

ETHICAL MYSTICISM

Mysticism is the experiential – mental – practical ‘realization’ of *the unity / one-ness of all things*.

Mysticism may be seen as the spiritual / religious basis of ethics in that it affirms a solidarity between self and others, and thus a motivation for ethical conduct toward others, in the mystical realization of unity /one-ness.

Buddhist Ethics are rooted in the life and teachings of Siddhartha Gautama (‘Buddha’) who lived from 563 – 483 bce. Two major emphases of Buddhist ethics are ‘mindfulness’ and ‘compassion.’ All actions should be performed mindfully (vs. ‘mindless’ action) and compassionately (vs. with hostility or indifference). In mindfulness, in compassion, and in the actions they promote we live ethically and consistently with the ultimate truth of self, others, and reality.

The Buddha’s enlightenment consisted of his realization of the ‘**Four Noble Truths**’:

1. **Suffering** characterizes all existence.
2. Suffering is caused by desire or ‘**Attachment.**’
3. **Liberation** from suffering (ultimate liberation = **Nirvana**) is possible.
4. There is a pathway of liberation: ‘**The Eight-Fold Path**’
(*Wisdom*: 1-right view, 2-right intention; *Conduct*: 3-right speech, 4-right action, 5- right livelihood; *Mental Development*: 6-right effort, 7-right mindfulness, 8- right concentration)

Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965 ce) developed an ethic of ‘**Reverence for Life.**’

He held that true mysticism must be ethical - and true ethics must be grounded in mysticism.

His basic affirmations include:

*I am ‘**will-to-live.**’

*You are ‘will-to-live.’

***All that lives is ‘will-to-live’** and all lives are grounded in / expressions of the ‘**Universal Will.**’

*I experience an ‘inner compulsion’ to ‘**reverence**’ (have deep respect and concern) **my** own will-to-live, and thus seek to avoid harming myself and seek to benefit / ‘perfect’ myself.

*I experience an ‘**inner compulsion**’ to reverence **your** will-to-live and thus seek to avoid harming you and seek to benefit you / help you in your ‘perfection.’

*‘**Devotion**’ of myself to the lives and to the perfection of others **is a part of my own self-perfection** and is an “enlargement” and “completion” of my self.

*To devote myself to other ‘wills-to-live’ **is to devote myself to the Universal Will (‘God’)** in which all individual wills-to-live find their essence and unity.

