

GOODNESS AS WEAPON*

Most of us spend much of our time trying to get other people to act as we would like them to act, trying to influence them in some way to further our purposes or advance our ends. In this enterprise, we make use of a wide array of motivational levers; we take advantage of various sources of others' susceptibility to influence. Much of this, I submit, is morally unproblematic. There is no moral reason why we should eschew all attempts at influence and pursue our projects unassisted or why we should in turn resent others' efforts to shape our own beliefs, desires, and ends. To maintain otherwise is to insist on a peculiar kind of individualistic isolationism. Nonetheless, the details of exactly how we influence others matter morally—what motivational levers we pull and the ways in which we pull them. I maintain—although I cannot defend this claim here—that it is difficult to offer general guidelines for assessing various motivational strategies, beyond saying, of course, that one should try to motivate others toward good ends and in ways that are not proscribed by our other moral rules. For the rest, we shall need to look at each kind of motivational strategy individually, with close attention to the details of its own particularity, to appraise whether it can survive moral scrutiny.

Here, I want to explore why it often seems morally problematic to get others to act by taking advantage of the motivational lever of their goodness. Taking advantage of someone's goodness is certainly not problematic across the board. While it may seem more troubling to take advantage of someone's goodness than of her badness—worse to make use of positive than of negative moral qualities—it may also seem better to take advantage of goodness than of any of a number of other possible motivational levers: weakness, ignorance, fear, and so forth. In one sense, we may want to say, this is what goodness is for; by its very nature, it exists as a resource for others to call upon. The problem is not simply with taking advantage of goodness, but in how that goodness is taken advantage of, and for what purposes. To examine these questions more closely is the burden of this essay. In the first section, I raise questions about why we are specially troubled when agents use another's goodness to cause her harm or to bring about evil ends; in the second section, I raise questions about 'why we might be troubled even when agents use another's goodness to bring about morally good ends that the good person herself endorses.

I

Consider the case of the treacherous motorist. A poses as a stranded motorist by the side of a snowy highway; when B stops to help him, he robs her and beats her before gleefully speeding off on his way. In this story, it is not only the familiar wrongness of theft and bodily assault that distresses us. Here A's treatment of B seems somehow worse than a standard robbery and mugging perpetrated upon some passerby at random. What seems to trouble us particularly in the case of the treacherous motorist is that A has benefited at B's expense and harmed her materially by taking advantage precisely of B's goodness. Why? Can we unpack this intuition more fully?

As a first attempt at grounding our response here, we might say that the case of the treacherous motorist exemplifies a familiar form of injustice, in its failure to apportion to each agent in the case what she deserves. We believe that virtue deserves to be rewarded and vice deserves to be penalized. Here, the opposite obtains—vice is rewarded and virtue is penalized—and this offends our moral sensibilities. As Joel Feinberg¹ observes regarding a somewhat analogous case, it troubles us that "A, who is morally defective, should gain relative to B and others precisely because B and the others are morally superior to him. This puts the moral universe out of joint: untrustworthiness is rewarded and honesty there, kindness] is penalized..." (ibid., p. 202). It will be more fruitful for us to focus on the loss to B than on the gain to A, for in any case of unpunished crime, A enjoys ill-gotten and undeserved gain. What seems to make the case of the treacherous

motorist special has to do instead with B's loss, occasioned by B's morally laudable response to what appeared to be A's need.

We might want to contrast the case of the treacherous motorist with other cases, familiar to readers of fairy tales and Horatio Alger novels, where B assists A in distress only to find out that A either has magical powers or is B's own long-lost millionaire uncle. A then rewards B handsomely for her kindness and B lives happily ever after. This is more like it, we think: this is the way a story should unfold.

But the intuition that virtue should be rewarded may not survive closer scrutiny. For every W. D. Ross² who claims that there is special value in "the proportionment of happiness to virtue" (ibid., p. 27), there is a Hastings Rashdall³ who "can see no reason at all why superior moral goodness should be assigned a superior quantity of external goods, that is to say, the means of indulging desires which have no connexion with this superior goodness" (ibid., p. 257). just because you are good, why should you get more stuff? Why should there be any connection at all between moral and material well-being?

One reason here is practical: we want virtue to be rewarded because we want to encourage virtue.⁴ Indeed, a central point of both fairy tales and Horatio Alger stories is to inspire readers to go and do likewise, to emulate the kind and generous behavior of the stories' protagonists. We want people to have a reason to be good. But it has often been noticed that this is problematic—that attempts to match happiness to virtue may be self-defeating. George Sher puts the objection this way: "If virtue were systematically rewarded, then people would try to act virtuously in order to receive rewards. But genuinely virtuous acts are not performed just for the sake of rewards. They are, instead, performed for other, purer motives" (op. cit., p. 138). Sher quotes A. C. Ewing⁵ on this point: "for a man who previously did good actions irrespective of reward to come to do them for the sake of the reward is decidedly a step downward" (ibid., p. 132). On the other hand, faced with our world of rampant and senseless violence and cruelty, I myself would not mind seeing legions of criminals opportunistically reforming themselves with an eye on possible prizes to come. Good deeds performed for ignoble motives may have no moral worth, but they are nonetheless preferable to bad deeds.

Even if we do not want to insist that one should gain from virtue, we may hold at the very least that one should not suffer any significant loss from it, that the good person should not be materially harmed in her interests simply because of her goodness. Again, this is partly because of our pragmatic interest in encouraging or at least not discouraging goodness. If good people get hurt often enough for good deeds, one can expect to see a steep falling-off in good-deed-doing. For example, like most people, I no longer pick up hitchhikers, a one-time favorite good deed of mine, because I fear the negative consequences of doing so. Beyond this, we may also feel, to return to Feinberg's phrase, that the moral universe is "out of joint" when bad things happen to good people.

This claim is too strong, however, if it is to be taken to mean that goodness should never bring costs to a moral agent, that good deeds are supposed to be somehow costless, a freebie for all concerned. Certainly a good deed costs time, if nothing else; it may cost money, or effort, or consume some other resource that is finite or scarce in the agent's own life. Time, or effort, or money spent on project *x* is of necessity time, or effort, or money that is not spent on project *y* to the extent that *y* has some value to an agent, then, she must confront the opportunity costs of her choices. The time someone spends ladling out soup in a soup kitchen is time she is not spending writing her dissertation or changing the oil in her car or figuring out whether to switch money from her T. Rowe Price stock fund to her T. Rowe Price bond fund. To be a Peace Corps volunteer means to give up the income of a Wall Street intern; it would not make sense to insist that the two should have equal lifetime earnings.

Now, we may want to say that good people themselves do not view the time, effort, and resources expended on good deeds as a real cost, for they have no other higher-priority use for the time, effort, and resources expended on goodness. Good people, we might say, do not view their good deeds as setting back their self-interest, because they conceive their self-interest broadly, as encompassing the furthering of all the interests

they happen to care about as moral beings. The soup kitchen volunteer may insist that it is in her self-interest, broadly understood, to volunteer at the soup kitchen; that this makes her happy, it makes her feel good about herself, it makes her feel better about the world. Even if she comes home depressed at the magnitude of the world's misery and her own inability to remedy it in any significant way—even if her work there brings her no particular pleasure—she likely comes home with a sense of having spent her time in a way she values greatly. The Peace Corps volunteer may have no desire to trade places with the Wall Street intern. He may not mutter, "Darn this goodness! Look what it's costing me!" He may view the "costs" of his chosen path as positive benefits,

Nonetheless, we can draw a workable, though crude, distinction between advancing one's self-interests narrowly construed and advancing nonselfish ends, although these, of course, are equally ends of the self in question. Few good people build their entire lives around the project of being good—at least we hope that they do not⁶—and when we say that the good should prosper, we tend to mean that they should succeed in their nonmoral ends, or at least not fail in these too badly. And it is precisely these nonmoral ends that goodness at times calls on one to sacrifice.

Now, in some cases, my moral and nonmoral ends cannot be pried apart; thus, my interests as an engaged parent and friend are my highest-priority personal interests, what I most care about in all the world, and also ends to which I feel I have a clear moral commitment. It would make no sense for me to view the time and effort I spend with my children and friends as involving in any way a sacrifice of my other ends. What other ends? But in other cases, I can rightly treat the resources expended on goodness—my own time and money in this mortal life—as limited and be very careful in how I—evil word—invest them. I have to admit that often I am keenly aware of trade-offs that I am making between "selfish" and "unselfish" interests, though both are mine in some strong sense. When I wrote out last year's Christmas check to Oxfam, while I did not in any way begrudge my contribution, it is only fair to say that I did debate long and hard about how much to give, weighing alternative uses that I have for that money: for example, saving it for next summer's long-awaited vacation (a more or less purely "selfish" interest) and my children's college education (both a "selfish" and an "unselfish" interest). So in some cases goodness can be understood as having costs to me, in diverting a certain amount of resources from other valued ends, and in other cases as being essentially costless, in that I have no more highly valued ends. We can conclude, then, that on occasion a good agent may well expect to bear some costs from her goodness, and this may be perfectly acceptable both to her and to us.

Some costs from goodness are clearly threatening, however, to all an agent's other interests, both moral and nonmoral, both "selfish" and "unselfish." Do we want to say that a good agent should never bear such terrible costs in the course of living a moral life? I believe we do not. Even when an agent suffers an enormous loss in the course of doing good, even when she places all her other moral and nonmoral ends in jeopardy, this may not trouble us morally, though it certainly saddens us. If a fire fighter dies in her heroic efforts to pull stranded children from a burning building, we weep—but through our tears we recognize that heroism is just the willingness to take risks on behalf of others, and that no one ever promised us that no good deeds would ever result in ultimate self-sacrifice. There is something about being good that necessarily involves the willingness to give a certain priority in our lives to the projects of goodness. We do not feel that it is worse in this case that the fire fighter lost her life precisely because of her goodness; it is better. What would have been a senseless, stupid death if she had been merely trapped in a burning building while sleeping becomes a heroic death.

Now, in the case of the fire fighter, the harm she suffers in the course of her noble efforts comes, as it were, from the universe; it is not deliberately imposed upon her by some human agent. How do we feel about the case of a man who tries to save a screaming woman from a rapist and is fatally shot himself in his rescue attempt? Here once again a morally good agent suffers harm precisely because of his goodness, and here the harm is intentionally inflicted upon him by a morally bad agent. My reaction to this case is somewhat complex. Certainly, I am both saddened and sickened by the man's tragic death. Yet I also want to say that when you try to combat evil you are taking risks of suffering from evil, that once again no one ever promised us that combating evil would be a piece of cake. Of course, there is something terrible about the end result

here, in which the bad man is victorious and the good man is vanquished, but what this comes to, I want to suggest, is simply that in a contest between good and evil we want to see goodness prevail. Again, I do not feel that it is worse that the man was shot trying to save the woman than if he were randomly shot, but somehow morally better.

Compare this to our original case of the treacherous motorist. Here it does seem to be far worse that the good samaritan was killed just because she was trying to help someone else. Why? Partly this is because the costs of goodness to her were not anything that she should have had reason to expect. In stopping to help the motorist, she was accepting the costs of delay and inconvenience, but hardly the costs of some greater odds of being murdered.⁷ (As our cities and highways become more crime infested, it may be that the garden-variety good samaritan becomes a heroic figure on the model of the fire fighter and rape rescuer.) But mostly, it seems to me, we are morally troubled here because in this case, unlike the case of the fire fighter and the rape rescuer, the agent's goodness is being used as a weapon against her. In the rape-rescue case, the rapist shoots the rescuer, but he does not set him up to be shot. In the stranded-motorist case, on the other hand, the fraudulent motorist sets up his victim—and he sets her up precisely because of her goodness. It is her goodness that makes her his patsy; A uses B's goodness as a weapon against her.

So the wrong of A's using B's goodness as a weapon against her does not lie merely in the fact that B is being penalized for her goodness. It lies in certain features of the particular penalty in question. For, as we have seen, it is not enough merely that B suffer a harm as a direct result of her goodness, or even a harm directly imposed on her as a result of her goodness by some other agent.

Nor is it merely that her goodness is somehow made use of, or turned to advantage. For consider the case of the charitable fund raiser. A produces an advertisement for a hunger-relief organization that is designed to dramatize the plight of the world's desperately poor and needy. B, kind and generous, sees the ad; moved by the plight it describes, she sends a large contribution. Here, A takes advantage of B's goodness, but in a way that strikes us as entirely unproblematic—though, of course, B has less money at the end of this advertising campaign than she had at the beginning. We do not seem to object to using goodness in the service of a morally good result—though I shall return in section ii to the case of the charitable fund raiser to raise some deeper doubts about it. We object to using goodness marshaled in the service of evil. Of course, we are going to object to anything marshaled in the service of evil, but I want to argue that we can mount a special, further objection when it is goodness that is used in this way.

At least part of what is at issue here, I want to suggest, is this: while good people may not deserve various nonmoral rewards (wealth, health, happiness, and so on), it does seem to me that they deserve a certain kind of moral reward: they deserve the reward of having their good actions issue in good results, or at the very least not to have their good actions used to produce bad results. Now, none of us—good, bad, or indifferent—has any guarantee that our actions will produce the results we desire. So the link between actions and consequences cannot be expected to be very tight. It is a commonplace that good intentions can lead to bad results—and yet when this does happen, I submit, we sense a tragic irony that is specially troubling to us. Suppose some person devotes his entire life to furthering a certain cause and finds his efforts are doomed to failure. This is sad. But suppose now that he devotes his entire life to this cause and finds that his very efforts are what have doomed the cause to failure—that by trying to make the world better in fact he has made the world worse. This makes of his whole life one great ironic tragedy. Great ironic tragedies happen all the time, of course. We do not have any right to expect that our lives will not turn out to be great ironic tragedies. But it does seem that we have a right not to have our good intentions intentionally used to produce bad results. What is so troubling about the case of the treacherous motorist is that all B wanted was to help someone in need and instead of helping someone in need she ended up being a party to her own brutal robbery. Her very goodness was made an instrument of its own thwarting. We might express this by saying that even on the broadest and most morally laden conception of self-interest, the good person could not see these results as in any way part of an interest that she was concerned to advance; that her goodness was twisted to thwart her own deepest interest in advancing the aims of goodness.

A pair of examples from Adrian Piper⁸ may help to fix our intuitions here. In the first case, my sending food relief to Somali famine victims proves actually counterproductive, in that it enforces dependence on foreign-food sources and discourages traditional practices of autonomous, sustainable agriculture. Piper maintains here that the primary object of our reaction in this case "is the plight of the Somalis I was trying to help, not my own plight of being cheated of the chance to do good." In Piper's second case, suppose my charitable contributions to a Somali relief organization have been used by double agents working within that organization to sell arms to local Somali warlords. Again, Piper insists that "what is morally wrong here does not have to do with the rewards which I may deserve, but rather with what innocent Somalis deserve."

Certainly, we do care most that our good actions achieve good results because we care deeply about those good results, and the difference they make to real, lived human lives. But I submit that there is nonetheless some sense in which we feel for the good agent in both of Piper's cases, above and beyond the grief we feel for the terrible plight of the Somalis. After all, the Somalis face comparable harm in many other scenarios. Consider the scenario in which I simply give nothing to the Somalis, while others contribute to the warlords. The Somalis receive no benefit and continue in their suffering. Now consider the scenario in which I give and am double-crossed. Again, the Somalis receive nothing while the warlords benefit; the consequences for the Somalis are the same in both cases. So, if we feel that there is something somehow worse in the second case than in the first, or at least something differently wrong, we shall have to go beyond harm to the Somalis themselves to account for it.

Finally, imagine a similar case in which middle-school children work all year on bake sales and car washes to raise money for the homeless, only to be defrauded of this money by someone posing as a fund raiser for humanitarian causes. Is our indignation here exhausted by concern for the homeless, or do we also feel that some wrong has been done the school children as well? ("Those poor kids, working so hard all year—and for this!")

A's willingness to use B's goodness to promote what we (and she) view as evil ends may further be criticized for the attitude it seems to reveal on his part toward goodness. His calculations here seem to reveal that he holds goodness in something approaching contempt. Sometimes this contempt is made overt, as when a fraudulent beggar accepts an offered contribution and then sneers, aloud or under his breath, "Sucker!" But even when A does not jeer outright at B's goodness, his view of goodness as a convenient tool to be used to his advantage does not seem to be the right way to view goodness. An underlying instrumental attitude toward other persons is a large part of what troubles us about manipulation and coercion generally: the sense that the coercer or manipulator views another human being purely as a means and not as an end in herself. But often it seems less problematic to use, not persons themselves, but their traits or characteristics. As Feinberg notes: "One exploits a person by exploiting his traits or circumstances, but one can 'exploit' his traits or circumstances without exploiting him" (op. cit., p. 177). In the case of exploiting someone's goodness, we may want to say that someone's goodness is so closely linked with her identity that to exploit her goodness is to exploit her. Or we may want to say that the proper response to goodness is not, "How can I turn this to my advantage?" but instead, "How can I cultivate this in myself?" The proper attitude toward goodness should not be cynical opportunism, but admiration, respect, even awe.

This suggests a second and perhaps deeper way in which B may be harmed when A uses her goodness as a weapon against her. In such a case, A's cynicism may prove all too contagious. Thus, someone who betrays our goodness may reduce us to his level by inducing in us a resulting cynicism to match his own. Piper notes that in the treacherous-motorist case, the motorist makes use not only of his victim's moral sympathies but of her moral beliefs: "The evildoer uses the agent's goodness not only to harm her, but to betray her faith in human nature" (op. cit.). He thus "teaches her a lesson": that our fellow humans are not to be trusted, that many seeming good deeds are not worth the doing. This is why the variation on our cases above, involving the idealistic school children, is so effective; for one counts as a cost of the treachery not only disappointment to the beneficiaries of those children's ideals but destruction of the ideals themselves—a loss both to the no-longer-idealistic children and to the rest of us. It is for this reason that I admire friends who refuse to lock their cars and houses, even in crime-ridden cities, who in essence say: "You may rob me of my stereo, if you

choose, but I will not permit you to rob me of my faith in the decency of my fellow human beings." The loss of such faith is perhaps the greatest casualty wrought by those who would use our goodness as a weapon against us.

II

In the last section, we explored the special wrong of using an agent's goodness as a weapon against her: both to harm her directly and to thwart the causes in which her goodness is enlisted. We looked at the special wrong of using goodness to produce evil. In this section, I want to ask a different set of questions, inspired by the earlier case of the charitable fund raiser. May there not be special problems that arise as well in using goodness even in the service of an indisputably good cause?

One first question we might ask about using someone's goodness to bring about a morally good result is whether this might nonetheless be manipulative. We can imagine a case in which a charitable fund-raising campaign, while in the service of a morally irreproachable cause, is in fact somewhat underhanded and deceptive in how it presents its objectives. As the campaign's organizer, I may know that it is much easier to attract sympathy for my (worthy) cause if I present my campaign as targeted to save cute and photogenic children, though in fact it has other (equally important) objectives. So I craft my fund-raising appeals to exaggerate the contribution your donation will make toward children's issues. I knowingly tug on your moral heartstrings, and you ante up generously. We might feel here that, although I have used your goodness in the service of a morally good result, nonetheless I have done something wrong by manipulating you toward this end, for the morally good result I achieve is different from the morally good result that I have convinced you, via your goodness, to support.⁹

I would reply here, however, that this is an impure case of making use of someone's goodness, for what I have really made use of, in deliberately opting for a manipulative campaign, is not your goodness, but your sentimentality, your susceptibility to a tear-jerking appeal. If your goodness, plain and simple, were adequate to move you to my good result, I would not have needed the manipulative maneuver in the first place. There is a sense in which it is unnecessary to manipulate goodness for a good result, for goodness will naturally be drawn to that result, anyway. When A persuades B, via B's goodness, to assist in a good cause, B's goodness naturally and harmoniously issues in her subsequent action. B, being good, sees the goodness of A's cause, and chooses to further that cause, because of both her goodness and its goodness. What, we may feel, can be wrong with this?

I want to suggest that there can indeed be something wrong with this. Let us return one last time to the (nonmanipulative) charitable fund raiser and ask whether it is entirely unproblematic even in that case for A to take advantage of B's goodness, to appeal to B's goodness honestly and openly even for unquestionably good ends that B herself endorses. Whether it is acceptable or desirable to play on B's goodness here will depend in part, I want to argue, on the other alternatives available as well as on the general extent to which B's goodness is tapped as a community resource.

One way to raise money for humanitarian causes is to appeal to the goodness of good people, to solicit from them a voluntary contribution. Another way would be to impose a general income tax on the population, as we do with our tax-funded welfare system. Or to fine wealthy criminals and turn that revenue toward humanitarian purposes. Or to provide tax incentives for corporations who advance these purposes. There is more than one alternative here, and it is not clear that the first is in every way superior to all the others.

One appeal of the goodness approach presumably is that the contributions are voluntary, unlike the general income-tax approach or the fine system. This presumably provides one reason to encourage the individual shinnings of a "thousand points of light" rather than to raise taxes. And, unlike the financial-incentives approach, which also relies on voluntary choice, the goodness approach is pleasing from a Kantian point of view because the choices radiate moral worth. A thousand points of light are morally preferable to a thousand

points of throbbing financial self-interest. On the goodness approach, it seems fair to say that we are making use of goodness as a resource, but not, so far, that we are exploiting or abusing goodness. We can still view goodness with plenty of awe and admiration, which we pour out in our subsequent thank you note.

A striking advantage of the tax approach, on the other hand, is that it is universal and so, seemingly, more fair. Why should the burden of providing for the world's needy fall only on the good, or even only on the bad (the fine approach), rather than on all alike? If we view provision for the needy as a duty falling equally on all able human beings, then on the goodness approach, the vast majority of persons are free riders, coasting on the kindness of a few. This is troubling both to those who care about fairness and to those who want to insist that meeting basic human needs is not, or at least should not be, a matter of voluntary charity, but an inescapable obligation of justice.

Now, there may be no politically feasible mechanism for enforcing this obligation, and so appeals to goodness may be our only viable option for addressing the problem of the world's vast misery. If so, it seems that such appeals are fully justified. But if we were able to enforce a more universal duty of service and simply chose not to do so (if we could have argued for a tax increase instead of calling for increased voluntarism), then we might come to view the charitable fund-raising appeal as placing an unfair and exploitative burden on goodness.¹⁰

Along these lines, consider a variation on the heroic fire fighter example."¹¹ Suppose that only one fire fighter is needed for the dangerous mission in question, and I am the fire chief charged with selecting the right person for the job. How should I make my choice? I might ask all the fire fighters to draw straws. I might simply give an order to a fire fighter I particularly dislike. I might tell one fire fighter who has been delinquent in the past: "Accept this assignment and I'll wipe your slate clean." Or I might tell him: "Accept this assignment or you're fired!" I might offer a financial bonus to anyone willing to go. Or I might issue a general call for a volunteer, knowing that I have one exceptionally kind and noble fire fighter, Betsy, who will be sure to step forward. Finally, I might call Betsy aside and say to her: "I hate to ask you to do this, but would you, one more time?"

I am not prepared to defend any one answer here as the best answer morally, and certainly not as the only right answer, though I am prepared to reject both the order motivated by personal dislike and the coercive threat of firing as morally unacceptable. There is something pleasing about the fairness of drawing straws, in the equal chance of risk it imposes upon everyone alike. There is also something appealing about the voluntary assumption of risk in a number of the other scenarios. But if the fire fighter indeed falls in the line of duty, it is only Betsy's voluntary choice, motivated by goodness alone, that adds moral value to the sacrifice, and the explanation here is probably Kantian.

I prefer the version of the story in which I call all the fire fighters together, describe the peril and the lives at stake, and then wait for Betsy, once again Betsy, to step forward. The version of the story in which I call Betsy aside for a special request is somewhat more troubling. For one thing, the additional one-on-one pressure on Betsy, my personal appeal added on to the general moral appeal, may be enough to make us say that Betsy's choice on this scenario is not completely voluntary. One might ask, however, whether Betsy's choice in either case is completely voluntary, given that to a certain extent good people "have no choice" but to do good deeds and it may be that Betsy, given an upbringing that molded her as a good person, has no choice" but to be good. But if Betsy's choice (on either scenario) is nonvoluntary, it becomes very difficult to see what would count as a truly voluntary choice. Surely, we do not want to say that any choice determined by something as general as "the kind of person we are" fails to qualify' as voluntary, or that the only voluntary choices are those which have no root in either circumstances or character.

Instead, I would say that what bothers us, or should bother us, about the scenario in which I tap Betsy for duty is that here, once again, I am taking advantage of Betsy's goodness in a way that I am not doing by merely making a general call for volunteers (even knowing there that Betsy will be the only one to respond).

There remains something fundamentally troubling about singling out a good person to bear a terrible burden simply because of her goodness.

The explanation here, I think, is that although goodness is a resource that all of us have a right to call on at times, it is one that we do not want to call on too often. For one, goodness may turn out to be one more nonrenewable resource that can be irrevocably depleted by careless exploitation. If there is no time for a general call for volunteers and I am facing a genuine once-in-a-lifetime emergency of course, I may and should call on Betsy. But if such emergencies become routine, if I find myself calling on Betsy "once again," then it seems as if Betsy's goodness is being unduly and unfairly burdened. And after a while, I may find that Betsy decides to retire from the fire fighting force. Or one day, when I call her aside for special duty, she will flash me her button that says: "Pardon me, but you must be mistaking me for someone who cares." Good people are peculiarly subject to "burn out," as apparent in the heavy turnover of workers in good-deed-intensive occupations. It seems that many good people who have been overly burdened in their goodness do not choose to regulate the burdens on themselves by selectively exercising their goodness, but by withdrawing from the field altogether. They escape the burdens of commitment by escaping commitment altogether. This is a loss for the rest of us, who have one fewer moral resource to call on. It is a loss for the good person herself as well, echoing our discussion of the costs of contagious cynicism in section 1.

Moreover, the burden of the moral life, insofar as it is a burden, is one that should be shared more broadly. We may be just as troubled by constantly calling upon the good even where we do not fear an ultimate erosion of their goodness. In fact, it may be more distressing to know that faithful, steadfast B is going to keep on being good, keep on doing more than her fair share of good deeds, keep on permitting others to enjoy a free ride on her goodness. Now, of course, it is unfair to call on anybody all the time, not only on the good. So this may return us to our concerns in section I. If it seems specially problematic to call excessively upon the good, this may be because we think the good should have a fair chance to pursue their nonmoral objectives and not jeopardize all their other ends simply because shirkers are refusing to do their share of what moral work needs to be done in the world. And, further, it is the good who naturally face the greatest danger of this kind of exploitation.

When I shared an earlier version of this essay with colleagues, several of them, intrigued by the tide, hoped to discover some way in which they, at long last, would be able to use their own goodness as a weapon against others. They were disappointed to find that instead I was discussing how their goodness could be used as a weapon against them. But even if they were disappointed, they should not have been surprised. This, after all, is part of what goodness is all about. If they did not want to pay any of the price associated with goodness, they should not have signed up to be good in the first place. But as others take advantage of our goodness unduly or Unfairly, or worse, use our goodness to thwart the aims of goodness itself, we shall begin to reconsider that original choice, if choice it be. And with the extinguishing of any point of moral light, the world becomes a darker and more dismal place.

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Footnotes

1. *Harmless Wrongdoing* (New York: Oxford, 1988).
2. *The Right and the Good* (New York: Oxford, 1965), quoted in George Sher, *Desefl* (Princeton: University Press, 1987), p. 132.

3. *The Theory of Good and Evil*, Volume I (New York: Oxford, 1907), quoted in Sher, 137.
4. We may also **want** a good deed to be rewarded because we want the beneficiary of that deed to practice the virtue of gratitude. It is not so much that we want *B* to get twenty dollars for returning *A*'s wallet as that we want *A* to exhibit a proper generosity to *B* for having benefited him in this way. Thus, an additionally troubling feature of the case of the treacherous motorist is that *A*'s response to *B* deviates 180 degrees from what we would expect from him morally.
5. *The Morality of Punishment* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1929), quoted in Sher, p. 138.
6. See Susan Wolf, "Moral Saints," this JOURNAL, LXXIX. 8 (August 1982): 419—39.
7. Of course, the heroic fire fighter and rape rescuer also may bear costs they had no particular reason to *expect* to bear, if, for example, they are injured in some unusual or surprising way: say, by contracting a rare disease from the individual rescued. I owe this point to Douglas MacLean. I think this shows both that our expectations do not play a definitive role here and that our generalized expectations of risk in a situation highly recognized as extremely risky are not tied too closely to any one causal story about how that risk might present itself.
8. I owe this example to MacLean.
9. Comments she delivered on my paper at the Eastern Division Meeting of the American Philosophical Association in Atlanta, December 1993.
10. Of course, the daunting task of getting a tax in place itself may depend heavily people's goodness. I owe this point to Dale Jamieson.
11. This example was suggested to me by Jim Nickel.

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