

A CONSEQUENTIALIST INTERPRETATION OF ALTRUISM

Altruism says you should help others without thinking of yourself. Egoism is the idea that you help others because doing so is its own reward for you. Egotism says you should help others to get a reward such as money or to feel good after.

Altruism is thought to be a consequentialist doctrine. That means that you must do whatever action that will bring the best results for others. It is not the same as Utilitarianism. Utilitarianism teaches that you do what is best for others and try to include yourself. Altruism agrees but says you should not include yourself.

The central problem with this is that altruism says that serving others is important and your happiness is not. How you could work out what is best for others with that kind of attitude is baffling! If you are an altruist and altruism is right and good, it is your duty to make sure that others are altruistic as well! If altruism will make you unhappy, you must encourage others to afflict themselves with the same misery. Altruism is not a consequentialist doctrine.

If it is the consequences that matter, then does the motive matter? Altruism says you must have an altruistic motive. So this declares that the motive not the consequences is what matters. Jesus then was advocating altruism when he said you should loan things to people who will not return them to you. The motive is what matters not the bad results for you or anybody else. Is this not advocating evil? Jesus would reply that the motive is so important that it is love to have the right motive regardless of the consequences. He taught for example that you should love God so much that you would take on a cruel death that degrades those who kill you and devastates your friends and family. He practiced that ethic himself, if the gospels are to be believed!

If altruism is so great, you should not treat yourself to an evening in to enjoy your bath and eat chocolates. Instead you should be out looking for somebody to sacrifice to. The consequences here it worries about are the ones for others.

The doctrine of altruism hinders the believer in altruism from creativity and self-development and self-improvement and makes him a missionary out to make others as bad as himself. The doctrine does not give a toss about consequences though at times it may seem to have good results. These results are just luck. They were not the responsibility of the doctrine.

If X acts altruistically in the interest of Y, and Y acts altruistically in the interest of X then no progress is made. Altruism is anti-progress. Yes Y has gold in the coffers because of X and Y has got the house that X has as a gift from X. This is not progress but an exchange for the "I must give, give, give" is the only concern. That is not progress.

It is impossible to tell an altruist apart from a begrudger. Perhaps one sets an example of altruism to stop people enjoying the good things they have? Altruism is evil because it says that being sacrificing is more important than pleasure and happiness and knowledge so you have to desire that evil and suffering and will always exist and indeed worsen for there can be no altruism without them. Altruism is about being on a meaningless treadmill.