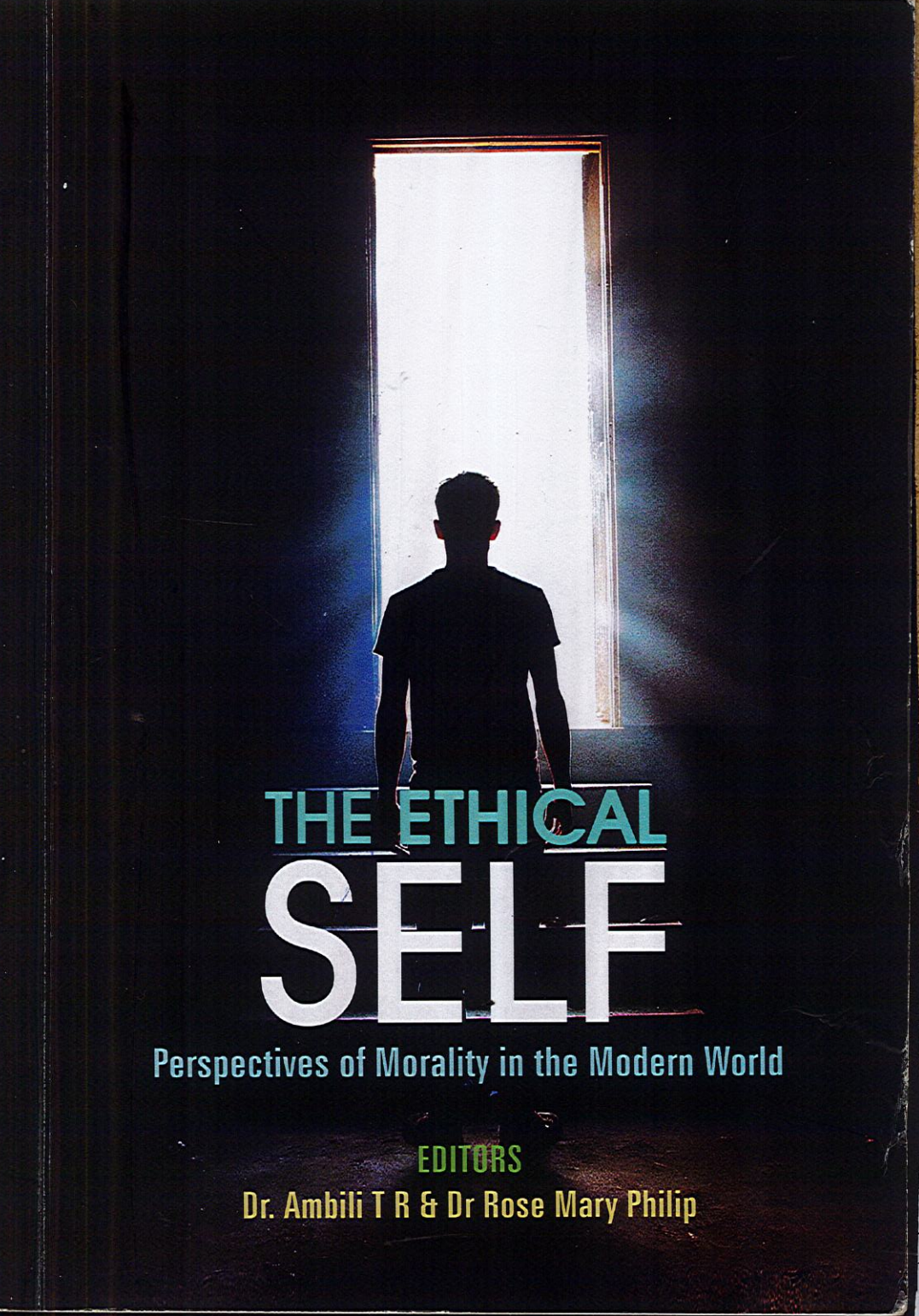




THE ETHICAL SELF

Perspectives of Morality in the Modern World

EDITORS

Dr. Ambili T R & Dr Rose Mary Philip

The Ethical Self

**Perspectives of Morality in the
Modern World**

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Dr Ambili T R
Dr Rose Mary Philip

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The Ethical Self: Perspectives of Morality in the Modern World

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MESSAGE

We live in a world of accelerating change-technologically, culturally and ideologically. In an age where moral clarity is deemed less privileged, *The Ethical Self: Perspectives of Morality in the Modern World* is an imperative exploration. The book arrives at a moment when individuals and societies struggle to reconcile personal values with collective responsibilities, grappling with enduring moral principles against the realities of contemporary life.

The authors craft urgent and timeless insights through diverse philosophical lenses, cultural narratives, and modern case studies. This book does not claim to provide definitive answers but offers valuable perspectives. It is both introspective and outward-looking- examining the individual's moral compass while recognising the collective forces that shape it. Drawing from philosophy, psychology, sociology, and real-world narratives, *The Ethical Self* invites readers on a reflective journey that challenges assumptions and encourages dialogue.

The book sheds light on various topics organised into modules, which include Personal Morality, Social Morality, Professional Morality, Environmental Morality, Political Morality and Religious Morality. The strength of this work lies in its balance: it neither preaches nor evades. It thoughtfully engages with the complex terrain of modern morality, addressing the foundations of identity, justice, technology, responsibility, and more. As someone striving to live with greater awareness, you will find a companion for your questions and a stimulus for deeper reflection in these pages.

I would like to congratulate the contributors, the teachers at Alphonsa College, Pala, who have worked diligently on every page of this book, and I express my appreciation for their efforts. I hope that this endeavour will have an impact that resonates in the minds of our youth, the potential readers, and that it will be of everlasting value to them

Pala
20.04.2025



Joseph Kallarangatt
Bishop Joseph Kallarangatt
Bishop, Eparchy of Palai

A Word of Appreciation

Morality is identified as the distinguishing feature that makes one human. Though ethics and morality are very often used interchangeably there is difference. We may clarify the difference by the description that Ethics is a branch of the philosophy related to the concepts of right or wrong behaviour, while morality regarding behaviour itself but dependent upon one's belief and convictions. These and related topics are to be read and understood in the context of the changing world without diluting the essence.

Some of the dedicated teachers of Alphonsa College considers it as their duty in addition to their statutory and other duties, to provide to their students and the society moral principles and teachings in a book form. As a result, we have the book the *Ethical Self: Perspectives of morality in the Modern World*. I congratulate all who have contributed to this endeavour in one way or other. I wish them and their work every success.

Msgr. Dr. Joseph Thadathil
Protosyncellus, Eparchy of Palai

Message

The essence of human existence can be characterized by rationality. At the core of our consciousness lies the profound realization encapsulated by Descartes' assertion, "I think, therefore I am." This self-awareness serves as the foundation of what it means to be human. To be human is to embrace responsibility, a guiding principle that informs our actions. Actions follow the being. Our inherent being determines the trajectory of those actions; virtuous actions promote goodness, while misguided actions lead to detrimental outcomes. The fundamental tenet of philosophical thought can be distilled into the guidance: "Do good and avoid evil." Furthermore, human existence transcends rationality, encompassing vital moral and social dimensions. This truth is prominently reflected in our behaviours and interactions as inherently social beings.

An individual's self-awareness, knowledge, and actions influence all spheres they interact with, affecting society and family. According to the nature of his act, man is either good or bad. Therefore, a free man has to shape himself to do good to society. C R Darwin says, "A moral being is capable of reflecting on his past actions and their motives – of approving of some and disapproving of others."

The value of every activity is in the light of one's conscience. Everyone must form the ultimate conscience of doing right and wrong. Everyone must strive throughout their life to cultivate a good conscience. Let us recall the words of Mahatma Gandhi, who said, "But one thing took deep root in me - the

conviction that morality is the basis of things, and that truth is the substance of all morality. Truth became my sole objective. It began to grow in magnitude daily, and my definition of it has also been ever widening." He continued, "True morality consists not in following beaten track, but finding the true path ourselves and fearlessly following it."

If truth is the foundation of morality, there must be recognition that God is the eternal truth. And all truth emanates from God, the source of ultimate truth. Only when Man stays close to God does he become good. "But anyone who does not love does not know God, for God is love. We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them" (1 John 4:8,16). This love endures all struggles, and it has compassion. In Arthur Schopenhauer's words, "the basis of morality is compassion."

The study of moral principles calls individuals to lead ethical lives. One's thoughts and actions must align with the noble ideals of truth and justice. Marquez Aurelias' words resonate here: "Waste no more time arguing what a good man should be. Be one." The book is a noble pursuit; I appreciate those who have relentlessly worked towards it. May these thoughts disseminate, and many find their way.

Rev. Dr. George Varghese

Director of the Centre for Catechesis

Eparchy of Palai

Dedicated to

Rev. Dr. Shaji John

our guiding light, as he retires from our institution after decades of selfless service, leaving an indelible legacy of wisdom, compassion, and inspiration...

Preface

"Even the most rational approach to ethics is defenceless if there isn't the will to do what is right"

Morality is a quiet yet powerful presence in our lives, a guiding force that shapes who we are and how we relate to others. It influences our choices, sense of right and wrong, and vision of living a good and meaningful life. In today's rapidly changing world, where digital technology affects cultural shifts, it is high time to redefine how we live and connect; the need for a strong ethical foundation is more critical than ever. The quote by Nobel laureate Alexander Solzhenitsyn suggests that for moral principles to have any real impact, individuals must have the motivation or desire to act on those principles. This emphasises the importance of willpower and personal responsibility in moral decision-making.

Nowadays, few people, not even children, seem open to the very idea of receiving advice. Many of us believe we are flawless and entirely self-reliant. However, we must renew ourselves by conducting morality checks on ourselves every day. Much like a machine that needs maintenance to operate effectively, this practice is essential for the smooth functioning of our lives.

The Ethical Self: Perspectives of Morality in the Modern World provides a relatable examination of morality as an essential, deeply human aspect of our lives. Instead of viewing morality and ethics as unrelated, this book highlights how our moral values influence our day-to-day life and the various systems we engage with in the name of ethics. Growing up as a young teenager amidst digital distractions, social media, and harmful drugs is in itself a challenge

nowadays. Behind the screen time lies an addictive pattern: a search for purpose and connection. These modern challenges don't just affect behaviour; they erode moral clarity, self-awareness, and a sense of meaning.

The book is structured as a moral science textbook for graduate students, with the hope that its content guides them in their lives. Through five carefully curated modules, the book encourages readers to reflect on values, make the right choices, and help to lead a morally upright life. These modules cover various aspects of morality, including personal, social, professional, environmental, political and religious morality.

The Ethical Self seeks to reconnect readers, especially youth, with their ethical core. Its first module is a call to turn inward, encouraging a deeper understanding of personal values such as honesty, empathy, self-discipline, and integrity. These virtues help individuals remain steady amid internal conflict and external pressure.

The second module expands from the personal to the social. How we treat others, how we communicate, and how we respond to injustice all reflect our social morality. Respect, kindness, and ethical responsibility are essential in building healthy relationships and inclusive communities, especially in a time marked by polarisation and misunderstanding.

The third module is about our professional lives. Ethics play a critical role in shaping leadership, innovation, research, and the pursuit of progress. As technology, especially artificial intelligence, advances at a breath-taking pace, our moral judgment must evolve accordingly, ensuring that ambition is always guided by

accountability. This module demonstrates how our young folks uphold their ethical standards amidst the changing world.

The fourth module expands on our relationship with the natural world. Environmental morality urges us to live sustainably, care for the planet, and consider the impact of our actions on future generations. At its core, this is a call for peace among people and between humanity and nature.

The ethics of civic life are also expressed in the book as moral engagement. Politics is not merely about policy or power; it encompasses values, justice, and participation. A morally conscious society depends on citizens who are informed, active, and driven by a sense of the common good.

Finally, this exploration of morality would be incomplete without considering ethical life's spiritual and religious dimensions. Across cultures and traditions, faith provides inspiration and discipline, encouraging compassion, humility, and a reverence for life in all its forms.

At this juncture, we would like to extend our sincere gratitude to our esteemed Patron and the Bishop of the Diocese of Palai, His Excellency Mar Joseph Kallarangatt. In benevolence, His Excellency blessed our efforts and consented to write the message at our request.

A brief discussion regarding this book with our manager, Protosyncellus, Very Rev. Dr. Joseph Thadathil, gave us insight into the book's intended message. He emphasised the perspective on morality as a continuously evolving concept and encouraged us to contemplate the possibility of a subsequent volume.

A special thanks goes to Dr. George Varghese Njarakunnel, Director of the Centre of Catechesis, Eparchy of Palai, for sharing his thoughts on morality and the book in writing. We also thank Rev. Fr. Biju Madathikunnel for reviewing the book and designing the cover.

Rev. Dr. Shaji John, our principal, serves as the book's spiritual strength, inspiring us through his prayers, suggestions, and contributions. His ability to tackle challenges with ease, combined with the freedom he grants his colleagues to realise their full potential, significantly contributes to the success of every venture that Alphonsa College has undertaken in recent times.

As it gets published, this book and its idea sprang from a humble discussion between the college Bursar, Rev. Fr. Kuriakose Vellachalil, and the editors about the need for a moral text for college students. Our Bursar quickly responded with his opinion and agreed to support and guide us from his position, providing all the necessary help to publish it. We feel his unmatched commitment to any project he undertakes here, too. His timely interventions and valuable opinions lightened the road ahead for us.

Our Vice Principals, Dr. Sr. Manju Elizabeth Kuruvilla, and Dr. Sr. Minimol Mathew and have given us all the moral support and prayers needed for the project's timely completion.

No journey is undertaken alone. We experienced our highs and lows while being carried by the benevolence of God with the utmost care. Our authors agreed without hassle to meet deadlines despite their many academic commitments. At all times, friends and family strongly supported us with their ideas and energy, special

thanks to all those who provided valuable suggestions that helped us in numerous ways.

The Ethical Self is not just a book about morality, it's an invitation to live more consciously and rediscover the values that guide us toward becoming more compassionate and humane.

Dr Ambili T R
Dr Rose Mary Philip

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Module 1 Personal Morality

The Ethical Self does not claim to provide definitive answers but offers valuable perspectives. The authors craft urgent and timeless insights through diverse philosophical lenses, cultural narratives, and modern case studies.

- **Mar Joseph Kallarangatt**
Bishop, Eparchy of Palai

Ethics is a branch of the philosophy related to the concepts of right or wrong behaviour, while morality regarding behaviour itself but dependent upon one's belief and convictions.

- **Msgr. Dr. Joseph Thadathil**
Protosyncellus, Eparchy of Palai

The Ethical Self is a compelling and thoughtfully structured exploration of moral thought and practice. It distils complex ethical theories into clear, relatable insights while maintaining intellectual depth.

- **Rev. Fr. Biju Madathikunnel, CSsR**
Writer and Artist



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