**John Stuart Mill: Rule Utilitarianism**

**Mill** was also a **hedonist** and accepted that happiness is of great importance. But he stressed **happiness rather than pleasure**. Mill argued that **not all forms of happiness or pleasure were of equal value**. He argued that Bentham’s approach did not recognise higher human values, he saw the advantages of a utilitarian system, but advocated the quality of happiness as more important: ‘If he (Bentham) thought at all about the higher values of human nature, it was but as idiosyncrasies of taste.’ In Mill’s view the flower seller should be educated to enjoy the opera rather than her bottle of gin.

Mill argued that human beings should seek to fulfil their highest potential and not stoop to the level of non-human animals: ***‘Better Socrates dissatisfied than a fool satisfied; better a man dissatisfied than a pig satisfied.’***

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According to Mill, quality of pleasure employs the use of the higher faculties. For Mill, it is intellectual pleasures (e.g. reading, poetry or listening to music) that really count and are more important than such pleasures as eating, drinking or having sex.

Happiness, he argues, is something that people desire for its own sake, but we need to look at human life as a whole- happiness is not just adding up the units of pleasure but rather the fulfilment of higher ideals. Therefore his theory is **qualitative.**

Mill believed that there are principles that work as a general means for securing the greater good. A popular example is that of lying. While there maybe good reasons for lying in specific circumstances, as an overall principle lying cannot be supported because it cannot support the greatest good for the greatest number.

For example ‘it is wrong to lie’ Mill noted that there is some benefit to this **maxim (rule)**- without it people would find it hard to trust each other. He therefore proposed a rule that contributes to the greater happiness. Breaking the rule might contribute to an individual’s short-term happiness, but is detrimental to long-term happiness for all concerned.

In summary Mill’s revision of utilitarianism allows for the formulation of rules based on utilitarian principles. These rules promote the happiness of the greatest number, and can be used in making ethical decisions. It is therefore called **rule utilitarianism**.

Mill also positively developed Bentham’s approach by the introduction of the **harm principle**, which states that the majority may not interfere with the minority unless it is to prevent harm to others. This principle could allow for a whole society to be provided with happiness rather than a large number benefiting from a small number of citizens.