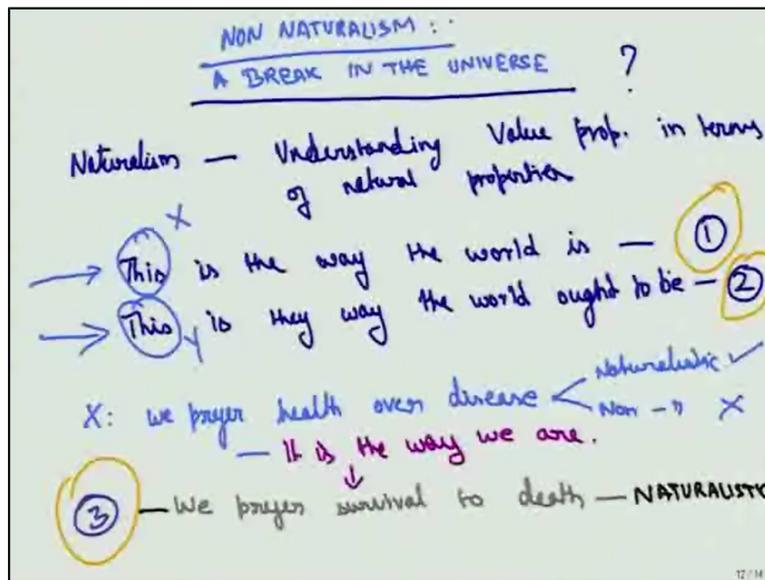


**Ethics**  
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**Module No. #01**  
**Lecture No. #17-A**  
**Ethical Non-Naturalism – Part-I**

Let us now explore, Non-Naturalism. We have been talking about Naturalism, and in contrast, what is Non-Naturalism. Let us explore, what do we mean by Non-Naturalism, when it is written as, being a break in the universe. Now, if you take a look at the screen.

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That well, when we call Non-Naturalism, a break in the universe, what does this mean. Well, as we knew that, Naturalism subscribe to, understanding moral properties, or understanding value properties, in terms of natural properties. And, Non-Naturalism was well, making value judgements, independent of moral properties. Somewhere, there is a disconnect between, the world out there, and moral properties, that the Naturalist perhaps fails to see.

Now, let us take a look. Now, Non-Naturalism. When we talked about Naturalism, we talked about, how we took Utilitarianism, or Hedonism, as a case study, as a standard example, that well. If something that promotes happiness, and happiness is desirable. Therefore, anything that promotes happiness, which in itself is desirable, is a good. And, contrary to that, anything that

promotes suffering, and suffering is undesirable. And therefore, suffering is bad. That was a simple logic of a Naturalist.

But now, let us look, what currency, or what weight, does the Non-Naturalist have. Now, let us argue, this Metaethical debate between, Naturalism and Non-Naturalism, from a Non-Naturalist's perspective. First, this Naturalism versus Non-Naturalism debate, is significant in the moral domain. But, also has its ramifications, in other domains. For now, we will keep ourselves restricted to, how it is affecting the value debate. Now, what does it take for us, to make a moral decision, a value decision.

If we are describing, what our likes, our preferences, our satisfactions are, our aim for happiness is. And, basing this paradigm for our value framework. Then we are perhaps Naturalists. But, now let us take a look at this, rather closely. What is it that, we desire? What is it that, makes us happy? Now, if we are talking about, say, very fundamentally, biological comforts of food, shelter, safety. Well, these are essentially, natural properties, and a natural phenomenon.

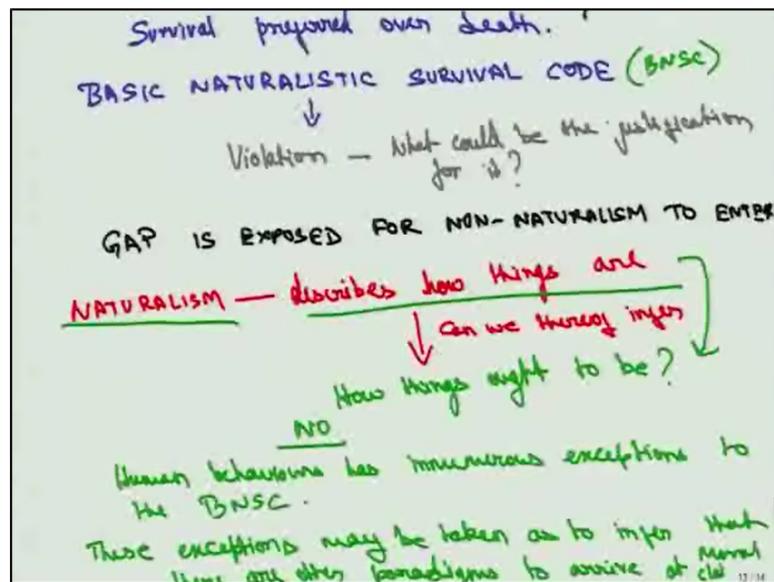
And therefore, the Naturalist puts forth that, these are preferred over, insecurity, insufficiency of food, or ill-health, and lack of shelter. What we have frequently referred as, essential requirements for human life, even animal life. Now, this is how the way, the world is. Is this how the way, the world ought to be. Now, this is a significant difference in the two questions, that will perhaps bring out the difference between, Naturalism and Non-Naturalism debate. Let us take a look at the board. This is the way, the world is. This is the way, the world ought to be.

Now, if these are the two sentences, or propositions, that we take into consideration. That well, instead of X, if we write this as X, and this, we write Y. And, this is how the way, the world is. And this is how the way, the world ought to be. Now, what is it, the way the world is. Well. X is that, we prefer, health over disease. Now, when we talk about this, that we prefer, health over disease, is this a naturalistic claim, or a Non-Naturalistic claim. Well, definitely, it is a naturalistic claim. It is not a Non-Naturalistic claim.

Well, preferring health over disease, is the way we are build, the way we are. That is, it is the

way we are. But, let us further generalise it, that which will perhaps indicate, what is the difficulty, that we are likely to come up across. We prefer, survival to death. Now, this is the way, things are, that we prefer, survival to death. And, this is again, a naturalistic claim. Now, let us hold onto this, as the third claim. We have three claims. Claims here, 1, 2 and 3. Now, when we prefer, survival to death, it is a naturalistic claim. Right.

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Now, if you prefer, survival to death. Now, let us try to imagine a situation, where this is not true. This is not true, in the case of a, say a martyr, a soldier, who was out to fight a war, and does not care about, his own life, or her own life. Or, say a doctor, who is operating in adverse circumstances, and exposing himself or herself to infections, which could be fatal. Say, in a famine affected area, or in a riot, or in a war torn country, doctors go in, where the operating conditions are far less than, what it should be.

So, and this makes the operating staff, the medical staff, vulnerable to numerable risks and infections, which could also be fatal. Suppose, we assume that, the doctors, or the operating team, or the medical team, continues with its work, exposing oneself to this risk, what could be the justification for it. Now, the reason, why I make this claim, is that well, we see, that there are innumerable counter instances of, what is Basic Naturalistic Survival Code.

Whereas, there are innumerable violations of this, if I may call Basic Natural Survivalistic Code.

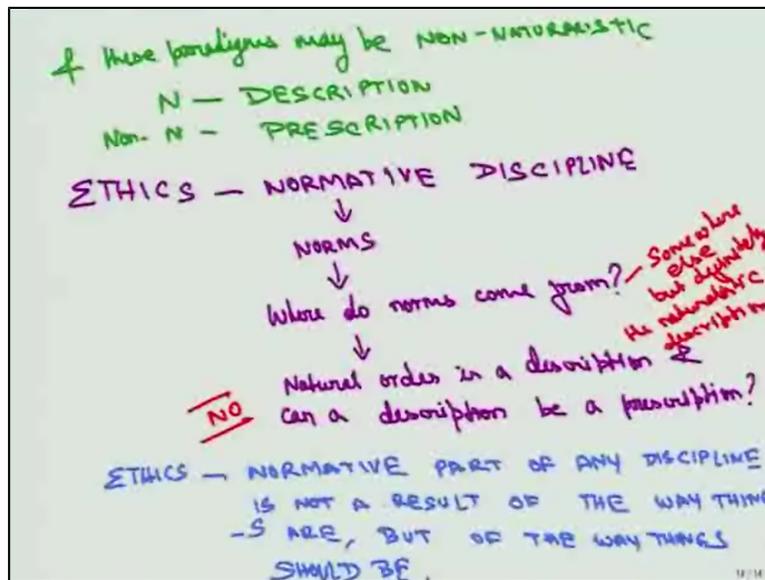
If, each one of us, or human beings, are endowed with such a thing as the, Basic naturalistic Survival Code, what about its violation, what is the justification for it, or what could be the justification for it. Now, it is here, that the wedge, or that the gap is exposed, for the non-Naturalistic, or for Non-Naturalism, to enter. How do I say that? Well. Again, it is still, we are talking about this particular example.

Well, that each one of us has a, Basic naturalistic Survival Code. And, the violation for this, has been frequently seen, throughout the history of human civilisation. We took two instances. We took the instance of the soldier, fighting. Definitely, survival for him, would be better, to withdraw. And, the medical team, in a war stricken area, with minimal hygiene, and suitable medically operating conditions, still going in for their duty.

Now here, they are doing something, which is clearly a violation of their, Basic naturalistic Survival Code. This is an example of Naturalism. Why do they do that? The Naturalism, as a Metaethical claim, is a description of the state of affairs. It describes, how things are. But, does it make a claim about, how things should be. Now, this is the crucial distinction, that we need to keep in mind. Naturalism describes, how things are. But, can we infer from this, how things ought to be.

Now, it is this crucial link, that is questioned by the, Non-Naturalistic. That well, Naturalism on the whole describes, how things are. But, from this, can we thereof infer that, how things ought to be. The Non-Naturalist answer is, no. Human behaviour has innumerable exceptions, to the Basic Naturalistic Survival Code. Now, these exceptions infer, that there is another paradigm. These exceptions may be taken, as to infer, that there are other paradigms, to arrive at moral decisions.

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And, these paradigms, whatever they may be, may be Non-Naturalistic. So, as we see, Naturalism was about describing, or it is a description of the state of affairs. Non-Naturalism, was about prescription, or prescribing the right thing to do. Now, it is here, that the crucial difference, strikes us. That, this is an interesting Metaethical issue, that we need to explore, that well. Naturalism describes the way, things are. We know, that well. Perhaps, if I believe that, mobile phone in that crowded train compartment, and come back in five minutes, it is going to be stolen.

Somebody is going to pick it up. However, that this will be the case, there is no guarantee of it. Just as, we may say, that well, if I switch on the mobile phone, it connects to a network. Unless until, it is programming and hardware malfunction, this is how, it will happen. However, in the case of, leaving the mobile phone, in a crowded train compartment, and then coming back in five minutes, to check whether, it is there or not, we can never be so sure. Why can we never be so sure. Now, I am taking the Non-Naturalistic Philosophers perspective.

Well. We can never be sure. Because, human nature, has a break in the universe, that we have talked about. That perhaps, Naturalism gives us our goals. But, what actually makes us act, is not, how we are equipped biologically, or psychologically, but also, how we reason, reflect all our values. That, we are not a passive recipient of the information, that is all around us. It is rather a proactive assimilation, manipulation, and reaction to, what information is available to us.

So, the Non-Naturalistic Philosopher makes a claim, that well, the moral domain is a break from the naturalistic domain. That the moral domain, is no more a continuous, to the natural domain. Let us, take to look at this. If we have understood, all the naturalistic facts about a case, or a situation, does that give us enough credence, to predict the normative discipline. Right. And, this is what makes it different, from other disciplines. Every discipline has a normative part. Right.

What is this normative part? It comes from norms. And, where do norms come from? A description. A natural order, is a description. And, can a description of the state of affairs, be a prescription? Now, this is where, the question is that, where the Non-Naturalistic philosopher comes in. That well, as long as, there is a description, it is insufficient to explain the goal, where are we going to go. Now, take very naive analogy to this. Now, if I describe the road to you. And, you want to go on a travel journey.

Well, that is definitely, not giving you the goal that, where you would like to reach. Prescription is like, the goal, the norms. Every discipline be it, the market system be it, engineering be it, the medical profession be it, research in any field, has to have a set of goals. What is frequently understood, or frequently mentioned, as the motto, the thing statement, philosophy of an organisation, of a discipline, of goal, of a subject, of a laboratory, of a project, it is the direction given to it. See the philosophy of a constitution of a country, that what is the goal? Where do you ought to go?

Now, describing, the way things are, is insufficient, to arrive at a goal. We have a goal. And, goal that way, is not a result of mere naturalistic phenomena all-around. Let us say, a leader, dreams of peace, and bonhomie in a war stricken country. Now, this leader is thinking, or having a goal, which is separate from, what is all-around. And, somebody, who is perhaps born and brought up in a war striven zone.

How does that make, one be okay with the war? Or, that human beings, have this ability to step aside from the perspective, that they have been raised in. And, have a less perspectival look at the way, things ought to be. The Non-Naturalistic philosopher, counts on this break, in the universe.

What is the break? From the naturalistic order, to the human reaction to it. That, our reaction is not a mechanistic determined continuous chain, with the way, the world is.

So, the Non-Naturalistic philosopher, answers this as, no. This is not possible. So, norms have to come from, somewhere else, but definitely not the current or the naturalistic description. So, it is here, that the Non-Naturalistic philosopher makes a claim, that Ethics as a moral enquiry, is a normative enquiry. Ethics is normative. And, the normative part of every discipline, normative part of any enterprise, or discipline, or project, is not a result of the way, things are, but of the way, things should be.

So, this is what, the Non-Naturalistic philosopher is trying to say, that the normative part of any discipline, not just Ethics, any normative claim, is not a result of the way things are, but the way things should be. Let us say, if I am a banker. And, if I require to reform the banking system. And, I have a vision. That well, it is normal for the customer to, say, a wait in a queue, for the teller to look into his requirement. Or, if the teller can use, his or her discrimination to decide on, which customer to tackle first.

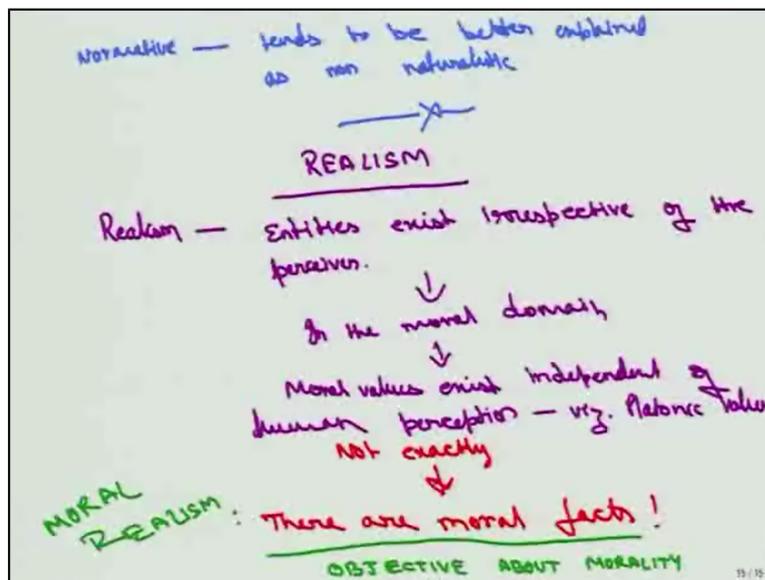
Now, these are the way, things are. And, maybe in many parts of the world, that is how, things are. But perhaps, if the manager, or if the banker, decides that well, this is not the way, I want things ought to be. I want people to be seated, or a chronology to be followed, or a one-to-one tackling to be done. These are instances, where the Non-Naturalistic brick is visible. Now, you can easily correlate and compare this, with Leadership Theories, with Management Theories, that what is it that makes a manager, or a leader, different from the rest.

Well, it is the ability, to have a vision. And, the vision, just does not come as a part of the description of the state of affairs, but as a projection, as how the leader or the manager, wants things to be. Now, wanting things to be, in a certain way, can definitely be a Non-Naturalistic claim. It need not be a result of the environment, one is exposed to. If, I may say, sparking out that, inherent thoughtful creative streak in a person. And, where this leader or the manager, breaks with the naturalistic order, and strives to imagine, how things should be, or ought to be.

And thereof, restructures policies and procedures, and motivational levels, to attain that. So, Ethics as a discipline, to a large extent, depends on the distinction between, the Non-Naturalistic order, and the Naturalistic order. Because, when we try to understand Ethics, in the Naturalistic order, we are actually reducing Ethics to, may be Sociology to be Psychology, may be to Social Anthropology to culture, to various other natural factors.

And thereby, there is nothing inspiring, or there is nothing prescriptive, about Ethics, as a normative enquiry. So, whenever we are prescribing something, or giving goals, it is definitely not a mere act of description. It is an act of having a vision, and sharing it with others. So, the foundation of Ethics as a discourse, is a part of every other discourse. Ethics, in any other discourse, that is found, is definitely normative. And, normative makes it almost, if you take a look.

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Normative, tends to be better explained as, Non-Naturalistic. Okay. Now, we talk about the next issue, that we would like to tackle, which is Realism. Now, Realism is closely tied with, both Naturalism, and Non-Naturalism. As, we have earlier understood and talked about, that Realism claims that well, entities exist, irrespective of the perceiver. Now, what does this mean, in the moral domain. That, there are some moral values that exist, independent of human perception.

Let me write that. Something, perhaps like the, platonic values. Well. Not exactly, rather more

accurately, it is that, there are moral facts. And, this is what is meant by, Moral Realism. Okay. Now, having said that, let us briefly go over, what is being meant by this? Well. First. When we talked about Realism, we talked that, Realism means that, entities exist, independent of the perceiver. What it simply means is that, well, this green board, over here, exists, even when I am not seeing it, or when anybody is not seeing it.

So, this was the Realist domain. I mean, it seems to be pretty obvious, that well, things exist, even when nobody is there to perceive them. Well, on the contrary, the Idealists have claimed that well, everything is either, created by the mind, or condition by the mind. So, we say, something like a prejudice, something like an idea. That, say, people of community X, have Y property. Now, this is almost a prejudice. Now, what makes this prejudice? Is this prejudice real?

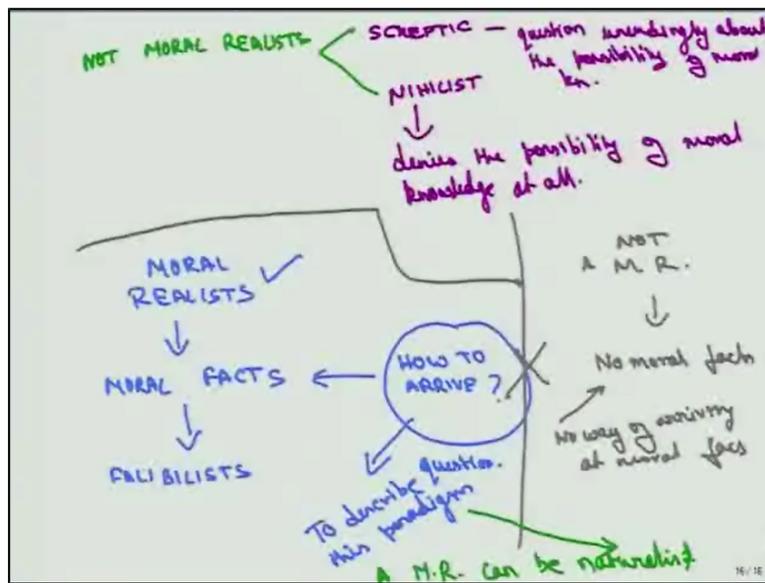
Well. No, it is not real, as we understood Realism. Because, it exists in the mind of the one, who has this prejudice. So, Idealism goes ahead to claim, that well, these ideas are dependent on the ideator. And, there is nothing existing, independent of the perceiver. But, that debate, does not concern us, now. What concerns us is, Moral Realism. That, what do we mean by Realism? Does it mean, that there is? Because, Plato was a Moral Realist of a sort, who almost defied moral values.

And, by saying that well, there was this idea of justice and goodness, which exist independent of human perception. And, our aim is to, we may never be able to know it, we can only know resemblances of it. So, there was this universal idea of justice, or good. You see a series of just acts. And, you infer that, this is what is meant by justice. So, we can give examples of just act. But, we cannot perhaps, we are finite enough limited, not to describe, what justice is.

So, that was the Platonic claim. And, when further ahead to say, that well, justice, goodness, and all these moral values, existed independent of human perception. Well. We do not now, go so far ahead to make such claims, which in today's parlance, would almost be mythological. Making of postulating entities, such as the ideal, good, or justice, that exist independent of human perception.

Whereas, as we noted on the slide, it was written there, well, that there are moral facts. That is, what do we mean by a Moral Realism? That, there are moral facts. And as long as, there are moral facts. That means, there is something objective about morality, and they are not just opinions of agents. So, that is what is meant by Realism, in the moral context. Now, Realism, traditionally held that, things are in themselves, and it does not depend, or is not perceived, by a mind.

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Now, let us go into some examples of, who are not Moral Realists, or what is against Moral Realism. Well. First is the Skeptics. Then, is the Nihilist. The Skeptics questions unendingly, about the possibility of knowledge. Possibility of moral knowledge, in this case. The Nihilist, on the other hand, denies the possibility of knowledge at all. So, people, who are is schools, that make a claim that, there can be no objective talk about morality, are not Moral Realists.

So, to be a Moral Realist, well, one has to be an Objectivist, about moral claims. Now, there has been a lot of debate, between Realists and Skeptics, that has been put forth by an interesting example, by a Western Philosopher. Let us look at it, this way. Now, when I talk about moral facts, what am I ask him. When I make a moral claim, it has to be acceptable to others. And, the very attitude, that there can be a moral claim acceptable by all, talks about Moral Realism.

An interesting example is put forth. This, example brings forth, tries to defuse, the attack of the

Skeptics, on the Moral Realist. The Skeptics asking, to show that, where are the moral facts, is analogical similar to, my asking, or to anybody is asking that, give me the address of the average Indian. Now, there is a notion called the average Indian. Let us say, there is a notion of averages, there is a notion of average Indian middle class, average Indian income, average Indian psyche.

But now, when I ask, the address of this average Indian, where does it come from. Now, this is what, the Moral Realist replies to the Skeptics. That well, when you ask for the location of moral facts, you are actually asking a question, that cannot be answered. You are asking a question like, give me the address of the average Indian. How can I give you? Clearly, it is a nonsensical to attempt, even giving the answer of the average Indian. Because, it is an average, it is not an individual.

So, when I say that, there is a moral fact, it does not have to have a location to be a moral fact, it is a moral fact by itself. Now, what does Moral Realism depend upon? Now, Moral Realism depends a lot upon our notions of, what moral objectivity is. Now, whenever we have a moral discourse, a moral claim, or a simple difference of opinion. Let us take an example. A school has raised its fees, 10 folds. And, two students talk.

Student-A says that, I do not like, the school raising the fees. It is too expensive. And now, it becomes painful for me, to pay. The second student, Student-B saying that well, they were wrong, in raising their fees. Now, the Student-A, his claim was an opinion, where he clearly expressed his or her dissatisfaction, with the new move of the school, to hike the school fees, by 10 times. The claim of Student-B, was closer to moral absolutism, was a judgement. A judgement, that need not be confined to himself.

So, he is making, what is perhaps can be called a moral fact, which is of course, judgeable and revisable. But, B's claim indicates that well, there can be an objective moral judgement on an act. Now, the act here is, the school is raising the fees, 10 times. Now, whether that is right or wrong, Student-A expressed his opinion. Let us say, somebody in the management C, person C, expresses his opinion, that well, I feel very happy now, that the fees have been hiked by 10 times, and now we will get good salaries.

If, I may say, a selfish, or person's specific perspectives. But, if the newspaper editorial, the journal, or Student-B's claim that well, the school is wrong in hiking the fees, is an indicator, or a step towards a moral judgement. Assuming now, that the school comes up with its justification, that well, it is for these reasons, that we raised hiked our school fees. And, if these justifications seem strong, or reliable, or robust, then from a neutral perspective, one can judge, whether the hiking the school fees was, right or wrong.

Now, this may sound, a little ambiguous. But, is not that what we do, every day in our life. Is not this, not an option. When the government's judge policies. When the courts judge the cases. So, we are actually assessing, that we are going ahead with the claim, that well, we can find a moral fact. Let us take a look, what is the structure of this claim, now. Moral Realists, believe that there are, moral facts. How do we arrive at them, is a question, that is to be tackled next?

So, most Moral Realist, tend to be Fallibilist. That is, they believe that there is a moral fact, but how to arrive, is the question. Whereas, someone, who is marked, a Moral Realist, no moral facts. That means, there is no way of arriving at moral facts. So, this question, does not hold any value, for the person, or the philosophy, or the school, which is not a Moral Realist. Now, this is the crucial difference. Now, the one, who is denying Moral Realist, is more likely to be, a Relativist, or a Nihilist.

Whereas, someone who is a Moral Realist, is going to accept moral facts. But, the effort is to find out, to describe this paradigm, to arrive at the claim. So, a Moral Realist, can also be a Naturalist. That is to be noted. Can be a Naturalist. How do you say that? Well, a Moral Realist can be a Naturalist, because this paradigm is answered by Naturalism. So, we have talked about Moral Realism. And, what does it take, to be a Moral Realist. And, what does it take, to be a Non-Moral Realist.