

QUESTION: THE HERO GIVING THEIR LIFE FOR STRANGERS PROVES PEOPLE CAN BE SELFLESSLY GOOD BUT SOME DISAGREE. DOES HUMAN NATURE ALWAYS HAVE A SELF-INTERESTED ULTERIOR MOTIVE OR NOT? IS SELF-GIVING FOR ANOTHER A MYTH?

If the answer is yes then it may be the way we are.

A psychological egoist is a person who is out chiefly for themselves or solely but who does not harm and nature has made them self-interested. A psychological altruist is about others chiefly or solely. There is disagreement on whether human nature is one or the other. The minority view that an egotist is a person who inherently engages in selfishness that harms others and that we are all psychologically egotist can be safely passed over.

If the answer is yes it may be the way we are formed by the tough realities of life.

If the answer is yes it may be simply what we turn ourselves into. We are good at turning parts of our brains off at times.

Some think your brain can make you altruist one minute or egoist the next.

## PROBABILITY

We see three possible answers. Everybody agrees that we can be egoist sometimes. All this leans in favour of the hero not truly being a hero.

## ASSESSMENT

Altruism sees egoism as the wrong and immoral approach. If you are an altruist you end up with no right to call anybody egoist for it is antialtruist to accuse somebody without evidence. No evidence is available for you cannot see human motives. The altruist can call you a misguided altruist.

Suppose an altruist hypothetically can use the egoist word. As altruists are to put on the best interpretation possible it follows that you must never call say a murderer or bank robber an egotist but an egoist. Or a misguided egoist if you like for anybody can do the right thing the wrong way.

Altruism totally contradicts itself. If you cannot define any behaviour as egoist or egotist in the real world then how can you define altruist? It turns into a mere word without any descriptive force. Altruism is bigoted if it wants to paint everybody as altruist so it is just useless fairy dust. For that it is selfish. It is pride for it is a person pretending to be better than what they are when the better is anything but good!

So altruism has nothing real to say to you if you choose to declare that you and everybody else is an egoist. It has no real authority to say anybody did something altruistic there. It steals that authority.

## WHY DO YOU SHOW THAT HUMANS ARE NOT ALWAYS SELFISH BY ALWAYS USING EXTREME EXAMPLES?

Hard cases make bad laws. A lesson is in that. Believers in altruism point to extreme situations like heroes dying terribly to save a stranger's baby to try and show that altruism is possible. Hard examples of altruism only show that we are only sure it appears then - but what about other times? If it only appears in extreme situations then is it really anything inspiring or is it an example of insanity or something?

Those who say we can do altruistic deny they are psychological egoists. However, if they think we are altruistic so rarely and only in big matters such as the one given they are still virtually psychological egoists!

Why are ordinary situations not as helpful for establishing altruism? Because it is so easy to do good to others and convince yourself and them that you do it for them not you. But in fact you may be taking advantage of how they cannot see your motives. You may do it for praise, to feel good, because you want something to do, because you feel guilty, because you want good luck, because you want a reward from God or because you feel if you do this people will do good for you so you have to set an example. Wanting approval from God or another is wanting approval as a reward.

The case of the hero who gives their life to save a baby would be considered proof that we are not predominately egoistic.

People take huge risks with their lives like when they race cars. Risking is not necessarily unselfish. It can be totally selfish. To die because one wishes to be a hero even if just in their own mind would be extremely selfish despite outward appearances. They have no time to think. They are not being themselves. They need a lot of time to make a big decision about their lives and deaths. What one is doing is selfish in the sense that one needs to believe that one should be happy for if one does not then one can't believe others should be happy either. Unhappy people make others unhappy.

What you assume is more important than what you prove in this case. Why? To prove that somebody is a murderer is not possible unless you assume that people murder in the first place. So assumptions and proofs can work together. So you have to assume the hero might still be selfish.

If altruism really describes what human nature is like then why do you need extreme examples to prove it? The answer is because you are trying to convince yourself that you and others really can be and are altruistic. You don't truly believe they are. You are a hypocrite. The examples at best might show we are altruistic in extreme situations but that does not mean we are ever altruistic any other time. Big altruistic acts might only prove that we are altruistic in big things. But we could have nothing but egoistic motivation for all the other things we do. A man who won't steal a hundred pounds might steal a pound.

The altruist uses the extreme situation in a mercenary way to convince themselves that people are selfless. That is disgraceful! If altruism is a lie then to use somebody dying while saving others to make it look good and believable is reprehensible.

The extreme situation drives it home that we are not fully free to do what we want so we feel overpowered by it and thus go along with it and give our life for another. There is a sense of escape. You want out and you want to be as big as the threat and you do that by aligning with it.

#### YOU ARE SAVING A BABY

Saving a random baby from a fire gives lessons about how suspect human morality is.

A house is burning fiercely and the baby is trapped inside. You know that if you get in you are unlikely to get out alive and will suffer severe burns and a life of horror if you survive at all. You burst in to get the baby.

If egoism is true you will not act to help unless something tells you there could be something in it for yourself. If it is 99% for the baby and you need the 1% of self-interest to act that shows how much this is about you and you are in denial if you call yourself altruist.

Whether you succeed in saving the baby or not, your act will be admired. Why do you admire your act? Why do others admire it? It is because you feel strongly about helping the baby. You will not be admired if you made yourself do it though you didn't want to.

It is not your fault at that moment in time if you are not inclined. You don't have time to think and feel better about it.

Thus you should be praised for acting.

Should you be praised more for acting against your inclination?

The answer is yes for it means you have a bigger struggle than those who want to do it in order to do the right thing.

Will you be praised as much for it as you would be if you wanted to do it? No. People will not suggest that wanting to do good matters than doing the good. They will not equate good done because you want to as just good. Good by definition does not care what you want. Right is right.

Doing good and wanting to is two goods not one. Which then would be the main thing for them? The good. The wanting is in second place.

Those who praise you for wanting to help are in fact insulting and judging you. They treat you as an emotion more than a person. They care more about the emotional inclination to help the baby than the baby. If you care about the baby they indirectly then judge you for caring. People can seem good and have warped values.

You don't want the baby to be in pain or die. What if you want to think of yourself as good and that leads to the desire to help the baby? It seems that a self-centred motive leads to an other-regarding motive. But how other-regarding is the other motive? If you were really that caring you would put the other regarding motive first. You would just care because of the baby if you really cared. You are still giving a mixed message. You make it both about you and the baby. It is more about you for you have to care about yourself before you get any interest in helping the baby.

## OBJECTION

It seems mad to argue that a man who risks his arm to get food for a starving family is being as self-interested as one who risks his arm to fill his coffers.

We need to see this clearly for we all feel an impulse to evaluate this by the results. He is not made unselfish just because a family is fed.

Wanting to do something for another means the wanting is yours and you suffer not doing what you want so it is about you. Your intention is to fulfil yourself by using another. This reasoning is said to be a tautology. "John wants to help x and wanting makes it self-centred therefore John is self-centred." But that is not a tautology or a circular argument at all.

First it makes sense.

Second it is true that wanting is you having to fulfil the side of our nature that does not want to be alone.

Third if you want a reward of 100 dollars you want just the same. Wanting is wanting wheter it is for another person to be okay or wanting a 100 dollars.

The object of the want makes no difference. An eye is an eye no matter what it sees.

Whatever action we perform we understand and experience it as self-regarding as in responding to our will. In other words, there is something self-regarding about doing your will. Your will is your will regardless of whether you are acting to benefit yourself or another person. Your sight is your sight whether you look in the mirror or at another person. Same idea.

## FINALLY

The extreme examples cannot tell us if the human race in general is altruistic. Nor do they prove that the acting individuals are altruistic. The examples show that altruism is suspect. There is no proof that everybody being into egoism all the time is an error. That in itself does not mean that it is false. It means that it might be true. It means we have the right to assume it and encourage others to. If psychological egoism is wrong then why do we need extreme examples to refute it such as a soldier blowing himself up to save the life of another person? The examples are sledgehammers - believe he was a hero and not seeking something for himself or you are bad person and a cynic and slandering a good man. That such bullying is present says the refuters have something to hide.