

Emotion equally moral

Experience, Human Nature



ARE REASON AND EMOTION EQUALLY NECESSARY IN JUSTIFYING MORAL DECISIONS?

Since the birth of human onto this earth, reasons and emotions are frequently used by us to justify any decisions made. However, to what extent that both of them play an important role in making decisions? This raises some arguable questions concerning reason and emotion; are they really equally necessary? Equally important means both factors must be present and without any of the factors which are reason and emotion, the decision cannot be justified. With that, I would say that reason and emotion have the same significant important role in justifying moral decision. Both of them work together to drive us in our daily life so the decisions made will be the best for the sake of human being. Thus, this essay will consider the equal role of reason and emotion in justifying moral decisions.

First of all, how this two ways of knowing works together. Reason is the ability to think logically regarded as a basis for knowledge, while emotion is a strong feeling towards what you believed in and influencing behaviors. Reason and emotion are equally necessary in ethic as in justifying decisions emotion will be the catalyst for the next process which is reasoning. Rachel Carlson in his quote says, "*If facts are the seeds that later produce knowledge and wisdom, then the emotions and the impressions of the senses are the fertile soil in which the seeds must grow*". As example, the news of natural disaster of Cyclone Sidr in the southern part of Bangladesh because of the global warming effect, the picture of 273, 000 houses were destroyed and 650, 000 damaged and more than 3, 000 people dead will emotionally affect the reader. Then, the emotions will tell us the sympathy to <https://assignbuster.com/emotion-equally-moral/>

the victims of the disaster. It would stimulate the reason to the morality of the countries that let their factories released the gases that caused the global warming disaster.

Here, the emotion is the catalyst for the reason to take place. However, without the reasoning, the information from the news cannot be organized and to sort out the news in the rational way. The emotion make the reader of the news felt sympathy to the victims of the cyclone and the reason makes sense of the emotion part and end up with the moral decisions of the news. As Joseph Cook aptly commented, “ *Conscience is our magnetic compass; reason our chart*”. Even reason and emotion equally necessary in justifying moral decisions, somehow reason play more important role as it can explain certain things that cannot be explained by emotion.

In justifying a decision, it must be reasonable and acceptable. Emotion can distract what is wrong and what is right because it depends solely on what a person sees and feel. Thus, reason must present in the process to justify and correct what emotion think of. As example, if a pregnant women wanted to have an abortion. On the emotion level, she might think that having a baby is a burden for her. She just wants fun from the sex but she refuses the baby. She wants to get rid of the baby so that she does not have to take care of the baby and continue with her previous life. Her immediate response is the option to abort the baby. At that particular time, it may be right for her to abort the baby. But then, the feeling of a mother declines her to do the abortion and the reasoning process began. She started to consider the debate, ‘ it is killing’, and the baby deserve a live. Perhaps she might

consider that it was not the baby's fault, so why should the baby take it. Or maybe she possibly will consider her religion not allow abortion. So, the reasoning process continues until the women can justify her decision to do the abortion or not. Here we can see both are equally significant. Reasoning comes from the emotion process but the emotion itself cannot justify the decision that going to make. Thus, one cannot take place without the other.

However, in this so-called civilization era where the cost of living is increasing, the option to abort the baby will be the most suitable choice for most of the people. Their reasoning brought them to that kind of decision because they claim having a baby will cost them a lot and they can't afford it. Even though they will feel it is a cruel action through their emotion, but it does not prevent the mother to abort that baby.

In view of the fact that emotion is a feeling that is given form by a thought, it is usually bounded from the past experience that would influence the emotion that is created. If the past experience of the person is good, the person will have the good side of emotion or otherwise, the experience will end up with the bad emotion toward something. As a case in point, a person witnesses a horrible accident happened in front of his eyes. He can see the victims of the accident screaming for help. Very luckily, the person has some knowledge about the medical knowledge especially in emergency situation. However, because of the past experience where he failed to save a few lives after he gave the medical treatment, the person felt guilty and had the trauma. His emotion tells him not to help the victims as they would die because of him by justifying the action from his past experience. But then,

he tries to reason his emotion; does it an appropriate action to let the victims that are really in need for some help as he was able to help them? Does it worth him just to see them helplessly facing the end of their life? After a battle between his emotion and reason, in the end he might decide to help the victims. Even though in this example it is seen like reason is overpower emotion but actually they are equal.

Someone may argue that reason is the cause that makes him to help the person. But in reality if his emotion is not stable enough or he did not have the confidence to help them but his reason push him to help, the probability that the victims would survive is low because he does not has the mental strength or something to inspire him to help them. This is just like what Winston Churchill has said, “ *Before you can inspire with emotion, you must be swamped with it yourself. Before you can move their tears, your own must flow. To convince them, you must yourself believe*”. After his reason corrects his emotion or change the perception made by his emotion to inspire him, then he was able to help them. By looking at this example, it is clearly seen that reason has been plays the role the change the emotion of the person and the emotion has justified the decision that he going to make. Here, at first emotion stimulate the reason to work and in the later stage reason corrected and stimulates the emotion. Both of the factors play such equal role in justifying the decision as one might get it wrong without another one or perhaps the decision cannot be justified.

There are some limitations where sometimes reason and emotion do not equal in making an ethical issue. This is frequently happen in the religious

belief, field of works, and the level of knowledge of the person. In the religion such as Islam and Christian, bigamy (polygamy, adultery) is prohibited in those religions. Although a person wants to have more wives or having a little experience of sex before marriage which comes from his emotion, he cannot do that because of his religion. His reasoning will prevent him to do it as it is against the belief of him to his religion. In the field of work such as judge, emotion must be put aside to justify the verdict that going to make. A judge must only depends to the reason from the facts either the accused person is guilty or not. This is the situation where reason and emotion do not play equally necessary in justifying moral decisions.

In conclusions, reason and emotion equally necessary in justifying moral decision, because emotion can change according to situation but reason will justify the emotion with logic and hence will drive us to the correct interpretation of the ethical issue. But, reason can only exist and be significant if and only if emotion exists. Emotion will be the catalyst for reason to work. In most of our life, we cannot deny the role of emotion and reason. However, other ways of knowing such as perception and language also can be important in justifying moral decisions but reason and emotion exist in the equal way to justify any moral decision that we make in our life. Therefore, reason and emotion are equally necessary in justifying moral decisions.