

What is morally correct behavior in a given community?

It is doing what the great majority of members of the community regard as being right--e.g. solidary behavior in a community of working people, smart behavior in a community of business, crooked behavior in a community of thieves.

How do we learn to do the right things in a given community?

By reinforcement and punishment. The boy scout feels pleasure in crossing an old lady because he has been rewarded with smiles and badges every time he has reported on similar good actions. The criminal feels pleasure in committing a crime not only because of the material reward it may bring him but also because he has been rewarded with praise by his fellow crooks on similar occasions. (Nowadays he also gets the benefit of wide media coverage which flatters him even more.)

Whether or not there are special centers for moral pleasure, it seems that basically the moral urge is not much different from the hunger, thirst, or sexual drives. But unlike the latter, which are essential to biological survival, the moral urge has been selected because it is essential to social survival, i.e. to continuance in a social group. (Cf.

John Z Young, Sources of discovery in neuroscience, p. 37. (MIT  
The Neurosciences: Paths of Discovery.)

Inv 83159  
F1 320