

On Human Rights

Human needs follow a logical order.

The most important needs are physiological, the need for food, water and shelter etc. The material needs come first. Unless these needs are given priority, there will be none of us around to worry about our self-esteem! To despise the material is to despise ourselves.

Many human rights are yours without you earning them. No matter what evil you do, you should be fed. You have a right to your food.

We are told that in some cultures, people will put other needs before the physiological. A man dying of starvation may refuse to eat pig meat if it is forbidden by his religion. But how do we know that he is really putting something in front of his need to survive? Perhaps there is a mental or emotional disorder that is behind it? Indeed we will perceive that he is deranged by his belief. It is the illness talking not him.

There is a popular notion that it's not your needs that matter but what you have to give.

Beliefs such as that God or the universe do not care about what you need but about what you have to give are harmful. That is really saying that your needs do not matter. If yours do not matter then nobody else's do either. Yet those who accept the belief, say God and the universe don't care about your needs but about what you can give. The belief is a dangerous self-fulfilling prophecy and will lead to others getting all your blessings while you get none.

WHAT DOING RIGHT IS

Doing right is doing whatever will result in the least damage possible if not in the short term then in the long run. If we have to do permanent damage or temporary damage we must do the latter for it can be fixed.

Now, we know what right is but the problem is discerning what will cause the most harm. That is what people cannot agree on.

Anyway, whatever right is we must always have good will when doing it or thinking we are doing it.

To mean to do good requires knowing what the right action is. Guessing is only permitted when your back is up against the wall. Condemning something as evil just because somebody or society says so is being irresponsible. It is uncaring. The motive is bad as well because you are condemning not because it is good or right to but for another reason. Even if a whole religion condemns something that does not mean it is right to.

Utilitarianism says that the action and not the motive matters. If you like hating people you can hate them and it does not matter as long as you continue to do what maximises happiness. It would allow you to kill a man if everybody wanted him dead and if he was better off dead. If you put in a rule that you can't do this you are denying utilitarianism.

Situation ethics differs from that in saying that everything must be done in a spirit of love but it is prone to the same criticisms.

Absolutism says that actions are not wrong because they have bad consequences but that they have bad consequences because they are wrong. It says that acts like adultery, not praying to God, or murder are absolutely wrong – that is, wrong under all circumstances. An act of adulterous sex to save the world is sinful. Absolutist ethics require that you agree that an action is wrong without waiting for its bad consequences to prove it.

Obviously morality has to be either absolutist or consequentialist, consequentialists say you must measure out what has the best consequences and do whatever results in them for if you don't you act evilly. It cannot be both because if consequences are what matters then you can't say any act is absolutely wrong, eg that lying is never right.

Religion only hinders human rights for it brings in dogma and revelations from God into the debate. We have enough trouble trying to figure things out without it causing time-lags in decision making and debates and confusion.

PEOPLE HAVE RIGHTS

A right is a benefit to which you are justly entitled although you are not free (you only feel you have free will but its false that you really do make choices) and capable of deserving the benefit. Another good definition of right is to give people as much freedom as possible or to make people as free from discrimination as possible. Religion is a notorious example of something that incoherently claims the right to discriminate.

What are needs? Needs serve the purpose of keeping me alive and well. I use the word need for things I merely want and do not need. I say I need to buy the Algebra Manual. Actually, I do not. I could get it out of a library or borrow a copy from a friend or I could share. It is vital that I recognise and know what I need.

Needs are needs whether I want to fulfil them or not. If I do not want to drink water at all, I still need it.

Is my basic instinct survival? My basic need is being able to handle whatever happens even the darkest depression. I can die for others because I can handle facing death. That is the kind of survival that is my basic instinct.

Rights are based on basic needs. They cannot be based on anything else. We need people to keep their promises so what is promised should be done except when we release the people from their promise. People only have a right to what gives them a decent life. Surplus money should be forcibly taken from the wealthy by law for the benefit of the underprivileged. Rights are not based on desires for they are too changeable and we can want what we should not have. Rights presuppose the value of the person for a worthless article can't have rights. The biggest right comes first when you can't respect them all. The most basic human right is the right to life.

Women, children and men of every race, religion and sexual orientation are all equal – that is, all are equally valuable in themselves.

Racists and sexists object that x is better than y if x is smarter or fitter. But what x has x has got through chance so it does not matter what x succeeds at, x is not a better person but a person with better luck. Denying free will makes us all equal.

The Church says that people are equal as persons or equal in what they are but not equal as regards abilities and goodness (page 305, Moral Philosophy by Joseph Rickaby). So you can be valuable one way and not as valuable in another. One who believes this has no business having a go at racists or sexists for his own belief makes them legitimate and his disapproval of racism and sexism would be pomposity. Why? Racists do not deny that there is a way in which all people can be equal but they do deny that this proves they should be treated as equals. You can regard a person as valuable as a person and still look down on that person and discriminate against that person because of what that person does. The only solution to the problem is to say that no matter how evil a person is that person is still as valuable as the saint in every way. In the same way, a diamond that falls into excrement is still as precious as the clean one. It is only people like us determinists that have the solution. The solution is to deny that our value is decreased in any sense by our evil actions for evil is a sickness.

It is absurd to say that we are all equal on the grounds that our natural gifts are empty and worthless. It would be actually better to look down on ungifted people and treat gifted people as better than they are than to run down and slag off the whole human race which includes the gifted and ungifted. At least then you have a good attitude towards some people. Moreover it would be hypocrisy to talk about gifts if you believe these gifts are worthless. You cannot be sincere if you say you treat all as equals for all human good qualities are washouts for you must secretly admire and respect the gifted and desire the downfall of those who are not gifted. The hypocrisy of pretending to regard all people as equal is one of the foundation stones of religion. To embrace the hypocrisy is to make all you do for your religion to be hypocrisy. There is no evil as poisonous as the evil that hides itself as virtue. Hypocrisy is play-acting and the more you act good the more evil and hypocritical you are and the more you are making hypocrisy appealing and the more you are an advert for it. The virtue of the believer in human free will is poison for once you say people are to blame for the evil they do you are saying that evil reveals what kind of person they are and since their character is evil it follows that they are evil and therefore despicable. It is vital that we destroy this doctrine for only then can we see people as equal no matter how they behave or how intelligent or unintelligent they are.

It is mad to look down on anyone who is allegedly not as intelligent as you are for intelligence is not as important as having a good nature and we all have the same good nature.

It is obvious that the best has to be thought of everyone for if we are going to start thinking the worst there is no place where we can stop or think we should stop at.

Isn't it plain that the notion of men and women having different roles is merely a subtle form of sexism? Why can't a man who is better with children than his wife let her be the breadwinner?

Judge no one by appearances, skin colour or by your feelings. A sinister looking or rude person can be better than the normal looking and polite one. The goodness within is the important thing. It may be warped but it is there.

Don't refuse to help others on the grounds that they never did anything for you for if they could have they would have. Even your worst enemy would have done favours for you under the right conditions, say if you were born their child. We all want to do good even if we don't do it. It is what we would do not what we do that is important. Would implies that I would act this way if I could. You have to bless people for their efforts even if they never get beyond the I-would-do stage. Reason says that you should try and persuade people to act but you should not hate or condemn them but love the good will in them that was thwarted.

Rights alone are not enough to create a moral theory for they are always in conflict. Also, people do not value all their rights the same. Rights only tell us to value the person but not how to treat the person. We have to work that out by judging what the best overall solution is through patience and talking to the person.

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