

Altruism as in sacrificing for others without thinking of yourself or doing it for yourself in any way - is it conducive to happiness and/or morality?

What is altruism?

Altruism is doing things for others without any thought for yourself or concern for any of your needs and is the doctrine that this alone is true love and morality. The altruist only looks after himself when it is strictly necessary. And then only to be of use to other people. The altruist who takes no flu treatment cannot help others. The altruist never does good because he enjoys it or sees benefit in it for himself for that is not altruism. Altruism does not say you cannot do good when you enjoy it but only if you are detached from the pleasure and would do the good without it and only if you are not motivated by the enjoyment. Without the conditions, it teaches that you did not intend it to be real good. The motive and the intent was bad even though the result brought good to others. Selfless love is not a feeling – it is a choice. You can love a person altruistically without liking them in the slightest. Altruism opposes selfishness or self-gratification. It says that other people matter more than you. The consistent altruist will donate his organs and die purposely so that five others can use his organs and live.

What is the link between altruism and love and compassion and justice?

It says that any violation of these even in the name of self-sacrifice is not altruism. It however exalts choice. Giving away your due is not called unfair as long as you choose to do it. So in a sense you can overrule justice.

What is sacrifice?

It is giving up something and seeking no recompense for giving it up.

Do unselfishness and sacrifice go together?

Parting with money to have an alcoholic drink cannot be described as a true sacrifice. Parting with money you need to help somebody else who also needs it would be sacrifice. Sacrifice and unselfish don't necessarily go together. The person who eats all the sweets and doesn't share them is regarded as selfish. But he is sacrificing in the sense that refuses friendship with others and knows he needs it more than he needs sweets. It follows then that the sacrifice of the egoist and the altruist is the same.

Why does altruism say that love is sacrifice?

If others are put first that is a sacrifice. A sacrifice that does not hurt you is no sacrifice at all. A sacrifice you want to commit is no sacrifice at all.

It would not be altruistic love to help someone just so that you will feel better or because you enjoy it or because you feel you might as well do it. That is really preferring your pleasure to that person and that is immoral in altruism. So altruism asks you to deprive yourself for others.

Is love always sacrifice?

Always, if you believe you can and therefore should be always other-centred. If you wish you could be altruistic and cannot be – say when you are behind bars and cannot get out to give your money to a woman begging in the street - then that is the nearest you can get to sacrifice so it is love. As far as motive is concerned, it is sacrifice for you are sacrificing your desire for yourself. Altruists say it would be evil to forcibly prevent yourself from doing loving actions so that you could love in your heart.

Can you do good while motivated by altruism and self-interest both at the one time?

No for you can drop the selfish motive. Adherence to evil makes the good you do to be hypocrisy for your good should be done in an attitude of repentance. Besides, while you can have an altruistic motive one instant and a selfish one the next you cannot have both at the same time so the idea of being motivated by both is incoherent. The motive you had the instant you decided what to do is the one that determined what you would choose.

I am surer I exist than that anybody else does so altruism implies that degradation of the self is good and it is love. So to

mix it with any concern for myself would not be altruism on any level at all for they can't be mixed and it would be evil and inconsistent to accept any happiness that altruism brings. An act either degrades me or it does not.

Is it true that altruism is supposed to think of making other people good first before helping them with food and clothing and companionship and other things?

Yes - good as in nurturing altruism in them. The altruist would give a hungry child bread in the hope of seeing the child give the bread away to another child. You are not supposed to help a person who becomes selfish because of your altruism. Though altruists do help such people it is only because of their belief that we cannot see what is happening in the heart of another and so have no right to judge. It is not because they doubt the principle that helping a person who becomes selfish through your altruistic deeds for them is wrong.

When you put altruistic love before yourself you have to put its propagation in others before anything else. The person who would rather work to you for nothing instead of trying to give you lessons in altruism and its spirituality is not an altruist but a fake. Anybody who teaches a hypocritical version of altruism is not a real altruist.

Can you accept a reward for your altruism?

The altruist only takes rewards to give them away.

Otherwise taking the reward is like reversing the altruism. It is like reversing it to take advantage of it. It is like saying I refuse to be altruistic any more now. I did the act not to get a reward and refusing to have a reward so now I am insulting that noble act. Rewards, if they should be granted, have to be forced on the altruist against their will if the altruists are to remain moral. Rewards are really a punishment when they are forced on you like that. To enjoy them would be to denigrate your dignity and freedom. It would be to say that you are no value as a person and the person or god who rewards you would be really doing evil disguised as good.

Think of it this way. If love is right and everything else is wrong then you should keep the attitude of love inside you all the time even if there is nobody about. It is the same with altruism which is supposed to be love. If you take a reward you have to be grateful and enjoy the reward for it is not a reward otherwise. Thus to take a reward is to cease having an altruistic attitude. Rewards are wrong if altruism is right. The reward for the altruist is a non-reward – more opportunities to be altruistic. The true altruist thinks only of others not the reward or the honour of it. We are not saying the altruist should be churlish and ungrateful. We are saying the altruist can't and won't make time and energy to make rewards mean anything. A reward is not a reward if you refuse to let it mean anything. If you cannot respect X because Y needs your love then it does not mean that you are doing wrong to X. You cannot do what you cannot do.

We see the religions of rewards such as Christianity and Islam tormenting people with altruistic demands while those who make the demands seek rewards. It is unfair.

Everything we do we think is right. Even when we do evil it is because we have come to temporarily believe that we ought to do it. If doing good just because it is good is the law then it is immoral to seek to reward a person by praise for doing good for they do not want it and should not want it. Their attitude is that virtue is its own reward. They are satisfied just by doing good and consider that to be the only real reward. So the reward then is insulting the person. It is not a reward at all. It invites people to do what they see as wrong. All it is, is a display of hypocrisy.

Also, if I do what I think is right then it does not follow that I do it because I want to think it is right. If I did I would clearly be trying to put my opinions in front of the truth. The problem is it still might be the case that that is exactly what I am doing. So nobody can point to an act and call it altruistic. Its arrogance posing as selflessness.

Christianity wants God to have all the credit for human goodness but still it praises people because it is false. Jesus started that in his parable of the Pharisee and the Publican. You have to believe we are naturally selfish creatures to gain anything from giving or receiving rewards which means they are not really rewards for you need free will to get them but the truth is we don't care.

What does altruism say about happiness?

Happiness as a reward is banned. Those who try to be happy usually fail. If you do good knowing that happiness is a side-effect if you do good then you are using this as an indirect method for being happy. You are forgetting about happiness as a method of being happy. You are still using the plight of others to get happiness for yourself.

What insight do we get from all this?

Altruism then is about rejecting not just ignoring rewards such as happiness. I don't want to be seen as good in God's or my own eyes for what I do. It is pure sacrifice.

I can be an altruist. That has a very demanding side. I can be an egoist which means I help others because I feel I want to and not because they are in trouble. I can be an egotist which is about hurting others and even myself to get what I want. The choice is between altruism and egoism. Egotism, being bad, isn't an option. Egoism then is the sanest and most natural. It is what everybody follows even if they say otherwise.

FINALLY

Altruism as in not caring about me being a person but only the kind of person I am is clearly moral bullying. Altruism violates the harm principle which says that happiness and doing the least damage are what matters. The latter is a stance more akin to atheism than anything else though some confused religionists say they accept it.