

Is God Dead?

Category : TEACHINGS IN ENGLISH

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Introduction: In this article you will discover and learn: Who is the atheist, what is atheism & where did it originate from!

What is 'The theory of Evolution' and 'The big bang theory'?

The bible wastes no time in proving the existence of God, and calls the atheist *“the fool”*.
“The fool hath said in his heart there is no God” (Psalm 14:1).

But Who is the atheist? What is atheism and where did it originate from one may ask?

Atheism is the position that affirms the nonexistence of God or gods or it is the absence of belief in deity. The term atheism predates to as early as 1571, with atheism as a label of practical godlessness used first in 1577. Atheism may encounter anything from the existence of God/gods, to the existence of any spiritual, supernatural or transcendental concepts such as those of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Philosophers such as Anthony Flew and Michael Martin have distinguished between strong atheism with weak atheism. Strong atheism is the explicit affirmation that God/gods do not exist and weak atheism includes all other forms. Under this demarcation of atheism, most agnostics qualify as weak atheists. Scottish philosopher J.J.C. Smart argues that *“sometimes a person who is really an atheist may describe himself as an agnostic because of unreasonable generalized philosophical skepticism which would preclude us from saying that we know anything whatsoever, except perhaps the truths of mathematics and formal logic”*.

Practical atheism

In practical atheism, individuals live as if there is no God or gods and explain natural phenomena without resorting to the divine. The existence of God/gods is not denied but is designated unnecessary or useless. God or gods according to this view neither provides purpose to life nor influences everyday life. Practical atheism can take various forms:

- (a) Absence of religious motivation-belief that God/gods do not motivate moral action, religious action or any other form of action
- (b) Active exclusion of the problem of God and religion from intellectual pursuit and practical action
- (c) Indifference-the absence of any interest in the problem of God and religion or
- d. Ignorance-lacking any idea of God

According to the French philosopher Etienne Borne, *“Practical atheism is not the denial of the existence of God but complete godlessness of action; it is a moral evil, implying not the denial of the absolute validity of the moral law but simply rebellion against the law.”*

Further information

Epistemological atheism argues that people cannot know God or determine the existence of God. The foundation of epistemological atheism is agnosticism. Skepticism, based on the idea of Hume, asserts that certainty about anything is impossible, so one can never know the existence of God.

Philosophers such as Ludwig Feuerbach and Sigmund Freud argued that God and other religions are human inventions created to fulfill various psychological and emotional needs. This is also the Buddhist view. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels influenced by the works of Feuerbach argue that belief in God and religion are social functions, used by those in power to oppress the working class!

Theodicean atheists argue that an omniscient omnipotent and omnibenevolent God is not compatible with a world where there is evil and suffering and where love is hidden from many people.

Axiological or constructive atheism rejects the existence of God in favor of a "higher absolute" such as humanity. This form of atheism favors humanity as the absolute source of ethics and values and permits individuals to resolve moral problems without resorting to God. Marx, Nietzsche, Freud and Sartre all used this argument to convey messages of liberation, full development and unfettered happiness.

One of the most common criticisms of atheism has been to the contrary "that denying the existence of a just God leads to moral relativism, leaving one with no moral or ethical foundation or renders life meaningless and miserable.

History

Although the term atheism originated in 16th century France, the 5th century BC Greek philosopher Diagoras is known as the 'first atheist' and strongly criticized religion and mysticism. Critics viewed religion as a human invention used to frighten people into following moral order.

The meaning of "atheism" changed over the course of classical antiquity. The early Christians were labeled atheists by non-Christians because of their disbelief in pagan gods. During the Roman Empire, Christians were executed for their rejection of the Roman gods in general and Emperor-worship in particular. When Christianity became the state religion of Rome under Theodosius I in 381, heresy became a punishable offense.

Criticism of Christianity became increasingly frequent in the 17th and 18th century, especially in France and England. In the late 19th century, atheism rose to prominence under the influence of rationalistic and freethinking philosophers. Atheism in the 20th century, advanced in many societies. Atheistic thought found recognition in a wide variety of other broader philosophies, such as existentialism, objectivism, secular humanism, nihilism, logical positivism, Marxism, feminism and the general scientific and rationalist movement. The Soviet Union and other communist states promoted atheism and opposed religion often by violent means.

In 1966, Time magazine asked "Is God Dead?" citing the estimation that nearly one in two people in the world lived under an antireligious power and millions more in Africa, Asia and South America seemed to lack knowledge of the Christian God. This leads us to the Bible again whereby the Lord asserts that "every people perish because of lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6). Therefore it is every Christian's duty to preach the gospel to the one who calls himself an atheist. However, no evangelism can be done without the Christian knowing what atheists believe, what their mentality is and what argument an atheist can come up with. For instance, starting with the atheist idea of

creation.

The Theory of Evolution and its criticism

Evolution in biology refers to the continual process by which one form of life changes or evolves into another form. The Theory of evolution was invented by Charles Darwin (1809-1888). The theory claimed that man was descended from apes. This theory was thought in schools for various years including at University level. However, not too many believers in Darwin have looked closely at the theory of evolution because if they did, they would find that the Nebraska man was scientifically built up from one tooth which was later found to be a pig. Java Man was nothing more than a piece of skull, a fragment of thigh bone and three molar teeth. Heidelberg man was built up from a jawbone, a large chin section and some teeth. Most scientists of the day have rejected it because it's similar to the jawbone found in modern man. Still, many evolutionists believe he's 250,000 year old and don't look to Neanderthal Man for any evidence of evolution. He died of exposure. His skull was exposed as being fully human, not ape. His stooped posture was found to be caused by disease!

The following is a quotation from a television program on the subject of evolution "To make any kind of judgment, one has to appreciate how little evidence there is of all our ideas of human evolution. If we were to gather all the material on early human remains, from everywhere on earth, and bring it together in one place, it would scarcely fill a single coffin; there would be room to spare. The gaps are still huge. The missing link is more like a missing chain, stretching back longer than the period for which we had human fossils"

The big bang Theory

This theory states that everything was created from an explosion " a theory that an atheist embraces. This theory contradicts the bible's description of creation in Genesis. It is interesting to challenge all those who believe in this theory to think of any explosion that has produced order. Does a terrorist bomb create harmony? Big Bangs cause chaos. How could a big bang produce a rose, apple trees, fish, sunsets, the seasons, birds and polar bears-thousands of birds and animals, each with its own eyes, nose and mouth?

Professor Louis Bounoure, Director of Research, National Centre of Scientific Research, so rightly states "Evolution is a fairy tale for grown ups. This theory has helped nothing in the progress of science. It is useless" when the theory of evolution came to public attention in 1859, it was met with a storm of protest and ridicule. With the spread of Christianity, men throughout the Western world accepted the story of Creation as told in Genesis -the first book of the bible. (New Standard Encyclopedia). Sir Arthur Keith (who wrote the foreword to Darwin's Origin of the Species, 100th edition) said "Evolution is unproved and unprovable". Malcolm Muggeridge, the famous British journalist and philosopher, said, "I myself am convinced that the theory of evolution, especially the extent to which it's been applied, will be one of the great jokes in history books of the future". Even Time Magazine admits "Scientists concede that their most cherished theories are based on embarrassing few fossil fragments and that huge gaps exist in the fossil record" (November 7, 1977).

The argument concerned

The atheist asserts that there is no God, the Christian believes what the bible says. Who is right, and who is wrong?

To reply to this question, one cannot not refer to what Mr. Ray Comfort, the author of ' God doesn't

believe in Atheists' states when he says "I can hardly believe that I once was a believer in such unfounded fables (referring to theories of evolution and man made speculations). The reason I approved of the ideas was that it wasn't very important to me. As a Christian, however, the subject of origins now matters greatly to me because if evolution is true, the Bible is false. Modern evolutionary theory (as opposed to Darwin's original theory) says that man was once an ape. But the bible says that there is one kind of flesh for man and another kind of flesh for animals (1Corinthians 15:39). It also says that every animal reproduces "according to its kind". Dogs have puppies, not kittens. Cats have kittens not chickens! It doesn't matter how many thousands of years pass, elephants don't have giraffes nor do monkeys have men.

The above underlined sentence is highly important to a Christian evangelizing to an atheist since the first reason the Christian must give the atheist for the discussion between them is to give him the reason why it is important to know the good news of evangelization. It can make a difference between where he spends eternal life: heaven or hell. The atheist may argue that he does not believe in Heaven or Hell, but one may reply that if they do not exist as he says, he has nothing to lose but if they exist as the bible says, then he has everything to lose, his eternal damnation!

The following is a typical fictitious role-play conversation between an Atheist and a Christian:

Atheist: "My philosophy is 'seeing believes'. So if I don't see God I don't believe in Him"

Christian "If that is so, then the next time you see water shimmering on a hot road, stop and drink. Or the next time you watch a sunrise and see the sun move across the sky, remind yourself that your eyes are lying to you. The sun does not rise, move or set. It remains stationary while the earth turns. The next time you gaze at a blue sky, tell your eyes that they are not seeing correctly. The sky has no color-ask any astronaut. Sleight of hand magicians make their living on the fact that seeing believes. We believe in many things we can't see for example, right behind you, beside you and even right in front of you are masses of invisible television signals, cowboys, Indians, and soap opera characters are passing before your eyes. You can't see them. If you deny their existence because you cannot see them, would that alter the reality that they exist?"

Atheist: "of course not, but still I need to see to believe!"

Christian: "ok then, so why do you believe a painting has a painter? Isn't it purely because of the existence of the painting? Do you insist on seeing Da Vinci before you believe the Mona Lisa was painted?"

Atheist: "No, not really"

Christian: "Furthermore, the most brilliant minds on earth cannot begin to recreate an eye. If you lose one eye, the best modern science can do is give you a glorified marble to slip in the slot! We are still in the dark about its incredible workings. Do you realize that each eye you are currently using has 40 million nerve endings?"

Atheist: "Interesting"

Christian "Find the most brilliant scientist on God's earth, put him in a laboratory and ask him to make something out of nothing. He can't do it! We can re-create but we cannot create!"

Atheist: "The word God itself offends me"

Christian: "Then, let me use the word 'creative force' instead of God (as Einstein called it). The universe must be awesome to say the least. What sort of supreme creative force could make something as incredible as the sun, tell me? The sun's average distance from earth is 93 million miles, yet light from the sun takes about eight minutes to reach us. Earth would not have any life on it without the sun's energy, which reaches us as heat and light to warm our days and illuminate our world. This creative force placed it 93 million miles from us so that it's just warm enough to maintain life. If it were a little closer, we would all die either from its heat or from drowning. If the sun were slightly further away, however, you and I would and all humans would freeze to death! It is said that the energy given off by the sun in one second is approximately 13 million times greater than the average amount of electricity used each year in the entire United States. What sort of creative force could make that sun, then hold it in space and sustain its brilliance? Take a moment and meditate on that thought."

Atheist: silence, then "umm"

Christian: "Let me ask you more. How could this power make the human heart and blood form the ribs within the body of an unborn baby? How could it create the human mind with its unending, complex corridors, its deepest thoughts and desires? The brain is utterly incredible. It makes you think...doesn't it."

Atheist "sure"

Christian: "Did you ever think also how can strawberries grow next to garlic and yet both derive their own tastes from the same soil and water?"

Atheist "Never crossed my mind"

Christian: "The most godless person must be humbled with a sense of awe when standing beneath the mighty power of Niagara falls, gazing into the Grand Canyon or staring into the infinity of space. How much more should we be humbled by the Maker of these things?"

Moreover, you know that plenty of people avoid taxes but no one avoids death!

Atheist "oh, that's for sure"

Christian: "Years ago, a non-Christian man in his 20's was diagnosed with cancer and the doctor told him that he had six months to live. His friends advised him to visit a few prostitutes and enjoy the last six months of his life. He wasn't interested. He found that deep within his heart he had something far stronger than sex drive. It was his will to live. The bible tells us that God has put eternity in our hearts. Did you ever reflect on that fact that the will for all of us to live is stronger than sex drive?"

Atheist: Smiles. But let me ask you now. Why you are so convinced there is a God and how would you define him?

Christian: "God is the Creator, the sustainer of the universe. He revealed Himself to Moses as the one and only true God"

Atheist: "But if everything needs a creator, then who or what created God?"

Christian: "He created time and because we dwell in the dimension of time, reason demands that all things have a beginning and an end. God, however dwells outside of the dimension of time. He moves through time as you and me flip the pages of a history book. This can be proved simply by studying the prophecies of Matthew 24, Luke 21 and 2 Timothy 3. He dwells in "eternity" having no beginning or end. This is a dimension in which all humanity will dwell when God withdraws time.

Atheist: "Since there are countless religions in the world today claiming to be the one true religion, why do you think yours is truer than theirs?"

Christian: "No religion is truer than another. Religion is man's futile effort to try to find peace with God. The Christian doesn't strive to have peace with the Creator. It was given to him in the person of the Savior. The uniqueness of Jesus of Nazareth is His statement "The Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins". No religion of man can do that. Christianity is not a manmade religion, but a personal relationship with the one true God. This can be achieved only through Jesus Christ, His Son who is the only mediator between God and Man (1Tim:2:5).

2Cor 3:16 tells us also that "whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away" and John 3:18 states that "Whoever believes in Him (In Jesus Christ) is not condemned but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because he has not believed".

If you are right dear friend, you and I have nothing to lose, however if the bible is true you have everything to lose! Are you willing to get to know more what the Son of Man, Jesus Christ has done for you?

Atheist: "go ahead"

Christian: "Ephesians 2 verse 8 and 9 shows us that "it is by grace you have been saved, through faith " and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God -not by works, so that no one can boast!"

Atheist: "so you mean just like that! Just by faith you can be saved?"

Christian: That's what the bible shows us and all you have to do is just believe!

Atheist: "But how does faith come?"

Christian: "Romans 10: 17 teaches us that faith comes by hearing and reading the word of God. Here, take it, I have an extra bible which I am willing to sow into your life, if you promise me to read it my friend"

Atheist: "well ok thanks, but where shall I start from?"

Christian: "Start from the very beginning, Genesis 1 "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.....; also, of particular importance for you is Romans 10:9-10, which states that "if you confess with your mouth 'Jesus is Lord' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved". For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified and it is with

your mouth that you confess and are savedâ€•.....

Conclusion

For conclusion purposes, I cannot not refer to a recent article published by American Atheists written by a zealous but discouraged atheist who is a graduate at the University of Texas and president of the American Atheists. He related five basic coronary problems that plague contemporary atheist and because of the â€œdiseased heart of atheismâ€• or so he calls it, this group is â€œthe most difficult to motivateâ€• as he writes. However, notwithstanding that his statement is true, the Christian cannot be discouraged to witness the atheist because â€œit is not by might, nor by power but by my spirit says the Lord! (Zachariah 4:6).

In conclusion, it is to be postulated that although nowhere does the bible set out to prove that God exists, as was highlighted in the beginning of this essay, it just frankly states the obvious as we have seen - â€œThe fool has said in his heart â€œThere is no Godâ€• (Psalm 14:1). No wonder, we have a bumper sticker â€œNational Athiest Day -April 1st!

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