

1 The question is about to what extent we are characterized by reason and
2 where do emotions fit into the picture. On one side of this dilemma we have reason
3 being what largely defines our behavior and on the other side we have will, or
4 emotions, as a defining factor for our behavior. This dilemma is more of a spectrum
5 than a coin.

6 Let me first discuss reason. Being rational is generally within reason, and this
7 is predictability and order. Among the highest qualities of reason are intelligence,
8 practical/emotionless thought, logic, common sense, purpose, and analysis. There
9 are more, but these give you a sense of the scientific-feeling nature reason has. This
10 is something that is universally identical in all humans with no room for
11 individuality. Plato defines a good soul as one that is healthy, virtuous, and for its
12 well-being reason must be in charge (Plato 53).

13 Aristotle sees the human good as tied to reason (Aristotle 57). It is this good
14 that will lead us to the virtue Plato discusses. Why does Aristotle place reason as key
15 to human good? If everyone followed their emotions then how would anyone reason
16 with anyone else. Being universal, reason is what glues modern society together. If
17 everything that made up humans were thought of like our government, Aristotle
18 would point to reason as the system of checks and balances.

19 We're generally rational creatures, but can't reason come from emotions? So
20 emotions aren't always a problem and the complexity of our dilemma unveils itself.
21 Let us now take a look at will/emotions. Dostoyevsky contends that we are
22 overemphasizing reason as the key to a good life. Really we aren't as rational as we

23 claim we are. This is because we care about being ourselves, doing what we want
24 dictated by emotions and free will.

25 Dostoyevsky does recognize that some things can't be managed by pure
26 emotions, like the rule that $2*2=4$, so reason has a role, but it just isn't a central role
27 (Dostoyevsky 70). Using the example of a toothache he conveys that we may be
28 more selfish than rational (Dostoyevsky 70); we just look out for ourselves. Self-
29 interest appears to be an irrational aspect of being human. We desire things that
30 aren't logical because in the end only our desires matter (Dostoyevsky 71).
31 Humanity is stupid for not following reason, but this not only doesn't stop us from
32 stupid acts but also can lead to great ideas that further our human society
33 (Dostoyevsky 73). He claims that being reasonable leads to single-function lives, and
34 so we rebel against this by prioritizing emotions over reason (Dostoyevsky 74).
35 Reason may lead to this interest in oneself, but we still would have emotions
36 towards others (Dostoyevsky 76). So, since our desires are what animate us, and we
37 still feel for others with emotions, we tend to live with emotions guiding us instead
38 of reason (Dostoyevsky 77).

39 I mostly agree with Dostoyevsky. We prefer having all our emotions to being
40 someone like Sherlock Holmes or Spock who have none (also see that all of the
41 purely rational characters we have are fictional as support in this area). We must
42 also note that reason isn't the only driving force that is universal, as instincts are
43 universal too. Really emotions are the only aspect of humans, at this level, that is
44 unique, and even there we all have the same emotions to work with.

45 Emotions aren't disruptive, but rather emotional intelligence is central to
46 human ability (Ben-Ze'ev 165). Ben-Ze'ev contends that emotions can be rational, in
47 accordance with reason, but emotions and reason are separate systems. Sometimes
48 we have reasons backing our emotions, but we must then be careful of the
49 possibility that our emotions aren't genuine for that very reason. These systems
50 Ben-Ze'ev describes are both used to our advantage as in new situations immediate
51 emotional responses are best but in the future for similar situations a reasoned
52 response is better. I agree with him in thinking that we need both systems to be
53 "normal" humans. Psychopaths, and those with severe autism, lack a complete
54 emotional system and aren't considered the average human. Our emotions have
55 reasoned regularities to guide their applicability to situations.

56 We consider ourselves creatures of reason, yet in reality (as both Ben-Ze'ev
57 and Dostoyevsky show) we operate based on emotions and will far more often. To
58 conclude that one is true over the other inherently denies a major portion of what
59 governs our behavior. My final statement on this question is that neither directly
60 controls our behavior, but rather a conglomeration of both is in control. Emotions
61 govern the instinctual responses (once we learn the proper emotions) before we
62 learn the proper responses to a given situation. But after that learning curve is
63 reached we behave with reasoned emotions. Never can reason express itself, so
64 emotions must be present to express reason as well as themselves. Both emotions
65 and reason are central characteristics of being human that we cannot live without.

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