For those interested in political philosophy or social philosophy, Revel is not an unfamiliar voice. Those who have read his *Pourquoi des philosophes?* (Why Philosophers?) or contemplated his tireless concern with the underlying mechanisms of democratic systems and his profound explication and explanation of the notion of the “decline” of the democratic ethos as explained in *How Democracies Perish* will meet the same man of high intellectual acuity and sharpness. Although he has traversed far away from socialism as his favorite politics, nonetheless it is not hard to detect a Revel who is committed to the metaphysics of modern socialism. In other words, readers are confronted with a man who takes “agnosticism” as his onto-epistemological point of departure, and this in turn colors and underpins his existential *Weltanschauung*. However, it is undeniable that readers also encounter a man who is critical of current philosophical modes and soberly reevaluates the history of Western philosophy. He does so, not in the light of fads and foibles (like those that Aleksandrovich Pitirim Sorokin told in relation to social theory and philosophy), but in the light of the inherent merit of philosophy as a way of life: an outlook that might, should or must lead to *Sophia*.

On the other hand, readers will encounter a son, Matthieu Ricard, who is well-versed in modern science and who has "lived" Buddhism as a way of life. In other words, in this work we are confronted with two poles of reflection and thinking that, in the final analysis, are based on "life-experience": one as a *monachus* and the other as a *philosophos*. The themes of this dialogue are as wide-ranging as the geographical locations from which these two people originate and inhabit. Old and New, East and West, Ancient and Modern, Greek and Pali, Latin and Tibetan, Plato and Lamas: all come in one enlightening dialogue by two great minds from each world tradition. And the most significant aspect of this dialogue is the manner of presentation in which the philosopher asks and the monk replies and in turn puts a question to the philosopher and so on and so forth.

The book is composed of nineteen chapters, one lucid introduction in which the philosopher opens up his heart as a father and talks about his own son, and two conclusions. The first conclusion is by the philosopher, who sums up his own intellectual odyssey after encountering Buddhism from his own horizon. I hasten to add that the philosopher demonstrates in a pedagogical manner what a true and enlightening dialogue really is. A dialogue is not something that allows you to lose yourself or to loosen up the other, but rather is conducted in a poetical dimension in which men of discernible understanding and intellectual acuity attempt to meet each other at the meta-level of horizons. The last conclusion is the monk's, in which he reaffirms the value of spiritual tradition and, most importantly, the significance of "metaphysical choice," from which even those so-called natural sciences are not exempt.

Although one has come to understand that in modern times one should make a choice between "scientific pursuit" and "spiritual quest," nonetheless the monk argues otherwise. His increasing attraction to Buddhism should not be understood as a renouncing of his scientific reasoning, but rather a rejection of the scientific ethos. That is to say, if to be a scientist entails that one should spend a whole life finding solutions for grand issues within the narrow paradigm of normal science and relegating the individual quest for wisdom, then that attitude, which has become so deeply institutionalized, should be renounced.

Another important aspect of this work is what one might in sociological parlance call "operationalization" of grand issues within both Buddhism and wisdom philosophy. Although Revel has a hard time understanding how Buddhism is different from a religious tradition since ordinary Buddhists in Katmandu behave as any pious Catholic or Hindu would do, nevertheless it is not hard to discern how Ricard takes the teachings of Buddhism into the realm of politics and the philosophy of the Dalai Lama's non-violence at an international level. In other words, the discussions are not just conducted at the metaphysical level, but instead the whole dialogue is a metaphysically oriented approach to the phenomenal world. Although Revel has a hard time comprehending the non-self philosophy of Buddhism due to his commitment to individualism, nevertheless one should credit the monk when he takes issue with the founding fathers of modern social theory such as William James and Sigmund Freud by putting forward the notion of the "Contemplative Science of Mind."

As a student of social sciences, I could not help being excited when the monk critically assessed the essential aspects of modern social theory in general and William James in particular. In examining the current debates within social theory in particular those where one
However, I would like to sum up this review by noting that at the end of the dialogue, I came to realize that the father surely met his son. However, I am doubtful about any "meeting" between East and West having taken place, in particular when these terms are taken more in terms of metaphorical designations rather than geographical locations. Could the East meet the West? Maybe!

The idea of science is what the philosopher refers to time and again. As a matter of fact, it is the basis of his metaphysical agnosticism. But the assumption by the philosopher in relation to science is worth considering. It seems that Revel defines "science" as an act of "knowing" about the mechanism of life, but calls "religion" a way of "being" in life. To say the least, this categorical distinction between knowing and being (and referring the former to the cognitive aspect of man and the latter to the emotional or metaphysical) is more of a recent secular ethos than a universal and absolute category. And one more unconvincing aspect of Revel's argument was that he keeps forgetting one tremendously essential aspect in Buddhism (as in all sacred traditions), namely to "live" the teachings of Buddha and not theorize about that teaching. Or as the monk puts it very eloquently:

"... no dialogue, however enlightening it might be, could ever be a substitute for the silence of personal experience, so indispensable for an understanding of how things really are. Experience, indeed, is the path. And as the Buddha often said, 'it is up to you to follow it,' so that one day the messenger might become the message.

This is the wisdom shared by all sacred traditions wherein man is not an insignificant accident but rather a cosmos in miniature. Hence the experiential dimension cannot be dispensed with due to either sociopolitical engineering or utopian projects. On the contrary, as long as man is a man, he is in need of spirituality, and the spiritual path as the monk advises us begins with a period of retreat from the world, like a wounded deer looking for a solitary, peaceful spot where it can heal its wounds.
Twenty-seven years ago, his son, Matthieu Ricard, gave up a promising career as a scientist to study Tibetan Buddhism -- not as a detached observer but by immersing himself in its practice under the guidance of its greatest living masters. Meeting in an inn overlooking Katmandu, these two profoundly thoughtful men explored the questions that have occupied humankind throughout its history. Does life have meaning? What is consciousness? Is man free? What is the value of scientific and material progress? Peter D. Hershock East-West Center. Here, I want to reflect on how we—both privately and publicly—have been responding to the horrific events of September 11. The declared war on terrorism—a central part of our public response—has not ended, but has instead spread and intensified. Along with this, our “enemies” have multiplied. Parents, sons, and daughters continue to be killed, sacrificed singly or in small groups, by the dozens, or—as in Bali on October 12, 2002—by the hundreds. My intention is not to analyze the complex geopolitics of the “war on terror.”
The Monk and the Philosopher is a collection of father-son dialogues between Jean-François Revel, a French philosopher and journalist famous for his leadership in Free shipping over $10. Home > All Categories > Politics & Social Sciences Books > Eastern Books > The Monk and the Philosopher: A Father and Son Discuss the Meaning of Life. ISBN: 0805211039. ISBN13: 9780805211030. The Monk and the Philosopher: A Father and Son Discuss the Meaning of Life. by Jean-François Revel. See Customer Reviews. Select Format: Hardcover. A Father and Son Discuss the Meaning of Life. A Father and Son Discuss the Meaning of Life. By Jean François Revel and Matthieu Ricard. By Jean Francois Revel and Matthieu Ricard. Meeting in an inn overlooking Katmandu, these two profoundly thoughtful men explored the questions that have occupied humankind throughout its history. Does life have meaning? What is consciousness? People Who Read The Monk and the Philosopher Also Read. Inspired by Your Browsing History. Praise. “The wonderful thing about this book is that it shows how fruitful open-hearted dialogue can be. Product description. Review. “The wonderful thing about this book is that it shows how fruitful open-hearted dialogue can be.” - His Holiness The Dalai Lama. “The Monk and the Philosopher is an intellectual banquet -- an enlightening and lively encounter that explores man-kind's most profound questions.” - Daniel Goleman, author of Emotional Intelligence. From the Inside Flap. Meeting in an inn overlooking Katmandu, these two profoundly thoughtful men explored the questions that have occupied humankind throughout its history. Does life have meaning? What is consciousness? That said, I have found a link and topical debate between father and son on a massive topic in my world. I have to confess that I was also apprehensive ordering from the US.