rational being to follow suit; nor can he expect the realm of nature...to favour his expectation of happiness. Despite that, the law:

Act in accordance with the maxims of a universal-law-giving member of a merely possible realm of ends remains in full force because it commands categorically. And just here lies the two-part paradox: (1) the will is subject to an inflexible rule concerning the place of humanity in its deliberations, simply because of the dignity of humanity as rational nature without any end or advantage to be gained by being human, and thus out of respect for a mere idea; and (2) what makes some maxims sublime, and makes every rational subject worthy to be a law-giver in the realm of ends, is just precisely this independence of his maxims from all such action-drivers as chosen ends and possible advantages. If it weren’t for this independence, the rational being would have to be seen as subject only to the natural law of his needs. Even if the realm of nature and the realm of ends were thought of as united under one sovereign, so that the realm of ends moved from being a mere idea to becoming a reality and gained reinforcement from a strong action-driver, still there would be no increase in its intrinsic value. For when we think about this possibility of a world in which a unique sovereign brings it about that principled actions do always lead to good consequences, we have to think of the sole absolute law-giver as judging the value of rational beings only on the strength of the disinterested conduct that they prescribe to themselves merely from the idea. The essence of things isn’t changed by their external relations, and the absolute [= ‘non-relational’] value of a man doesn’t involve his relations to other things either; so whoever is estimating a man’s absolute worth must set aside his external-relational properties—and this holds for anyone doing such an estimation, even the supreme being. Morality is thus the relation of actions not to anything external to the person, but to the autonomy of the will. Now here are definitions, in terms of the autonomy of the will, of five key terms in morality. An action that can co-exist with the autonomy of the will is permitted. One that clashes with autonomy of the will is forbidden. A will whose maxims are necessarily in harmony with the laws of autonomy is a holy or absolutely good will. If a will is not absolutely good, it is morally constrained by the principle of autonomy and its relation to that principle is obligation (so a holy will can’t have obligations). The objective necessity of an action from obligation is called duty.

From what I have been saying, it is easy to understand how this happens: although in thinking of duty we think of subjection to law, we nevertheless also ascribe a certain sublimity and dignity to the person who fulfils all his duties. There is nothing sublime about being subject to the moral law, but this person is also a giver of the law—that’s why he is subject to it, and only to that extent is he sublime. Also, I have shown above how the only action-driver that can give an action moral value is respect for the law, not any kind of fear or desire. The proper object of respect is our own will to the extent that it tries to act only on maxims that could contribute to a system of universal legislation (such a will is ideally possible for us), and the dignity of humanity consists just in its capacity to give universal laws to which it is also subject.

The autonomy of the will as the supreme principle of morality

A will’s autonomy is that property of it by which it is a law to itself, independently of any property of the objects of its volition. So the principle of autonomy is:
Always choose in such a way that the maxims of your choice are incorporated as universal law in the same volition.

That this practical rule is an imperative, i.e. that the will of every rational being is necessarily bound to it as a constraint, can’t be proved by a mere analysis of the concepts occurring in it, because it is a synthetic proposition. This synthetic proposition presents a command, and presents it as necessary; so it must be able to be known a priori. To prove it, then, we would have to go beyond knowledge of objects to a critical examination of the subject (i.e. to a critique of pure practical reason). But that is not the business of the present chapter. But mere analysis of moral concepts can show something to our present purpose, namely that the principle of autonomy that we are discussing is the sole principle of morals. This is easy to show, because conceptual analysis shows us that morality’s principle must be a categorical imperative and that the imperative in question commands neither more nor less than this very autonomy. [See note on page 32 for ‘autonomy’ and ‘heteronomy’.

**The heteronomy of the will as the source of all spurious principles of morality**

A will is looking for a law that will tell it what to do: if it looks anywhere except in the fitness of its maxims to be given as universal law, going outside itself and looking for the law in the property of any of its objects, heteronomy always results. For in that case the law is not something the will gives to itself, but rather something that the external object gives to the will through its relation to it. This relation, whether it rests on preference or on conceptions of reason, admits of only hypothetical imperatives: *I should do x because I want y.* The moral or categorical imperative, on the other hand, says that *I should do x* whether or not I want anything else. For example, the hypothetical says that *I shouldn’t lie* if I want to keep my reputation. The categorical says that *I shouldn’t lie even if lying wouldn’t bring the slightest harm to me.* So the categorical imperative must abstract from every object thoroughly enough so that no object has any influence on the will; so that practical reason (the will), rather than catering to interests that are not its own, shows its commanding authority as supreme law-giving. Thus, for instance, I ought to try to further the happiness of others, but not in the spirit of ‘it matters to me that these people should be happier, because...’ with the blank filled by a reference to some preference of mine, whether directly for the happiness of the people in question or indirectly via some satisfaction that is related to their happiness through reason. Rather, I should to try to further the happiness of others solely because a maxim that excludes this can’t be included as a universal law in one and the same volition.

**Classification of all possible principles of morality that you’ll get if you take heteronomy as the basic concept**

·Why the interest in all possible principles that come from this underlying mistake? Because in the absence of a critical examination of the pure use of reason, human reason always—including here—tries every possible wrong way before it succeeds in finding the one true way!

If you start with the idea of heteronomy—i.e. of how the will can be directed from outside itself—you will be led to principles of one of two kinds: empirical and rational. (1) The empirical ones have to do with happiness, and are based on the thought of the will as being influenced by· either (1a) physical feelings· concerning one’s own happiness· or (1b) moral feelings. (2) The rational ones have to do with