

THE PROBLEM WITH HUMAN IRRATIONALITY

The best way to understand how useful reason and thinking correctly are is to learn what the logical fallacies are. These are nonsensical arguments. By avoiding reasoning errors we see the glory of reason. Please look up what the fallacies are online.

Please read the 2018 paper, The Problem with the Problem of Human Irrationality. By John Eigenauer, it jolts us into thinking how much harm people not thinking straight or correctly or logically has done. He states that "despite the widespread negative effects on society - human irrationality has never been a matter of social concern" (page 341).

His top reasons for this problem are

- # How people don't see when they are being irrational
- # That people guess that taking time to think carefully is pointless for technology may do that for us
- # They think that intelligence and rationality overlap when in fact you can have one and not the other!
- # The popular perception that society being very irrational is not a pressing matter

IS REASON SUPREME?

Socrates thought that checking things out and learning how to think correctly about them was the best human quality. Not all agree that he was right. Some think that reason is good but our appetites and our feelings are equally good. This would mean they all work together and reason helps keep itself and them in check. It is said that the evidence that reason is paramount is poor. It is said that giving reason that place is only a matter of faith and belief and not of reason. It is said that reason though important cannot be of top importance for there are many things it cannot understand or capture.

The answer is that reason checks for contradictions and weeds out truths from assumptions and guesses. We should not give into feelings or appetites or follow them without thinking. So reason is supreme. And to make feelings equal to reason means that if you feel that 1 and 1 is 3 and says it is 2 then what? Reason will be no good. Its voice will be ruined.

IT MATTERS - SO WHAT ABOUT REASON?

Reason and the views you hold are related. You cannot have a view without thinking it is true.

If you have a view then why do you have it? There are three possibilities.

- 1) Rational thinking. You are applying deductive reasoning to facts and creating a hypothesis and testing your hypothesis. That means you are taking steps to avoid thinking incorrectly.
- 2) Conditioning. You are making a thought or idea or thought pattern part of yourself or you are conditioned to motivate yourself to try and accept it. The thought is typically repeated to you so much that you end up thinking it is true.
- 3) Satisfaction of an egocentric need - eg you want to believe God will raise you from the dead one day for you are too superb to perish forever.

All three still involve thinking. With two you think something is true for it is what you were raised to think. With three you think you need something to be true and that probably makes it true.

Learning to think properly and carefully is the most important life skill of all. Reason is thinking properly and carefully. It uses logic. Logic is a tool that helps us find contradictions and avoid them. It helps us think and gives us much protection from error and lies. A logical contradiction is no better than a lie. You may as well lie. To argue that your dog is made of steel is illogical. You know it is not steel so to say it is, is to lie. Try not to think logic but feel it too. Don't let it be a cold enterprise.

"Reason is the only self-corrective faculty for arriving at truth" says John Hospers.

You need to work on your reasoning powers daily. The more you do the better the chance that you will know and believe and assume things that -

*Help you work towards good goals

*Help you develop healthy and constructive interests

*Come across as sensible to others

*Sensible people inspire others and you can learn from them too as a result

*Help you fit with facts and testable beliefs and ideas

*Improve your work life and your relationships

*Be safer from the clutches of religionists who do not have the truth or your best interests at heart

You are either reasoning or engaging in emotional reasoning. The latter is when you take something as true because you feel it is true. Or it could be mistaking a feeling that something is true for thinking it is true. You always reason even in a distorted way so you must get it right when you are doing it anyway.

Remember that reason though we use it, is independent of what we think. A rational argument will stand on its own and show itself to be the truth no matter if the whole human race think its wrong.

THE MORAL "OUGHT" AND THE "OUGHT" OF REASON

A moral ought is that you must help others who need your help.

Reason has an "ought" of its own. It is not a moral ought we are talking about. We are talking about how a calculator ought to give the right answer. That is a kind of ought.

Believers say that we must perceive with our heads that we need to be moral. So the ought of reason is the only way to get to the moral ought. It is paramount for if there were a choice we would have to take the reason ought not the moral ought.

If a person seems to have lost the sense of the moral ought then a reason ought can keep them reasonably on the right path. The person is not to be condemned but to be allowed the chance to find the way.

SELF-EVIDENT TRUTH

Certain truths are said to be their own proof. They are called self-evident truths and some examples will soon follow. You would know a self-evident truth is right when you understand it.

People say they must exist because they are aware they exist for even if they were tricked about that there would have to be something there to be tricked.

I can almost hear some yelling,

"But wait! You are aware of your own existence. Then you are aware that there must be something to be deceived if you are deceived about that. You have to use logic to get the proof. But logic could be wrong for perhaps some demon is making you think wrong. You can only think of one thing at a time and you reason in steps. You have to forget that you are aware in order to get to the second step of the argument about which why you can't be deceived.

"If your own existence is not a self-evident truth then how can anything else be?"

"A=A is a very simple argument but it isn't self-evident for it has two steps:

1. A
2. = A.

"Just like you can think that $45-12 = 38$ you can be caused to mistake $=A$ as following from A. Anything that takes place in steps could be wrong.

"Anybody who says that anything is self-evidently true is not saying it because it is self-evident for they are wrong but are saying it because they feel that it is self-evident.

"The non-existence of self-evident truth does not mean that we cannot rationally commit to using reason or that we have no reason to take reason as reliable. When you see that $A=A$ you see that to you it is most likely that $A=A$. Belief, not full

certainty supports reason.”

When you realise that your awareness is awareness and not unawareness the argument's steps are only verbal. You are just being compelled by our language to use several words to express the one thought. Thus it is self-evidently true that $A=A$ and that reason is true. To say that A is A in the case of my awareness but might not be in the case of others things is absurd. Why? It denies that A is A and then affirms it. The principle of A is A condemns it! Again, we use several words to spell this out but it is really just one fact that can be grasped and sensed without steps of logic. Reason is provable.

Those who deny that self-evident truth exists are saying that it is self-evident that there are no self-evident truths! How? Because if there are no self-evident truths then it must be evident or self-evident that they are not self-evident. So it is self-evident that there are no self-evident truths. In that case self-evident truths would have to be possible and admitted. People only think certain truths that are self-evident are not self-evident because they don't want to believe them or because they don't understand them. Emotion can blind people to make them refuse to understand a truth that is self-evident or fail to see that it is self-evident.