

Free essay on fatalism a deafeatist attitude

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Philosophy

Essay

Fatalism is believing that all events in a person's life are preordained. A person holding onto such a faith feels that it is futile to plan for an outcome, or choose to act differently to get a different outcome. Whatever he does, the result would be the same. Some groups of people believe that this predetermination is the plan made by a supernatural entity, for that individual or group or a nation. Man may propose, but it is for God to dispose. Many Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic and Christian theologians subscribe to fatalism, and adapt it as an attitude to life. There are two aspects to be considered here. Is there such a thing as fate? If there is such an external force, can we fight it?

Fatalism contends that man has to go with the flow without attempting to change course. He has to bow down to the dictates of his fate and accept it, rather than think of how to improve his lot. He therefore, has no free will, or the ability to choose. It has been observed that such people who accept the chain of events in their lives as fate, escape the stress and tension associated with planning for a change. They don't need to spend time and energy on planning. They need not implement new strategies and wait to see if the results are as they anticipated or not. They are not at risk of getting disappointed. At the same time, their chances of being inspired, excited and elated are also less.

Free will, on the other extreme is a concept which postulates that, although he may be conditioned by his environment to some extent, everything that

happens in man's life is his own doing. Those who support fatalism question this and ask why anyone should suffer, if he or she was in control of his own life. The unknown factor that thwart's a person's plans is fate, they argue.

This cannot be accepted. An individual who makes choices can make mistakes because some information that he received was wrong, or because he was being greedy or because he is confused by too many options. In such cases, there is the possibility that he can correct himself and choose better. People who choose violent crime as a means to gratification, may regret it and make better choices.

Aristotle questioned the concept asking why man had the ability to choose, if he were just meant to follow his destiny. However celebrated philosophers such as Plato and Nietzsche believed in fatalism. Although Nietzsche expounded that man could determine his own self, he believed that people were victims of biological factors and could not change their natures. He commented that the collective nature of man cannot be improved. , If this were true, then we would all still be savages. History abounds with stories of travellers who strove to establish better routes among nations and scientists who toiled to lessen human suffering caused by diseases. The Japanese, for instance, chose to make peace their priority, after living through the horrors of the nuclear bomb. Their nation has prospered and is committed to the cause of peace.

Fatalism contends that , no matter what we do, the result is going to be the same. This supposition probably generated during times when social systems such as class systems and social institutions such as family and school were hierarchical and rigid. For instance, in feudal England, the eldest son

inherited all the property. Although this law was man made, the younger sons accepted that they had no right inherit. In course of time, the laws have been reframed to make it fair to all children, including females. This is a clear example of the impact of free will on the human condition.

Fatalism discounts the power of the human mind to rise above its situation.

Aesop, born a slave, chose to observe the word and write creatively, and was recognized for his work and wisdom. Even in days when slavery was

acceptable legally and socially, he was given his freedom. Extraordinary

stories of survivors tell us how they fought for their safety and how they

managed to keep alive. Would anyone dispute that these tales are instances of man's will to live, inspite of an unexpected accident that led to a reversal

in his circumstances? Steve Callaghan, a sailor, was on his boat on the

Atlantic ocean when a gale struck and his boat crashed. He escaped on a raft

and lived on fish and rain water for seventy six days, floating across the

rough seas, and being attacked by big fish, that bit into his rubber raft.

In modern times, it is dangerous to believe in predeterminism. Life is much

more complicated than before and the options available are sometimes

excessive and confusing. Leaving things to fate in such a world can lead to

negativity, isolation and depression. Eric Berne, the psychologist who

analysed human behavior and interaction, writes about how empowering it

can be for a person to be able to choose. Psychology has evolved into a

dynamic science , where therapies can bring about changes in behavior. A

person addicted to drugs can be treated . A man who is afflicted with a

severe degenerative disease, or lost a limb or an eye in an accident, can still

find ways to survive and even make remarkable contributions in his field of

work. Rather than look upon bad circumstances or illness as a curse or fate, an individual should look into the situation with a positive approach.

Accepting fate is a defeatist attitude and prevents one from experiencing the wonder of exploring a myriad possibilities and arriving at the best possible solution.

Sources

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