
Correlation Of Gentleman And Virtue In Confucius Philosophical Thoughts

Throughout the Analects of Confucius, Confucius teaches and gives a lot of concepts to certain contents. Each one has many definitions that go as a circle and complete the intended meaning. In most parts, Confucius gives small definitions to the concepts of gentleman, filial devotions, humanness and rituals which give us a space to think in our way what he wants to show with those definitions in his perspective. He focusses on virtue and the qualities of a gentleman a "Nobel Man". Confucius mentions some definitions for a gentleman and how someone can be a Nobel man in their society. In this paper, I claim that Confucius manifests the characteristics of a gentleman as someone who does not care about the appearance nor pretends but remains constant in his judgment. Nonetheless, this ideal gentleman and ruler do not exist in the Arab world.

According to Confucius, a gentleman is a man with virtue who behaves with humanity and is loyal, generous to others. A gentleman is a person who is well cultured of Chinese history and is respectable as well as reliable. As mentioned, "the master taught four things: culture, behavior, loyalty, trustworthiness". (VII/ 24). Virtue, in turn, is defined as behaving and acting in a just way for society and others, also to respect one another which appears when Confucius asks, "in making plans for others, am I being loyal to them? In my dealings with friends, am I being trustworthy? Am I passing on to others what I have not carefully thought about myself" (I/4) Confucius claims that when any person behaves with virtue people will respect and imitate him and that is why people must examine themselves before judging others.

Confucius judges the true ruler from his possession De (virtue) which is an important characteristic to be loyal to his people and having rituals to govern the state as he says "The master said, can you govern the state with rituals and a deferential approach? Then you will have no difficulty" (IV/13). So, he reveals that without virtue and rituals, rulers cannot govern their people and states which are the most important elements to be a gentleman. Since the ruler is the representative of the government, Confucius gives an image of the government's behavior. So, if the ruler acts with virtue, all the people will follow his lead and respect him since his good behavior will influence his people. The government becomes like a star standing in the center and all the other smaller stars are around it. As mentioned, "it will be like the North star standing in its place, with all the other stars paying court to it" (II/1). Confucius is trying to show us that it depends on the ethical behavior of a person or a ruler or anyone else which makes people show the bad or the good reaction, which we can see especially, in the Arab World.

Confucius's perspective about a gentleman does not work in the Arab World, because no one has virtue, ritual and other elements that make him have moral behavior for his people and society. Moreover, we do not see a person who is loyal, respectable, trustworthy, honest or caring about people's interests and society. For instance, the individuals who have the highest position in the authority must respect their people, guarantee their rights and fulfill their needs. Those people must choose a decision that benefits their citizens and state. However, in our time, we can see words but not actions. We can see people who promise that they will do something good for people but in the end, it appears that their actions are only motivated by their interests.

In Tunisia in 2011, people revolted against their president Zain Al Abidin Ben Ali because they were angry about the government's system since the president did not respond to them and used a policy of oppression against them. Also, people were angry about the existence of corruption, unemployment, poverty, and famine which Zein failed to solve. This is a small example of how persons who have to take care of and defend their people, torture them. If Zein was loyal to his people and did what the population wanted, he would have found a good treatment from them. However, since he was an unfair ruler, his people did not like him so they pressed the president to leave. Confucius argues that "to practice five things under all circumstances constitutes perfect virtue; these five are gravity, generosity of soul, sincerity, earnestness, and kindness" (XVII/6). Unfortunately, I cannot see any of these characteristics in the Arab world so the Arab authorities realize that they have a lack of virtue among their citizens and people in which trustworthiness is nonexistent. So, all Arab representatives and administrators of each authority should comply with certain attributes and laws. It is out of the question to have an ideal man in a society whose people look to their interests and benefits and they know that.

In the Analects, Confucius describes a gentleman with virtue in his viewpoint. He is looking for this person who is a gentleman but cannot find any. The nobility that Confucius is talking about is to be perfect in having the main characteristics as virtue and rituals which lead to a true gentleman. Confucius provides an idealistic picture of a gentleman since he presents him as a complete being. Nonetheless, this perfect image of the ruler is nonexistent in the Arab world, since the rulers we have only care about their self-interests. Even Confucius's perspective about a gentleman is good and easy to have, but it is impossible to achieve in the Arab world.