

I have argued that the existential question about the ultimate meaning of life may be understood in two distinctly different ways, "because there are two senses of the phrase, 'the meaning of life,' which may be distinguished as its 'subjectivist' and its 'objectivist' senses respectively (Notebooks, 24 August 2003). I have since wondered whether this distinction may perhaps parallel that between "mystical" and "prophetic (apocalyptic)" types of religion. Or are the two distinctions really so related that the "subjectivist/objectivist" cuts across the "mystical/prophetic"?

On the face of it, the mystical type of religion seems subjectivist insofar as the *summum bonum* for it is our subjective union with, enjoyment of, strictly ultimate reality. In a somewhat similar way, the prophetic type seems objectivist insofar as the *summum bonum* for it is our objective service of, contribution to, strictly ultimate reality through our objective service of our fellows, our objective contribution to them (cf., e.g., Mic 6:6 ff.).

On the other hand, the idea of "absorption," which appears to play a role in at least some mystical religions, might really be taken more in an objectivist than in a subjectivist sense. And in the case of certain prophetic religions (although apparently under the influence of certain mystical ones), our service of, contribution to, strictly ultimate reality is effectively wiped out by the notion that God is solely the Benefactor, in no way the Benefitted.

I'm still not able to sort this all out so as to give a confident answer to my question. But it does seem to me to be worth pursuing.

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