

---

Subject: Re: Debate on Altruism.

Posted by [cheesesoda](#) on Fri, 13 Feb 2009 15:24:06 GMT

[View Forum Message](#) <> [Reply to Message](#)

---

reborn wrote on Fri, 13 February 2009 02:41 After contemplating this, I have to come to the conclusion that my original position is wrong.

The very definition of a selfless act is flawed. Because simply it means you have to act, the process of acting means you have to want to do it, and the act fulfills that want. Even if you don't want to do it, you do it for some reason, and this reason is gratified by your act.

If there is no reason for your action, then there is no intent to do a selfless deed. Without the intent, it cannot be a selfless act.

The burden of this knowledge is greater than you might think.

I gave this a great deal of contemplation through meditating on the subject. I used to believe that the pursuit of enlightenment was a selfless act, it's motivation driven by the want to free people from suffering. But this is not a selfless act.

The consequence of knowing there is no selfless act is troublesome for me, I am having difficulty digesting it.

If there is no such thing as a selfless act, my nature is based on self. Then what is the meaning of life?

Am I to assume that I must defy my nature, which is impossible, or accept my nature and act accordingly.

I cannot possibly believe that anything I do which I used to deem as a good deed is selfless, I did it for my own benefit, it was driven by my nature of self.

Perhaps I should make knowledge my pursuit, experience of life maybe. Even if I make my pursuit in life a noble one, it is still driven by my nature of self.

I must therefore conclude that there is no meaning to life, if there is indeed an afterlife then there is nothing I can do to justify my existence, it's just a pointless exercise.

I might as well accept my nature and try to enjoy myself. Perhaps if there is a creator then this was their intention, and this is the best thing I can do with my life, as I am incapable of anything else anyway.

Or maybe despite knowing that I perform these acts for my own benefit in some way, I should continue anyway because I believe it's the right thing to do.

It's quite perplexing, and I must thank you for making me challenge it. Although it is almost equally as easy to not thank you and curse you for this knowledge. But I do not believe that ignorance is bliss.

I think you're looking at this the wrong way. You're looking at it in black and white. Either you're completely selfless or you're an egomaniac. I don't think that's true. I think it all boils down to the intent and desire. Yes, you HAVE intent and desire, and you can't shake that, but what makes the desire to do good any less noble and moral than being completely "selfless"? I think actually DESIRING to help others is more noble than walking through life as someone who doesn't act in a

way that fulfills a desire to help others.

Besides, if you can't respect yourself, you cannot respect others. Thus, self-preservation is the first step in forming relationships with others and the world. It's a good thing, and without it, we would never have progressed as a species or a society.

---