



Does our planet need more religion?

Rob Rabinowitz



TRUE SELF NESHAMA

Giving

What do others need?

How can I serve others?

Gratitude

Inner Focused

Presence

Now

EGO YETZER

Taking

What do I need?

How can others serve me?

Dissatisfaction

Status Focused

Absence

Grievance, regret, worry

Pascal on humanity's “two-sided nature”

412 There is internal war in man between reason and the passions... Thus, he is always divided and opposed to himself.

417 This twofold nature of man is so evident that some have thought that we had two souls.

430 I created man holy, innocent, perfect, full of light and intelligence... [but] man is now become like the beasts... His senses, independent of reason and often dominating it, have led him into the pursuit of pleasure... ‘That is the state men are in today. They retain some feeble sense of the happiness of their previous state; and they are plunged in the miseries of their blindness and of the greed that has become their second nature.

434 In short, if man had never been corrupted, he would in his innocence have an assured enjoyment of both truth and happiness; and if man had always been corrupt, he would have no idea of truth or bliss. But wretched as we are—and more wretched than if there were no greatness in our condition—we have an idea of happiness and can't reach it; we detect an image of truth and possess only a lie.

Liberation from the Illusory Self

1. Human beings fail to see the world clearly which leads them to suffer and to make others suffer.
2. Humans anticipate more enduring satisfaction from attainment of goals than will transpire.
- 3 *Dukkha* ("unsatisfactoriness"/"suffering") is a relentlessly recurring part of ordinary life.
4. The source of dukkha is *Tanha* as "thirst" or "craving" or "desire"- the desire for pleasant things and to escape from unpleasant things.
5. Mindfulness meditation can weaken tanha by making one less enslaved by craving and aversion.
6. Our intuitive conception of the "self" is misleading. Identification with thoughts and feelings is optional. Meditation reduces identification and hence suffering.
7. There is no interior self that is the decider, judge or "thinker of thoughts." "Thoughts think themselves."
8. The bounds surrounding the self are illusory and can be dissolved.
9. Dissolving the bounds of self leads to less prioritization of "my" interests over the interests of others.
10. Emptiness = it is an illusion that objects and beings have independent "essences." This illusion leads us to suffer or to inflict suffering on others.
11. Not seeing the world clearly leads to our own suffering and to bad conduct that makes others suffer needlessly.
12. Mindfulness meditation increases attentiveness to how illusory perceptions and feelings influence our internal states and behaviours. Buddhist liberation is an escape from chains of influence that bind us and to which we were blind.

Robert Wright
Why Buddhism is True
pp. 270-275

אֵלֶּא שְׂאֵלֵנוּ לִי יֵצֶר הָרָע לֹא בָּנָה אָדָם בֵּית, וְלֹא נָשָׂא אִשָּׁה, וְלֹא הוֹלִיד,
וְלֹא נָשָׂא וְנָתַן. וְכֵן שְׁלֹמֹה אָמַר כִּי הִיא קִנְיָת אִישׁ מִרְעֵהוּ

Were it not for the evil inclination, a person would not build, would not marry, would not have children, and would not engage in business. And so Shlomo said (Kohelet 4:4): “(all work comes from) man’s jealousy for his neighbour.” (Bereishit Rabbah 9:7)

אִיזָהוּ גִבּוֹר, הַכּוֹבֵשׁ אֶת יֵצֵרוֹ,

Who is mighty? One who masters their “yetzer” (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

The Declaration of Independence

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,

That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

Homo Economicus

- Humans as agents who are rational and self-interested and who pursue their subjectively defined ends optimally.
- Agents act to maximize utility as a consumer and profit as a producer.
- The term "economic man" was used for the first time in the late nineteenth century by critics of John Stuart Mill.
 - “[Political economy] does not treat the whole of man's nature as modified by the social state, nor of the whole conduct of man in society. It is concerned with him solely as a being who desires to possess wealth, and who is capable of judging the comparative efficacy of means for obtaining that end.
 - Mill stated that he was proposing "an arbitrary definition of man, as a being who inevitably does that by which he may obtain the greatest amount of necessities, conveniences, and luxuries, with the smallest quantity of labour and physical self-denial with which they can be obtained.”