Bribery and Immanuel Kant

Bribery is defined on the dictionary as the giving or offering of a bribe, which means giving or paying someone with something of value in exchange for a specific favorable outcome that may not occur if it weren't for the bribe. Bribery is typically illegal and dishonest under almost every country in the world, it is considered a criminal offence. Many people will relate bribery with corruption in the government. They may think only government officials may be the only ones accepting it, but you may not notice that you deal with it every day due to the mistaken thought of bribery only being linked with government.

Immanuel Kant was a 19th century German philosopher who believed in the theory of deontology which basically says that consequences doesn’t matter, what really matter is the intention, but how can we know which is the morally right intention? What is the right thing to do? That are very good questions, that’s why Immanuel Kant came up with the law of Categorical Imperative, which are the steps that can be used when making a decision. Categorical imperative contains three main principal. First we have the principal of universality, which basically says that if an action is right for others, then it is right for us. Now let’s speak about bribery, is it morally right? Is it morally wrong? That might be a very discussion able topic because there are many arguments that support both. Many people think that its right and
others believe it’s wrong. That’s why the categorical imperative have this other principle about treat humanity as an end, never as a mean. A way to see this is to treat humanity as rational beings, and never as a thing. This principle might be hard to understand, so to make it easier to understand, this principle is basically says that if you treat someone as a mean/thing you are disrespecting him, and that’s morally wrong. Generally when someone bribes you, you don’t have any option but to accept the bribe, you are a human being capable of making your own decisions, but because someone is threatening/bribing you aren’t able to make your own independent decision. According to Kant, doing that is morally wrong, so bribery isn’t acceptable. The third and last principle of the categorical imperative is the one of autonomy. Autonomy is self-governing yourself, having freedom, etc. But with this Kant doesn’t means that you can do whatever you want, he means that we should behave well according to the first two principles of the categorical imperative. Going back to bribery, you can be autonomous if you are threaten/bribed because Kant might argue that doing that is false dichotomy. Most of the times when people bribe, they make it look as if you only had one option so you are forced to accept it.

I agree with most of Immanuel Kant’s philosophies but I think there are some. What if the person bribing has good intentions but his consequences are against the categorical imperative? What if a person is not capable of making rational decisions? I think that the categorical imperative will work with most of the cases but not with everyone. What would Kant do in one of those situations? Kant believed that this philosophy was an unbreakable moral code so there are no exceptions. I think that is a major flaw, there is now universal moral law that will work with all situations, so I would completely agree with it if had it exceptions but it doesn’t.
Citations


This webpage is an encyclopedia of philosophy, and it has many topics and many biographies of many philosophers with similar ideas as Immanuel Kant. It contains the historic background and his life, the books he wrote, his knowledge and ideas, theories, etc.


This pdf book contains lot of information on how bribery and what bribery it. It asks Important questions as like, is it morally wrong? It gives the dictionary definition of bribery and its aspects. It has a very detailed and extensive about the morality of Bribery.