

X. Emotions

1. EMOTIONS AND THE GOLDEN RULE

According to Hodgson, morality is to be regarded as belonging to the sphere of value rather than to the sphere of fact. Consequently, like other questions of value, morality does not belong to the domain of reason, which relates to facts. It belongs rather to the 'domain of emotion or preference in which each individual can make a choice'. 'Moral conclusions, concerning what "ought" to be done, can never be derived from factual premisses, concerning what "is" the case.' (HODGSON 1991: 448; cf. SINNOTT-ARMSTRONG 1984: 249–261; 1988: 135.) And he adds, in slightly contradictory terms: 'Generally, I contend that emotion, while it can be irrational, is a part of rationality; so that the involvement of emotion in value judgements does not make them non-rational.' (HODGSON 1991: 449. See also LOUDEN 1992: 76; MCSHEA 1987: 277–278.)

Gibbard says about feelings and action:

An action is morally admirable, we can say, if on the part both of the agent and or others it makes sense to feel moral approbation toward the agent for having done it. An action is shameful if it makes sense for the agent to feel ashamed for having done it, and for others to disdain him for having done it. An act is dangerous if it makes sense for the agent to feel afraid on account of having done it. All these notions concern the ways it makes sense to feel about things people do, the feelings that are warranted. (GIBBARD 1992: 51. See also BLACKBURN 1992: 343–344.)

Hinman says:

There are three important misconceptions about the emotions which, taken together, have resulted in the exclusion of emotions from our understanding of the moral self and have thus profoundly affected our understanding of the role of emotions in morality. These are the beliefs that emotions are: (1) non-cognitive; (2) causally determined; and (3) passive. (HINMAN 1985: 58.)

The Analects mention different kinds of feelings in several passages. Confucius regards feelings as belonging to the leader. The Book of Songs, Shih Ching, helps one to cultivate the emotions.

The Master said, Little ones, Why is it that none of you study the Songs? For the Songs will help you to incite people's emotions, to observe their feelings, to keep company, to express your grievances. They may be used at home in the service of one's father; abroad, in the service of one's prince. Moreover, they will widen your acquaintance with the names of birds, beasts, plants and trees. (AN. 17:9.)

Confucius connects emotion with morality, and especially with Goodness, *jen* 仁:

As for Goodness – you yourself desire rank and standing; then help others to get rank and standing. You want to turn your own merits to account; then help others to turn theirs to account –

in fact, the ability to take one's own feelings as a guide – that is the sort of thing that lies in the direction of Goodness. (AN. 6:28; the present study, p. 108.)

Lau translates 能近取譬 as 'the ability to take as analogy what is near at hand (viz., oneself)' (LAU 1979: 85. See also LEGGE 1969: 194). This has the idea of being able to select what is near and to compare it. Waley's translation seems to expose the meaning of the sentence best, especially in the light of the context. Those desires which are near, one's own desires are the same as what is desired by other people. In this way one's own feelings should be the guide.

In this Golden Rule, in its positive form, Confucius recognizes that feelings or likings and dislikings (CH'EN Mu 1978: 77–78) guide one's moral choices. The moral question is about an empathic exchange of roles in sentimental terms. Gibbard says:

One reason we care about morality is that we care about others; we want life to go well for them. Benevolence competes at times with hatred or rancor, with envy or jealousy, with indifference or rivalry. Still, at times good wishes for others sweep widely. (GIBBARD 1992: 257.)

When one follows one's own feelings in regard to others, one is rewarded by positive feelings. These feelings are in the mind of the moral agent.

The Master said, He that is really Good can never be unhappy. He that is really wise can never be perplexed. He that is really brave is never afraid. (AN. 9:28; CH'ENG Shu-te 1974: 542.)

This reward is mentioned also in the following passage, too, where the Golden Rule appears in the negative form. The reward is other people's response to the agent.

After emphasizing that one should honor other people, Confucius said:

Do not do to others what you would not like yourself 己所不欲勿施於人. Then there will be no feelings of opposition to you, whether it is the affairs of a state that you are handling or the affairs of a family. (AN. 12:2.)

This negative form of the Golden Rule means avoiding wrong actions. Andersson calls a theory 'which would require the agent to avoid evil as much as he can', a 'minimalist' ethical theory (ANDERSSON 1990: 43). By avoiding negative behavior, like cheating and fraud, the agent on the whole will probably gain more than from egoistic calculations. Friendly feelings 'can move us to efforts great and small on others' behalf. We may act without thought of return, much of the time.' (GIBBARD 1992: 258–259.)

More especially, the prescription to take account of feelings is seen in the attitude of the leader or 'Good Man' towards the people. His anxiety is, that he may not recognize the merits of the people:

The Master said, (The Good Man) does not grieve that other people do not recognize his merits. His only anxiety is lest he should fail to recognize theirs. (AN. 1:16.)

The idea behind this would seem to be, that anyone would prefer the bolstering of one's own ego. One must be led by this feeling and be led by the prescription produced by this feeling. Often the case is that there is a choice between bolstering one's own ego or someone else's. One should feel that everyone wants his/her ego to be bolstered, and

it is this feeling which should prescribe the choice of whose ego is worth bolstering up. The failure to bolster another person's ego is a matter of grief for the Gentleman. The motive here is that the Gentleman wants to lead the people, and therefore he is interested in bolstering the ego of those whom he is leading. As a result they will accept and approve of him as a leader.

According to the quotation above, if the Good Man does not recognize the merits of other people, he believes that he has done something morally wrong. Consequently he has the feeling of remorse, which is appropriate in this case. (MCCONNELL 1987: 161; WILLIAMS & NAGEL 1976: 127.) The following passage expresses a very similar opinion:

The Master said, (A Gentleman) does not grieve that people do not recognize his merits; he grieves at his own incapacities. (AN. 14:32.)

This is not necessarily a grief due to inferior morality. However, the following passage approaches more closely a concern with moral choice:

Yen Hui said with a deep sigh, The more I strain my gaze up towards it, the higher it soars. The deeper I bore down into it, the harder it becomes. I see it in front; but suddenly it is behind. Step by step the Master skilfully lures one on. He has broadened me with culture, restrained me with ritual. Even if I wanted to stop, I could not. Just when I feel that I have exhausted every resource, something seems to rise up, standing out sharp and clear. Yet though I long to pursue it, I can find no way of getting to it at all. (AN. 9:10.)

The feelings delineated in this passage are not spontaneous feelings. They are rather feelings of concern, which imply that the agent has chosen them through deliberation. 'There is an element of artifice in the way these terms are made accessible to his thought.' The concern is not to the same degree spontaneous as the emotions, which are not chosen by the moral agent, but 'are an articulation of his spontaneous affective apprehension.' (DILMAN 1989: 288. See also KENNY 1963: 39; SKORUPSKI 1993: 131.) What is behind this concern is that the leader should gain confidence and authority.

When the leader is benevolent 仁 toward the people, they put their confidence in him. When the Gentleman relies on this, he is able to use the people so that they do not feel they are being exploited. This appears clearly in the following:

Tzu-hsia said, A Gentleman obtains the confidence of those under him, before putting burdens upon them. If he does so before he has obtained their confidence, they *feel* that they are being exploited. It is also true that he obtains the confidence (of those above him) before criticizing them. If he does so before he has obtained their confidence, they *feel* that they are being slandered. Tzu-hsia said, So long as in undertakings of great moral import a man does not 'cross the barrier,' in undertakings of little moral import he may 'come out and go in.' (AN. 19:10.)

We see that moral choice which follows the prescriptions of the feelings of other people, aims at gaining authority over the people. This is also for the good of the people:

He who is broad wins the multitude, he who keeps his word is trusted 信 by the people, he who is diligent succeeds in all he undertakes, he who is just is the joy (of the people). (AN. 20:1.)

However, Confucius does not regard it as good if the leader is loved 好 by everybody. He must be hated 惡 by the bad people. (AN. 13:24; CHENG Shu-te 1974: 813.)

When the authority of the leader is lost, this is a reason for pity and sadness (AN. 19:19, 18:6). The failure of the ruler also has other sentimental and moral consequences, especially in one's attitude towards material benefits: 'When a country is not ruled according to the Way, he (the Gentleman) shows compunction in regard to rewards.' (AN. 14:1.)

The positive feelings towards another person are genuine. Even when another person causes harm to one, one should not feel annoyance, or rancor.

Once when Yen Hui and Tzu-lu were waiting upon him the Master said, Suppose each of you were to tell his wish. Tzu-lu said, I should like to have carriages and horses, clothes and fur rugs, share them with my friends and feel no annoyance if they were returned to me the worse for wear. (AN. 5:25.)

The Master said, Po I and Shu Ch'i never bore old ills in mind and had but the faintest *feeling* of rancor 怨. (AN. 5:22.)

In terms of the choice of moral action, this means subduing one's rights and a readiness to give them up.

2. NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

Above we saw that according to Confucius one should take one's own feelings as a guide. Kuppermann explains this sentimentalization of Goodness 仁 and takes the negative emotions into consideration. According to him, a Good Person is normally regarded as being one concerned 'about the well-being of other sentient beings'. In order to attain Goodness, one needs to have 'intense feelings of warmth and concern for others as much of the time as possible, and to have feelings of a contrary sort as seldom as possible.' According to Kupperman, one may occasionally have hostile feelings toward others and still can be regarded as a good character. Nevertheless, it remains true that a virtuous person 'is likely to have fewer hostile feelings than a person of unformed character.' (KUPPERMANN 1988: 42.)

Confucius lists a selection of the possible hostile feelings a Gentleman may experience:

He hates 惡 those who point out what is hateful in others... who dwelling in low estate revile all who are above them... who love deeds of daring but neglect ritual... who are active and venturesome, but are violent in temper. (AN. 17:24; CHENG Shu-te 1974: 1076–1077.)

These hostile feelings of the Gentleman belong to his morality. However, by no means do they express that the Gentleman is morally bad.

Confucius combines matters of taste with moral statements:

The Master said, I hate 惡 to see roan killing red, I hate to see the tunes of Cheng corrupting court music, I hate to see sharp mouths overturning kingdoms and clans. (AN. 17:18; CHENG Shu-te 1974: 1062–1063.)

The first and second statements are statements of Confucius' taste, but these are only rhetorical preparation for the third statement. The reason he has chosen 'sharp mouths' as a moral vice is illustrated further in the following:

The Master said, Clever talk can confound the working of moral force, just as small impatiences can confound great projects. (AN. 15:26; CHENG Shu-te 1974: 967-968. See also AN. 11:24.)

The reason is that Confucius has in mind a consequentialist idea of a bad outcome because of the 'sharp mouths' or 'clever talk'.

There are differences between the hatreds of Confucius and his disciple Tzu-kung. Confucius does not like people to be hypercritical, or to highlight the faults of others. Confucius criticizes people who are too active and 'violent in temper' and who are not regulated by the rituals. Confucius' disciple Tzu-kung chooses a different object for his hatred. His statements refer to dishonesty, to an individual's inner personal attitudes. He hates those 'who mistake cunning for wisdom', 'those who mistake insubordination for courage', and 'those who mistake tale-bearing for honesty.' (AN. 17:24.)

The negation of negative feelings in the case of the Gentleman is based on the spotlessness of the Gentleman. The right moral choices are the basis for the safety of the Gentleman. Socially, too, the Gentleman is favored or much liked by other people when he has made the right moral choices. His feelings should be well regulated without grief or fear. (AN. 12:4.) The Gentleman does not need to grieve that he has no friends. If he carries out his duties well he will gain social acceptance. (AN. 12:5.) From this we can deduce that the social acceptance contributes to the emotional balance of the Gentleman. The process leading to the emotional balance starts from making the right moral choices, which means taking care of one's duties. In this way the Gentleman gains social acceptance, which will result in his gaining emotional balance and so not needing to grieve.

3. EMOTIONS AND FILIALITY

A young man's duty is to behave well to his parents, filial 孝 at home. (AN. 1:6.)

The emotional attitude towards one's parents includes more than providing them with the necessary material needs. If one does only this, one can be compared with the animals. The emotion is shown by the feeling of respect 敬. (AN. 2:7.)

Confucius explains similar ideas:

The Master said, In serving his father and mother a man may gently remonstrate with them. But if he sees that he has failed to change their opinion, he should resume an attitude of deference and not thwart them; may feel discouraged, but not resentful. (AN. 4:18.)

This shows that the feelings are regulated in the filial relationship. The feeling towards parents was problematic even during Confucius' time. For example, the required three-year mourning period was felt to be too long. On the one hand Confucius is of the

opinion that if one feels that a one-year mourning period is enough, then this is reasonable. On the other hand, he still maintains that three years is necessary. (AN. 17:21.)

In considering Confucius' opinions about feelings towards the parents, we should note what Lemmon says about duty and obligation:

If we regard it as a duty to help our parents, we are thinking rather of our special relationship to them, our status as children. If, on the other hand, we think of ourselves as under an obligation to our parents, it is surely in virtue of what they have done for us in the past, when we were children; that we are under this obligation – that is, it will be a case of our having been put under an obligation in some way by them. This difference in the mode of thought becomes clear if we vary the example slightly. Suppose they turn out to be not parents but foster parents. Then we may well feel that our duty is less because the relationship is less close, but our sense of obligation may be no less great in view of what they have done for us. On the other hand, if our parents have not in point of fact done a great deal for us, we may feel in no sense under any obligation to help them, but our sense of duty may be just as real because of our close relationship with them.

Broadly speaking, then, duty-situations are status-situations while obligation-situations are contractual-situations. (LEMMON 1987: 104. See also WHITELEY 1953: 96; LEMOS 1991: 103.)

Confucius' grounds for the three-year mourning period is based on the fact that 'only when a child is three years old does it leave its parents' arms.' (AN. 17:21.) This means that the mourning period was an obligation towards one's parents, and that this situation of mourning was a contractual-situation. However, Confucius' emphasis upon feeling respect 敬 also recognizes that we have a special relationship to our parents and because of this relationship we have a duty to respect them. From this it follows that the feeling of respect toward one's parents in Confucius' thinking is causally determined. According to Kant, the feeling of respect belongs both to the causally-determined natural world and to the world of morality, where human freedom is possible. Other feelings and emotions according to Kant, do not belong to the world of morality. It was partly on the basis of this opinion that Kant demanded the purity of the moral domain. Because of the causal determination, the free choice to respect or not to respect one's parents does not in fact exist, if we follow Confucius' thinking.³²

³² HINMAN 1985: 57. 'Kant's demand for purity of moral motivation, we have seen, excluded the emotions from the moral domain. Such an exclusion was grounded, at least in part, in Kant's distinction between the causally-determined natural world and the moral world in which human freedom is possible. Yet once Kant has placed the emotions squarely in the natural world, he finds that he is forced to admit that there must be at least one emotion, respect, which inhabits both worlds. He is not, however, able to provide a very illuminating account of such an interaction between these two worlds.' (HINMAN 1983: 264.) 'For the Chinese, the family and kinship group remained the centers of man's social existence. For the Greeks, to say that man is a social animal is to say that he is a political one. It is not surprising, then, that the latter were concerned with the political liberties, while the former were not.' (WONG 1984: 166.)

4. CONTRADICTIONARY FEELINGS

To pretend something other than what one really feels is not recommended:

The Master said, Clever talk, a pretentious manner and a reverence that is only of the feet – Tso Ch'iu Ming was incapable of stooping to them, and I too could never stoop to them. Having to conceal one's indignation and keep on friendly terms with the people against whom one feels it – Tso Ch'iu Ming was incapable of stooping to such conduct, and I too am incapable of stooping to such conduct. (AN. 5:24.)

According to this, one should choose behavior which is consistent with one's feelings.

There is in the Analects a case when there are two equally strong emotions. A difficulty, a dilemma of emotions, occurs when one loves and hates at the same time.

Tzu-chang asked what was meant by 'piling up moral force' and 'deciding when in two minds.' The Master said, 'by piling up moral force' is meant taking loyalty and good faith as one's guiding principles, and migrating to places where right prevails. Again, to love a thing means wanting it to live, to hate a thing means wanting it to perish. But suppose I want something to live and at the same time want it to perish; that is 'being in two minds' 惑. Not for her wealth, oh no! But merely for a change. (AN. 12:10.)³³

This emotional dilemma is simultaneously a moral conflict. Confucius' feeling here shows that he ought to do two things but cannot do both (HARE 1981: 28–29). In the background here there is the idea that an irresolvable moral conflict is possible according to Confucius.

Enthusiasm for certain things will extinguish negative feelings, despite the fact that circumstances would easily give incentive for such feelings. This idea is reflected in the following description of Confucius in his old age:

The 'Duke of She' asked Tzu-lu about Master K'ung (Confucius). Tzu-lu did not reply. The Master said, Why did you not say 'This is the character of the man: so intent upon enlightening the eager that he forgets his hunger, and so happy in doing so, that he forgets the bitterness of his lot and does not realize that old age is at hand. That is what he is.' (AN. 7:18.)

In this case 'one emotion can always be overcome by a stronger emotion or coalition of emotions.' (McSHEA 1989: 278.)

³³ Confucius quotes the Book of Songs, song number 188. The song is about a man who has married a wife from a far country and then promptly neglected her in favour of someone taken up 'simply for a change', as an example of 'being in two minds', 'not knowing one's own mind'. (WALEY 1964: 166; KARLGREN 1974: 129–130.)

5. HAPPINESS

Happiness is different from pleasures. McShea says that

happiness is the overall satisfaction of the major and enduring passions, whereas pleasure is the accompaniment of the satisfaction of single feelings taken in isolation. A life of pleasure probably will be an unhappy one. (MCSHEA 1989: 283.)

In Confucius' mind the Good Person is happy:

The Master said, the Ways of the true Gentleman are three. I myself have met with success in none of them. For he that is really Good is never unhappy, (or free from anxieties, LEGGE 1969: 286, not grief 不憂) he that is really wise is never perplexed, he that is really brave is never afraid. Tzu-kung said, That, Master, is your own Way! (AN. 14:30.)

The Master said, The wise man delights in water, the Good Man delights in mountains. For the wise move; but the Good will stay still. The wise are happy 樂, joyful (LEGGE 1969: 192), but the Good, secure. (AN. 6:21.)

This refers also to the regulated feelings of the Good Man. Any contradictory feelings are diminished by the good moral quality of the agent. In the chapter about utilitarianism we saw that Confucius' thinking has a utilitarian overtone. The regulation of feelings is a part of utilitarianism. It does not deny the feelings but 'prevents a certain level of emotional attachment.' (CONLY 1983: 307.)³⁴ To regulate feelings according to Confucius means to prohibit the contradictory feelings and to prevent the excessive emotional attachment.

Moral choices contribute to one's happiness:

The Master said, He who seeks only coarse food to eat, water to drink and bent arm for pillow, will without looking for it find happiness to boot. Any thought of accepting wealth and rank by means that I know to be wrong 不義 is as remote from me as the clouds that float above. (AN. 7:15.)

Confucius understood that one has natural inclinations. The virtuous agent knows that certain things are wrong. By the use of this knowledge one can overcome inclinations which might lead one into vice. This approaches the Kantian conception that 'the virtuous agent overcomes those inclinations or passions which would lead her into vice, and does what reason shows her to be right.' (DUFF 1987: 2.)

Conceptually Kant has here 'reason', 'Vernunft', which works as regulator of the passions, whereas Confucius uses 'knowing' in similar context.

³⁴ 'If utilitarianism does not allow truly moral convictions, that is more evidence that it alienates a person from his ground projects whatever they may be. Which alienation means, of course, that that person loses his identity as an individual.

Williams has done two things, he has argued that utilitarianism by its nature as a system of calculation of ends and means is necessarily attached to a rational system of evaluation, and that because of this credence in the superiority of the rational, utilitarianism disapproves of, and eventually prevents, a certain level of emotional attachment. Secondly, he argues that this depth, complexity and strength of emotional attachments is necessary for one to have the ground projects that give his life point and individual him from others.' (CONLY 1983: 307.)