices, in addition to being good in themselves, also contribute to and maintain an overall virtuous mental character of the agent. In the *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle writes that,

Some activities are necessary, i.e. choiceworthy for some other end, while others are choiceworthy in themselves. Clearly, then, we should count happiness as one of those activities that are choiceworthy in themselves, not as one of those choiceworthy for some other end. For happiness lacks nothing, but is self-sufficient; and an activity is choiceworthy in itself when nothing further beyond it is sought from it.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sidgwick, 223.

<sup>15</sup> Sidgwick, 226

<sup>16</sup> Aristotle. Nicomachean Ethics. Trans. Irwin, Terence and Fine, Gail. 1995. 1176b

This seems entirely in line with Sidgwick's utilitarian view. Aristotle continues, "This seems to be the character of actions expressing virtue; for doing fine and excellent actions is choiceworthy for itself."<sup>17</sup> A utilitarian virtue ethic, in addition to including universal happiness as the ultimate end, reflects this common sense Aristotelian view of virtue as good in and of itself.

In his chapter on the Ultimate Good in The Methods of Ethics, Sidgwick argues that,

The only so-called Virtues which can be thought to be essentially and always such, and incapable of excess are such qualities as Wisdom, Universal Benevolence, and (in a sense) Justice; of which the notions manifestly involve this notion of Good, supposed already determinate.<sup>18</sup>

Sidgwick's definition of virtue as incapable of excess reflects Aristotle's doctrine of the mean. He argues that the "so-called virtues" such as courage, can be either deficient (cowardice) or excessive (rashness,) neither of which can be called virtuous. Sidgwick is hesitant to accord other such "virtues" a firm place in his doctrine, and thus concludes that "neither (1) subjective rightness or goodness of volition, as distinct from objective, nor (2) virtuous character, except as manifested or realized in virtuous conduct, can be regarded as constituting the Ultimate Good."<sup>19</sup> While Sidgwick rejects an ethic where the sole ultimate good is living virtuously, he nevertheless accords a

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Sidgwick, 393

<sup>19</sup> Sidgwick, 395

special case to virtue. Sidgwick writes, "The case of Virtue requires special consideration: since the encouragement in each other of virtuous impulses and dispositions is a main aim of men's ordinary moral discourse; so that even to raise the question whether this encouragement can go too far has a paradoxical air."<sup>20</sup> Sidgwick thus argues that our common sense view of morality requires the inclusion of virtue and friendship in any fully developed conception of happiness.

Sidgwick, like Epicurus, admits the somewhat paradoxical nature of virtue and friendship in the Utilitarian system. Just as Epicurus notes that in friendship, one must pursue the relationship with the friend as one's end, and not the benefit one receives from the friend, Sidgwick writes, "We have seen that many important pleasures can only be felt on condition of our experiencing desires for other things than pleasure. Thus the very acceptance of Pleasure as the ultimate end of conduct involves the practical rule that it is not always to be made the conscious end."<sup>21</sup> While Sidgwick fully accepts utilitarianism as his non-moral theory of value, he notes that in pursuing happiness we must sometimes choose ends other than pleasure in order to achieve the hedonistic end of pleasure. Sidgwick warns,

We shall miss the valuable pleasures which attend the exercise of the benevolent affections if we do not experience genuinely disinterested impulses to procure happiness for others (which

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<sup>20</sup> Sidgwick, 402

<sup>21</sup> Sidgwick, 403

are, in fact, implied in the notion of benevolent affections.<sup>22</sup>

Where a purely hedonistic view cannot make sense of affections and goodwill towards others without concern for personal gain, Sidgwick argues that universal happiness, as the ultimate good, requires we act not only for our own benefit, but also for the benefit of others. Sidgwick can be seen as arguing for a more Aristotelian form of utilitarianism, with his inclusion of the virtues as key elements in achieving the ultimate good of universal happiness. Sidgwick argues that individual happiness doesn't possess the characteristics, which, "as Aristotle says, we "divine" to belong to Ultimate Good."<sup>23</sup> Sidgwick argues the while pleasure is always the ultimate good, our common sense view requires that the virtues be included as key components of his ethic.

In clarifying his position on special cases such as the virtues, Sidgwick argues that universal happiness, is often best realized when "the extent to which we set ourselves consciously to aim at it be carefully restricted."<sup>24</sup> This reflects the common sense view that there is something distasteful and unsatisfying in a purely hedonistic pursuit. Sidgwick feels that this dissatisfaction is rectified by the inclusion of other ends such as the virtues. While Sidgwick feels that ultimately we should be hedonistically motivated, we again seem unable to fully secure happiness when aiming for it as the sole end.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Sidgwick, 405



Sidgwick states that common sense tends to consider virtues and other such ideals as entirely different from other human attributes. He writes that “qualities that are... Virtuous, are always such as we conceive capable of being immediately realized by voluntary effort, at least to some extent; so that the prominent obstacle to virtuous action is absence of adequate motive.”<sup>25</sup> Virtuousness, as a state of character, seems to motivate the agent towards further virtuous actions. Sidgwick finds it necessary to leave the virtues relatively intact within his utilitarianism, including them as more than mere acts conducive to happiness, but as ends of our moral conduct. Sidgwick argues that,

As the chief element in the common notion of good (besides happiness) is moral good or Virtue, if we can show that the other virtues are—speaking broadly—all qualities conducive to the happiness of the agent himself or of others, it is evident that Benevolence, whether it prompts us to promote the Virtue of others or their happiness, will aim directly or indirectly at the Utilitarian end.<sup>26</sup>

Sidgwick goes on to argue that since the true virtues all aim at the utilitarian end of universal happiness, pursuit of the virtues as ends in themselves is indirectly, though not directly, rational. While the end pursued in benevolent action is benevolence or altruism, the practical result is pleasure. Sidgwick continues,

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<sup>25</sup> Sidgwick, 426

<sup>26</sup> Sidgwick, 431.

The subsistence of benevolent affections among human beings is itself an important means to the Utilitarian end, because... the most intense and highly valued of our pleasures are derived from such affections; for both the emotion itself is highly pleasurable, and it imparts this quality to the activities which it prompts and sustains, and the happiness thus produced is continually enhanced by the sympathetic echo of the pleasures conferred on others.<sup>27</sup>

Sidgwick here argues that the pursuit of virtue and benevolence as ends in themselves is not only beneficial to the community, but also produce the highest order and best pleasures for the individual. The importance of community in Sidgwick's system is directly linked to the ultimate good of universal happiness. It seems, for example, that inconveniencing oneself to aid one's neighbors in times of trouble is a very good and logical thing to do under utilitarianism. The benefits of our neighbor's aid and protection, continued goodwill, and society's very functioning seem all so conducive to our happiness that we should go to great lengths to maintain them. For Sidgwick, there may even be examples where ties to country, community, friends, or family may in fact carry strong enough worth in themselves that protecting their continued existence may mean subverting one's own happiness for the greater good. Under Sidgwick's Utilitarianism, selfless sacrifice for the greater good is counted amongst the most virtuous and praiseworthy of actions, since it promotes the universal good over the individual's. Sidgwick also argues

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<sup>27</sup> Sidgwick, 433

that these selfless benevolent actions are among the most rewarding in terms of pleasure and satisfaction we receive from acting virtuously.

### **Constructing a Utilitarian Virtue Ethic**

While Sidgwick does accord an important position to virtue and the other “ideals”, they do always remain subordinated to the ultimate end of universal happiness. Sidgwick writes,

The doctrine that Universal Happiness is the ultimate *standard* must not be understood to imply that Universal Benevolence is the only right or always best *motive* of action... if experience shows that the general happiness will be more satisfactorily attained if men frequently act from other motives than pure universal philanthropy, it is obvious that these other motives are reasonably to be preferred on Utilitarian principles.<sup>28</sup>

In following this distinction between the ideals such as the virtues and other utility maximizing actions conducive to happiness, it seems necessary to outline a sort of virtue ethic within utilitarianism.

Henry Sidgwick’s formulation of utilitarianism, whereby right conduct is that which produces the greatest happiness for all affected by the conduct, seems to be correct. Given that universal happiness is the ultimate good, and that virtuous choices produce the greatest amount of happiness, it seems necessary that the virtues be sought as ends in themselves in seeking the ultimate end of universal

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<sup>28</sup> Sidgwick, 413

happiness. In accepting ends other than pleasure in a system where pleasure is the ultimate end, it is useful to construct a system of interior ends, such as virtue, benevolence, and friendship.

Sidgwick argues that while universal happiness is the ultimate good, it is nevertheless rational to pursue interior ends such as virtue since they lead to the ultimate end sought. Sidgwick notes a hierarchy with the ideals subordinated to utility. He writes,

We may conclude that the pursuit of the ideal objects before mentioned, Virtue, Truth, Freedom, Beauty, etc. *for their own sakes*, is indirectly and secondarily, though not primarily and absolutely, rational; on account not only of the happiness that will result from their attainment, but also of that which springs from their disinterested pursuit.<sup>29</sup>

Pursuit of universal happiness is “primarily and absolutely rational,” because it involves directly pursuing the ultimate end of happiness. Sidgwick argues that pursuit of the ideal objects is “indirectly and secondarily” rational, because pursuing them indirectly leads to the ultimate end of happiness. This distinction accepts universal happiness as *the* ultimate end of all actions, but leaves room for the interior ends, the pursuit of which leads indirectly back to the ultimate end. It thus stands to reason that in seeking universal happiness, there is at the minimum an impulse towards virtuous conduct and promotion of virtue in those nearby.

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<sup>29</sup> Sidgwick, 405-406

We think a person virtuous for doing things beyond their duty, and feel that a virtuous society is better than a vicious one. Common sense morality does not, however, condemn non-virtuousness in situations that do not harm others. While it is virtuous for Bob to donate his time to charity, not doing so doesn't by itself make Fred a bad person. So long as actions meet the base utilitarian requirements, they are acceptable, yet the life of virtuous action, far from being a chore, reveals itself as the best means to universal happiness. Laws may be passed on utilitarian grounds, but virtues are best policed by morality and cultural approval. This reflects our own system of laws, where law generally serves to protect people by determining legal blame, while societal sentiments and the cultural milieu determine what is merely morally reprehensible.

In following Epicurean formulations of friendship, and the special place of virtue in Henry Sidgwick's utilitarianism, we have seen that pursuing the utilitarian end is sometimes best achieved by the pursuit of non-utilitarian ends such as virtue, friendship, benevolence, etc. While Sidgwick considers pursuing hedonistic ends primarily and absolutely rational, he explains that since pursuing ends such as virtue is a means to the end of universal happiness, it is still rational. These primary and secondary rational goals reveal themselves in the hierarchy of universal happiness as the absolute end, over virtue and friendship as instrumental but essential ends in and of themselves. The virtuous life and friendships are to be sought for their own sake, but this is only rationally possible because in seeking them we find the end of happiness.

## **Conclusion**

A utilitarianism that accords an important place to interior ends such as virtue and friendship not only captures the concrete utility gained from actions, but also takes into account the emotional resonance characteristic of our highest pleasures. The inclusion of virtue and the other ideals within utilitarianism permits us to pursue complex issues, such as the place of care in our relationships, and highlights the importance of intentionality in our actions. A utilitarianism recognizing the importance of the virtues also expresses our common sense views regarding the inherent importance of friendships and virtue outside of their beneficial affects. Sidgwick's inclusion of virtues in his utilitarian ethic thus more fully expresses our moral sentiments, and accomplishes the Epicurean therapeutic goal in promoting a practical way of pursuing the actions most conducive to universal happiness. The utilitarian end of universal happiness seems to require that we create a Utilitarian Virtue Ethic, which embraces the non-hedonistic ends that produce the greatest happiness.

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