Name

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Philosophy

Kant’s categorical imperative states that an individual should act and treat others in the same way that he desires to be treated. The actions of a person should not harm the other individual in any way. The society will only become better, and it would also become the universal laws if the individuals of the society keep a check on their actions and ensure they do not cause any harm. In the case of cyclist named Cohen, he used to cross the red lights, while riding the bicycle. He is of the view that he only crosses the signal when there is no person on the crosswalk, as well as ensuring that no vehicle is heading towards the intersection. The cyclist also included the description in his article that each and every individual of the society breaks the traffic laws while endangering the lives of others. He also breaks the law, as well as gets the tickets, fines and other punishments in return, however, he breaks the law, only after ensuring that it would not cause any harm to any individual (Cohen). Although no individual gets physically hurt due to his disobedience of the law, his habit does annoy a lot of people on the roads. He was of the view that he obeys all the other traffic laws, except staying still on the red light when the path is clear, and there is no person on the crosswalks. He also shared his concern that the laws of traffic and the timing of the traffic signals are only formulated, keeping in view the heavy vehicles and not the bicycles.

The author of the article has claimed that his reasoning is according to the standards of Kant’s categorical imperative. I think that Kant would agree with the reasoning of Cohen because of the fact that his actions are not causing any harm to society. Moreover, he is not trying to tease any person. He wants to be treated in the same way by the rest of society. Due to his disobedience towards the law, he is trying to highlight the fact that the traffic laws have not been formulated keeping in view every kind of vehicle on the roads, which also include bicycles. Moreover, in the area, where he breaks the rules, there are no separate pathways for the bicyclists, and he has to ride along with the rest of the traffic (Robinson).

According to the principle of utility, an action is only right when it brings happiness, and it is wrong in the case it causes any pain or unhappiness to the other individual. In the case of Cohen’s cycling habits, I think that a utilitarian would not agree with the point of view of Cohen. Although, he breaks the laws by ensuring the fact that it does not cause any physical injury to any other individual. However, his actions annoy a great number of people, becoming the reason for their unhappiness (Hirsh, Lu, and Galinsky). So, in reality, he is becoming the source of unhappiness of a great majority of the society, due to which his action cannot be justified as right action. A utilitarian would never agree with the concept and ideology of Cohen and would consider the greater unhappiness, as the sole impact of the wrongdoing of Cohen. If the whole society acts in the same way and nobody gets annoyed by the actions of Cohen, only then the utilitarian would consider the cat of Cohen as a good deed.

Works Cited

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