

A Defense of Reason, Objective Reality, and Sanity

by Thomas Ulatowski

Responsibility is central to morality because responsible behavior is love manifest. In other words, love is expressed by responsible, careful concern. Responsibility requires reacting to reality reasonably, so morality requires a concern to learn the truth about important issues.

Carl Sagan:

"If we lived on a planet where nothing ever changed there wouldn't be much to do. There would be nothing to figure out. There would be no impetus for science. And if we lived in an unpredictable world where things changed in random or very complex ways we wouldn't be able to figure things out. And again there would be no such thing as science. But we live in an in between universe. Where things change alright, but according to patterns, rules, or as we call them, Laws of Nature. If I throw a stick up in the air it always falls down. If the Sun sets in the West it always rises again the next morning in the East. And so it's possible to figure things out. We can do science and with it we can improve our lives. Human beings are good at understanding the world. We always have been. We were able to hunt game or build fires only because we had figured something out."

Carl Sagan

So Sagan says that we can be scientific — we can do science. Nevertheless, in an attempt to mask the arbitrary essence of faith based beliefs, theologian Douglas Wilson declares, "You have faith in reason," and "Both our positions are faith positions!" In a debate with scientist Richard Dawkins, the famous theologian, Cambridge Professor John Lennox argues as follows:

"I think atheism undermines science very seriously because if you think of the basic assumption that all of us who are scientists have, that is, we believe in the rational intelligibility of the universe. And, ... you've got to believe in the rational intelligibility of the universe before you can do any science at all. Science doesn't give you that."

This is ridiculous. Everyone knows that knowledge is valuable. How is it that we know that education is worth so many investments in time, money and effort? The short answer is simply that facts are sufficiently reliable. A reliable person seeks facts and tries to avoid false beliefs. And, every year the Human race accumulates more reliable information. Also, over time the average individual knows more. Why? Because this is our Human MO -- our survival relies on our ability to understand innumerable facts.

Over the eons, we evolved big brains because we began to increasingly rely on information. In addition, we know we can continue to rely on almost all the facts that we rely on now because we know that nothing changes without a reason.

Reasoned out facts are reliable; therefore, reason is reliable. So we don't need any blind childish faith. In fact, the opposite is true. A 1998 survey showed that over 90% of America's top scientists are not at all religious.

Think about this. If reason wasn't reliable -- if facts weren't reliable, not only would there be no reason to try to learn, there would be no difference between sanity and insanity — and no such thing as responsibility!

“Facts are stubborn things; and whatever may be our wishes, our inclinations, or the dictates of our passion, they cannot alter the state of facts and evidence.”

John Adams

“Truth alone will endure, all the rest will be swept away before the tide of time. I must continue to bear testimony to truth even if I am forsaken by all. Mine may today be a voice in the wilderness, but it will be heard when all other voices are silenced, if it is the voice of Truth.”

Mahatma Gandhi

“It is impossible for us to understand what reason is, and at the same time determine that our reason is depraved; for this would be the same as when we know that we are in possession and exercise of reason, to determine that we are not in possession or exercise of it.”

Ethan Allen, Author of REASON,
“the Only Orical of Man”

1785

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