

FREE WILL. What motivates us; what gets us going?
Our driving force is our spirit, the fire within, the energy that is part of the universal spirit, which is the creative force in the universe. Our spirit is the creative force in our life.
● Once we discern this spiritual provenance of our will, our actions are steeped in the potential of our higher being. Everything we do will be to further the good in the world, fight evil and do right by every member of the human family.

*But where does evil derive from?
The duality of good and evil in our existence is the result of free choice that is given to us along with our will; we have the choice to do good or evil.*

I deem it paramount that we concede our potential for evil (to sin) by our own free will. This is in contrast to the Christian dogma of 'original sin', where we inherit the guilt of Adam.

I finally read the book Free Will by Sam Harris; and I knew full well he deems the idea of free will an illusion: "Thoughts and intention simply arise in the mind. What else could they do? But our thoughts are the product of prior events that we did not bring into being."

I find the book unsatisfying, unconvincing and tiresome. However, Harris is not only a respected author and philosopher (I regard him highly), but also a neuroscientist, and in Free Will his arguments seem to come rather from his background in science and neurology.

He quotes Daniel Dennett - also a scientist, philosopher, author - who says "even if our thoughts & actions are the product of unconscious causes, they are still ours." This makes more sense to me, indeed probably to a large contingent of the public; as well as our judicial systems.

Free will comes to the fore in the fifteenth century tapestries The Lady and the Unicorn, deemed one of the greatest artworks of that time. One of the pieces is called A Mon Seul Désir.

The translation My One Soul Desire can be interpreted as By My Will Alone. Then the desire of free will becomes - in the context of these six tapestries - the sixth sense, alongside the other five.

see also my blog 912

"The champions of the metaphysics of hypocrisy say: 'Man cannot change his life, because he is not free. He is not free, because all his actions are conditioned by previously existing causes; so whatever he does, this means man cannot be free and change his life.'

"And they would be perfectly right if man were a creature without conscience and incapable of moving toward the truth; that is to say, if after recognizing a new truth, man remained always at the same stage of moral development. But man is a creature of conscience.

"Thus man is capable of attaining a higher and higher degree of truth. And therefore, even if man is not free as regards performing certain acts because of pre-existing causes, the very causes of his acts, consisting as they do of the recognition of truth, are within his own control."

Leo Tolstoy

"The Kingdom of God is within you", 1893

also go to the appendix, blog 938

Albert Einstein introduced me to the Schopenhauer quote, "a man can do as he will, but not will as he will." This has never rung true to me, until I read the original German wording:

"Ein Mensch kann zwar tun, was er will, aber nicht wollen, was er will." This lead Einstein - in a philosophical sense - not to believe in human freedom ... a compromise I can go along with.