

Inquiring Minds Want To Know (revised)

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Often it is more effective to illuminate answers—and understanding—by posing relevant questions and letting inquiring minds do their thing.

With this in mind, I'd like to pose a series of questions that may help audiences explore and understand some key relationships and "ahas".

Here goes ...

1. What is the nature of *life*? (Here, I'm speaking of life in general.) What is within life's nature for it (life) to tend to seek, tend to try to do, and tend to "value", at least in effect?
2. What are the most foundational and defining things, within the nature of life, for life to tend to seek, try to do, and "value", at least in effect?
3. How do you understand the phrase, "life values its own survival and continuance (reproduction) from the present generation to the next"?

(For a clearer version: Life values its own survival and continuance—i.e., reproduction—from the present generation to the next, or it strongly tends to seek to do, or to do, the things that facilitate its survival and reproduction from the present generation to the next. That is, life values these things in effect, if not always or even usually "consciously".)

4. Now ask, what is your own conception of *reason* and *the nature of reason*?

(Here, my present focus isn't on 'reason' in the sense of "that pain gives me a reason to withdraw my hand from the hot stove", "your insult gives

me a reason to have hurt feelings”, “low interest rates are an important reason to consider in the decision of whether to buy a house now”, and so forth. Instead, I’m really asking you to consider your own understanding of the *nature of reason* and of *reason itself*—e.g., what can reason accomplish and not accomplish, judge and not judge, weigh and not weigh, and so forth? What would “reason” have us conclude regarding a matter if reason were to consider and weigh the question, and potential responses, according to its own measuring-stick—i.e., to the measuring-stick of reason itself—all other factors equal and less important?)

5. Keeping in mind your own conception of reason and the nature of reason, ask yourself these questions:

5-R1) When reason—when judging the matter according to its own scale, and all other factors being considered “equal” (to all possible options) and less important than reason itself in the decision—faces a choice between its own healthy continuance or its own extinction, would reason (in your conception of it) be *indifferent* to the matter, ruling that it is not within reason’s nature or ability to judge that particular matter?

Or ...

5-R2) When reason—when judging the matter according to its own scale, and all other factors being considered “equal” (to all possible options) and less important than reason itself in the decision—faces a choice between its own healthy continuance or its own extinction, would reason (in your conception of it) rule that the choice leading to reason’s own extinction would be better reasoned than, more consistent with reason than, and more reasonable than the choice resulting in its own healthy continuance? (In other words, would reason rule in favor of its own suicide?)

Or ...

5-R3) When reason—when judging the matter according to its own scale, and all other factors being considered “equal” (to all possible options) and less important than reason itself in the decision—faces a choice between its own healthy continuance or its own extinction, would reason (in your conception of it) rule that the choice leading to reason’s own healthy continuance would be better reasoned than, more consistent with reason than, and more reasonable than the choice resulting in its own extinction? (In other words, would reason rule in favor of its own continuance, if left to rely only on its own measuring-stick?)

6. If your own conception of reason is that in the third option above (5-R3), what are the implications of that to the relationship between the nature of life and the nature of reason? What are the congruencies, parallels, or correspondences? What are their implications? And so forth.
7. On the other hand, if your own conception of reason is that in the second option above (5-R2), what are the implications of that to philosophy, to moral philosophy, to life, and to your own actions? Can you soundly defend the conception of reason reflected in the second option (R2)?
8. Or on the third hand, if your own conception of reason is that in the first option above (5-R1), what are the implications of that? Although a conception of reason that must remain indifferent to the question presented (and is required by the concept-holder to ignore certain factors that would indeed allow reason to have a nature such as that in 5-R3) may be an entirely fair and understandable one, depending on how you look at it, can a conception of reason admit that it is incapable of being anything other than wholly indifferent on a matter and yet, at the same time, insist on being the final judge of the same matter? Then, what are the ultimate implications? If one holds this conception of reason, what are the conclusions that ultimately result with one or two further steps?

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The nature of the relationships between 'is' and 'ought', between fact and value, and between scientific understanding and reason, as well as the relevance of scientific understanding to morality in the normative sense, are best understood by recognizing and understanding the interrelationships, correspondences, and common matter between the nature of *life* and the nature of *reason*.

Be Well,

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