

DEFENDING ETHICAL EGOISM - THE DOCTRINE THAT YOU MUST LOOK AFTER OTHERS FOR IT MAKES YOU HAPPY

Altruism, the doctrine that the wellbeing and dignity of others matters and yours does not, only produces nasty hypocrites and is evil. Egoism is better for it teaches you to care about yourself. Giving of yourself is giving to yourself.

Your actions have lots of reasons most of which you cannot call to mind but they are still there. We think of ourselves a lot and struggle with self as opposed to others and others as opposed to self. So plausibility says that we always think of ourselves no matter what we do. Altruism is forgetting that or being unaware. No act however other-centred is done without thinking of what is in it for you at some level. If then we are that self-centred - it is the self-centredness hiding its presence for it makes us feel better to think we are great people for others - then altruism never really happens.

If we are egoists then we are self-centred not selfish and it does no good to deny that. You cannot fight what you are. You will only end up fighting what others are.

Should we reject egoism if it has faults?

No because at least it is better than the approval of self-sacrifice which is the only alternative. We have to pick the best doctrine of good and evil. And it is the only candidate.

Are egoists widely hated and accused of threatening all that is good?

Yes and religion and altruists have done a lot to bring this about. It is themselves who are threatening good.

If egoism is true then does that mean we should do all the evil we like?

The true egoist will never harm anyone for people alone provide permanent pleasure and you only need to have as few needs as possible to be content and if you are happy you will automatically enjoy helping others so detach yourself. The true egoist is detached from transient things and is devoted to helping others. Experience proves that liking such a life is the supreme and immovable source of happiness.

Why does egoism tell me not to need God?

Because that is increasing fear by giving yourself a need you don't really need.

If egoism is true then why can't I treat some people and not all badly?

When you harm a person you automatically insult everybody else for you would do the same to each and every one of them if they filled the shoes of your victim. You are willing evil to them no matter how much you pretend that you are not. You are giving up the right to have friends and to have your word taken. Until you reinstate that right, true peace and the greatest happiness will not be possible. If you are a true egoist you will never hurt anyone without grave need. By your evil example you are telling people to degrade you.

How can an egoist preach egoism when that is making other people enter into competition against him?

That is only if egoism is about grabbing the best women or the best job or the most money. Egoism is not about these things but about sensible good works. A certain amount of competition is not a bad thing. Without competition or the threat of competition life would be less exciting. And winners wouldn't be possible.

How can an egoist want to die to save others from death?

Some would argue: "There is proof for life after death. The egoist knows that it is better to take the risk of dying to save lives, even though he or she is more certain of his or her own existence, when she or he knows that death is not the end. It is simply murderous fanaticism to ask a person to die for others without that proof like the world does. Without the conviction that there is an afterlife, the egoist has to become mad to save lives. So the belief is necessary. But in what way has the egoist to become mad when he doesn't believe. He knows that fear of the guilt he will have to live with, will force him to look away from his desire to live. He blanks that desire out to die to save others. He has to become delusional to do it. He is not committing any sin against egoism for he is forced by his fear and the reality to forgo his life. The circumstances give

him a kind of madness that is good for others and to their benefit.”

The Humanist answer is that belief in life after death is bad and there is no reason to hold that the afterlife is possible and that there are better grounds for egoists saving lives. If egoists see children drowning in stormy waters they should jump in and try to save them. The egoists are not doing wrong in this for they intend to survive. There would be no point in jumping in to save the child if they were sure they would drown themselves for that would mean the children would drown too. So when an egoist dies a martyr's death it is an accident. Also, no egoist will save lives thinking of the afterlife. He goes mad with emotion and it takes over.

But what if an egoist has to save lives say in war and knows that he will die for it? He is satisfying his egoism by doing this because though he is egoistic he can still feel he wants to die for others. The fact that you have to put yourself first for you are most sure of your existence condemns this but there are other considerations that make a difference. Nobody could enjoy their closeness to their loved ones or their lives unless there are people prepared to die for them when there is no other way. The egoist gives his life for this principle because it is an egoistic one and he cannot be an egoist without it.

People should be more careful so the people who are in danger but have not caused the accident should come first. If a man drives into a lake through pure recklessness and you will probably die if you try and save him you should not save him. He had no right to force this risk on you. If this disturbs people they ought to remember that there will be far more to disturb if they adopt altruism.

Why do egoists talk about love when they do not believe in it?

Egoists simply do not mean the same thing by love as altruists do. By love the egoist means just willing and liking to see the best happen to others not non-emotional arid selfless love. Cold selfless love is the altruists unsatisfying ideal not ours.

Is egoism harmless?

It is indeed. It recognises that you can only love others to the extent that you can love yourself. Altruism tells you not to love yourself for you cannot love yourself when you pretend that you are non-existent in order to focus on doing so-called good for others the way it requires? Altruists are often really egoists which is good news for us for it means we can live up to the best in Altruism and avoid the dangers and the lies that are required to defend Altruism.

How can egoism be good when altruism makes one really happy?

To those who would deceive you into believing that there is no happiness unless you forget yourself and be selfless, say that if they are able to be happy while merely pretending to be unselfish for genuine Altruism is impossible, then what is called Altruism is no proof against egoism. The so-called Altruist does good because it feels right now and not directly for future happiness. This makes them happy. Why? For if you are too future-centred you can't be happy for you long for what you don't have yet and that is pain. They fulfil themselves in the present and that is the key. But people can do lots of things that will improve their future and the thought of how good it is going to be makes them happy. It will only do that if their work is not motivated by too much of a desire for a good future.

What about egoism and falling in love?

Though in the past the religions frowned upon falling in love, they turn a blind eye to it today for nobody would have anything to do with them if they still opposed it. Falling in love is a very selfish act. You do not fall in love with nice kindly caring people who would make you happy if they are old or ugly but people who are likable for you and who are sexually appealing to you. The sexual urge is behind falling in love. And you cannot control the feeling at all. For it to be love you would have to freely fall in love and it would be based not on a person suiting you but on a person being good and kind. Falling in love can be mistaken for selfless love but it is nothing like it. It is proof that apparent sacrifices for another does not prove you are unselfish.

Why will egoism do more good than Altruism?

Altruism orders you to do this and that or make this sacrifice and that which is sanctimonious because there is to be nothing in it for yourself. It just cares about rules and “goodness” not you. That is a complete turn-off.

With egoism, you are being encouraged not ordered to develop your own happiness and dignity by behaving in a good way and doing it to be happy and to spread happiness to others. We find anybody preaching at us a turn-off and will resent it if we have to obey and the reason is why our inclination towards self-indulgence is being denigrated and frustrated. Egoism is a better incentive to good behaviour than altruism for it is warm and sensible and realistic. And it is more than just better – it's a hundred times better. It is more natural.

Commonsense says that if we are naturally self-centred as everybody who is honest agrees, then we should build on that to create people who are self-centred the right way instead of trying to foist altruism on them. The altruists cannot consistently reason that they should make the person who practices unstable or unbalanced irrational egoism which we call egotism turn to rational egoism. If you are an egotist and extremely arrogant it is easier to come down to the egoist level and become decent than it is for you to come down to the altruist level. The step from egotism to altruism is so big that it is only going to encourage those people to do evil. And when people realise the step is impossible, it gets worse. Altruists may have to hold that egoism is worse than egotism for it looks good while virtue is to be identified only with altruism. It cannot encourage egoism at all.

If egotists change then why should they become altruists and turn their backs on happiness? Altruists will just have to say they should do it for happiness is a sin. The egotists will be less likely to feel and see that happiness is evil when they practice egoism so altruists have to either leave egotists as they are or they have to convert them to altruism. Egoism has to be left out of the equation. Altruism just cares about being selfless that is all and it cannot even tell us why we should not be selfless and kill ourselves for no reason for that is as much selflessness as the kind it demands. At least egoism can give a reason for being egoistic. Altruists cannot say we should sacrifice for the sake of indirect happiness for that would be adopting the egoism of working and doing good for the happiness. It says we should sacrifice just because we should sacrifice. Even God should not be obeyed if he requests altruism for he offers no proof that we should obey and this shows why obedience to God is and can only be slavery despite the promises of Christ that we would be the sons and daughters of God. If that kind of slavery is allowed so is the other kind.

Should the egoists be proud of their faults when they are the fault of nature?

It is thought that the egoists have to have strong self-esteem and have to like their own faults. That is incorrect for the egoists like their good side and see the dark side as the fault of the programming they received. They must wish to correct the dark side but they must not let it make them feel bad.

What about the argument that if egoism is true and we are all egoists then we don't need to serve the interests of others for they will be happy enough?

They can't make themselves happier or stay happy on their own.

What about the argument that the theory of psychological egoism destroys morality for it says that we do what we want and what ought to be done does not come into it?

This egoism says we are naturally egoists and can't be anything else. It is true that it destroys morality but it does not destroy what is right and wrong. We know that even if there is no free will there are things that ought not to be done or happen. Psychological egoism can be triggered to make a person behave well. It is not good things like fancy food and houses that do this but things like kindness and friendliness. Good, real good, breeds good and leaves a legacy of love that will go on forever and contribute to the world forever. Its value is infinite both in what it can do and what it does do. Good is more powerful than evil and good will destroy religion and the work it has done to advance evil. But evil is just a perversion, a thing that is thought to be good but is not and is a kind of good in that sense, so it cannot survive.

What about the theory: "Egoism is bad news for it is nonsense to say that only my self-interest matters for others exist and morality is about how I should regard myself and others. Morality means that what applies to me applies to everybody else as well meaning that it is universalizable?"

So it is saying that I cannot encourage others to be egoistic because that means I am telling them to get the better of me if they can. I cannot say then that the whole universe should follow egoism.

The theory confuses the fact that egoism can be non-universalizable in the sense that I put me first but I can't expect others to do that and that egoism is universalizable in the sense that I can put me first and others can put themselves first. That is why the theory is wrong.

Morality is based on what is supposed to be true and what can be believed. When I experience myself as the being I should put first how could it be morality to put others on the same level?

The theory assumes that I should not come first in my own life. I am not saying that I matter and that others do not. If I am, I would be denying the universalizability of morality which the theory seeks to avoid and which it condemns. I am saying that others matter as much as me if they exist but unfortunately I cannot help the fact that I have to put myself first so I cannot be condemned for not having others on the same level for I have no choice. Morality does not condemn the man who commits adultery because of uncontrollable psychological forces that have appeared suddenly. It is not relevant to him.

Egoism is universalizable and practical because it says each person who experiences himself or herself as the one who must come first must do the same as I do and do it rationally and advocates as much simplicity in tastes and in life as possible.

What about the argument that since egoistic people have different needs and desires that we cannot have rules meaning that egoism is a recipe for anarchy?

The altruists have many different ideas about what altruism is. For example, Jesus said that if somebody steals your coat give him your cloak as well. Altruists in their inability to be consistent, would disagree. Clearly altruism is a greater threat to order than egoism could ever be.

Some egoists don't mind being slandered. But some altruists are the same. But this does not mean that laws against slander should be revoked. The egoist can sue the slanderer though he or she was not upset by them because the slanderer is practising unbalanced or irrational egoism or egotism and the egoist finds joy in helping others. Thus the egoist can uphold the law better than the altruist.

What about moral neutrality and egoism?

Is it as good for the egoist to eat his pie as it is for him to give it to his mate and do without it? If it is not then egoism is incompatible with neutrality. It depends on whether or not the mate is a real mate so it would be worth doing without. The egoist only gives for pleasure or for future pleasure. We are afraid of being controlled by feelings which is why we often renounce great fun for something duller. Yet even then it is done for the pleasure of being and feeling in control. So it is not really duller after all. We are hedonists and nothing else in this sense.

What about the complaint that egoism says that rationality will always make us happy when it doesn't?

Rationality could spoil your happiness for not all truths are pleasant. But it will only do that if YOU let it. We develop our responses to things. But egoism is about dignity and rationality and dignity are inseparable so you have to learn to make yourself happy through truth. If irrationality were allowed even if it was just for making you happy it would be right then to believe that you should abuse others if it makes you happy. This conclusion is unacceptable and undermines true egoism.

Should we love all persons without exception as ourselves?

It would be great if we could feel love for all but we cannot. We can still will good to them and that is love even if we dislike them. Feelings may make us bad judges of character at times but we are only in this world a while and it is better to have them. I should love myself most of all and love others as much as I am able and love myself in loving them. I should not love my neighbour as myself but if I practice egoism there will be no harm done anyway so do not worry about that. In fact I should love my neighbour through loving myself. Because I love myself I am good for others.

An objection

Ethical egoism is said to argue that if you rob a bank and give an account as to why this was the best thing for you alone then you should get away with it. It should be a defence. Egoists may say that will never happen. But what about the principle? Surely it is egoistic to wish it could happen? The best answer is that egoism means self worship and robbing banks is beneath you.

Should the law discourage altruism?

Yes for it is destructive to social order and illegally offers what it cannot give. Criminals who blame it for their behaviour are laughed at and that is unfair. Altruism with its hatred of feelings and emotional love leads to psychopathic disorders.

BOOKS CONSULTED

PSYCHOLOGY, George A Miller, Penguin, London, 1991

AWARENESS, Anthony de Mello, Fount, London, 1997

ETHICS, AC Ewing, English Universities Press Ltd, 102 Newgate Street, London, 1964

AN INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS, John Hospers, Routledge, London, 1992

OXFORD DICTIONARY OF PHILOSOPHY, Simon Blackburn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1996

RUNAWAY WORLD, Michael Green, IVP, London, 1974

THE SATANIC BIBLE, Anton Szandor LaVey, Avon Books, New York, 1969

THE WWW

