

AGNOSTICISM - EACH ONE OF ITS FORMS IS IRRATIONAL

Belief is not 100% certainty. It is seeing something as probably true. Belief is based on evidence. The believers who say they believe in God but do not know that he exists are believers but they are partly agnostic. An agnostic says he or she doesn't know.

Agnosticism is best seen as not being about God directly but, "Naturalism is the notion that there is no magic or supernatural but I don't know if it is true or not." That covers all the different versions of God.

Here are the three different types.

-Philosophical agnosticism is the view that if God exists we cannot know it and so should keep an open mind and stay away from belief in God or in atheism for we will never know.

-Another type of agnosticism worries about evidence and may say, "I don't know if there is a God or not or if it can be known but I am just searching for the truth and haven't made up my mind what I believe"

-A third type of it will say, "I don't know if there is a God or not but I don't care. I refuse to make up my mind or believe or disbelieve." This is deliberate. It is defiance and is not an argument. It is not real agnosticism.

The view that you don't need to know if there is a God says you don't need to know it any more than you need to know the name of the person who made the bronze age implement you found in your garden. This is confused with agnosticism. It is not. It only says something about agnosticism. It is not a form of agnosticism.

Let us examine agnosticism.

AGNOSTICISM THAT SAYS WE CANNOT KNOW FOR GOD IS UNKNOWABLE IF HE EXISTS

Sometimes, Agnosticism is the view that we cannot know or have any degree of certainty that God exists or does not.

Philosophy says you cannot prove a negative. It is true that one cannot prove a negative. E.g. that there is no tooth fairy. This leads many to conclude that nothing proves that God doesn't exist. But this overlooks the fact that God is different. God is supposed to be an unchangeable being for he is perfect and all good. He is not the creation. The creation depends on him to stay in existence but it is not God or a part of him. No other concept of God can be called God. Create means to turn absolute nothing into something. But there is nothing there to change. So what is being said is that creation popped out of nothing. So that is magic. Its contradictory. If God causes the universe to pop out of nothing then it can do it by itself. If something can come from nothing with God it can do it without him. But if it popped out of nothing then God has had nothing to do with it. He would not be God or supreme. In that sense, creation refutes the very doctrine of God it is contrived to back up! Whatever the mystery about the existence of all things is, creation is the worst possible answer. Its worse than princes being turned into frogs and we consider that absurd and impossible!

Agnostics often say that God is unknowable if he exists and that therefore his existence cannot be verified. But if they think God is unknowable then how do they know that he would be unknowable? God can make a creature understand him. He can give a creature literally endless wisdom just he can make an infinite straight line. It seems that these agnostics are wrong to say that God is unknowable. The God they mean is not a God at all if he cannot make us know him. There are powers greater than he. So they are in effect atheists after all!

They may respond that the mystery of God proves that the only reasonable stance is agnosticism. By this mystery, they mean that the concept of God seems incoherent to us. It is certain that the only real concept of God implies belief that God is spirit or being without parts. This kind of God has several faculties and they are all one for he is one undivided unit. So his power to think is his power to communicate and so on. But this makes no sense which is why God can be described as unknowable for the description makes no sense to us.

If they say God is unknowable to them that seems fine for they are not denying that people exist who might know God. But still, if God existed we would all know him.

Agnostics who say you just cannot know are philosophical agnostics. It arises from how we don't know what God means. We have found that it ignores contradictions which rule out God as an option.

For God to be God, God would have to be the perfect personal being and not a spiritual machine. Why? Because a person is first and foremost self-aware or conscious and so a being that is just a machine is not perfect or divine. But we haven't got free will in the sense that we can do literally any evil therefore it is not possible that God exists. If we have free will we can be blamed for the evil in the world and not God. But free will can be conditioned so free will cannot get God off the hook for he didn't ensure that better conditioning took place.

It is obvious that an all-evil God does not exist. Evil is insanity and an insane being would not be God for it is not supreme,

If God were partly evil and partly good he would give us free will that can escape conditioning so that he can encourage us to do evil freely and so on. He would perfect himself if he were able to be good at all. Good works that are done while he refuses to repent his evil would be really just hypocrisy for he would be doing good just because it suits him and not because it is good.

A God with little power would be evil for wasting his power on making useless planets and so on.

So some agnostics state on philosophical grounds that they simply do not know. Others say it on the grounds that the evidence doesn't point clearly to God's existence or non-existence. But God by definition would be supernatural and thus would want people to love him so he would not let people be confused for long. In fact, these agnostics must actually suspect atheism is true when they see no signs of any guidance that could be understood as coming from a benevolent supernatural source.

AGNOSTICISM WHICH SAYS THE EVIDENCE CAN GO EITHER WAY

Another type of agnostic says you cannot know for the evidence isn't able to tell us one way or the other if God exists. Agnosticism could and should be based on evidence that God cannot be proven or disproven.

Nobody can be fifty fifty on the existence and non-existence of God. You have to believe one more than the other. A slight lean to atheism or theism is enough to make you fall into either camp.

It would be too neat and bizarre of the evidence for and against were really the same weight. Evidence is one thing but we can be wrong about what is evidence.

Agnostics may assert that it is just as likely to their minds that God exists as that he does not exist. But when they see the seeming design in the cosmos surely they perceive that it is more likely that God exists if he is an option (which he is not). Their agnosticism is not as unprejudiced and good and honest as it they like it to appear.

It is perfectly acceptable to refuse to believe in God (to refuse to believe does not necessarily mean rejection of God. It could mean you simply don't make up your mind one way or the other) simply because there is no evidence for his existence or because you consider the evidence inconclusive if you think there may be evidence. You don't need to be arrogant or to know everything to be able to say that. The believer says, "There is no evidence against the existence of God. There is no disproof of it. Therefore it is reasonable to believe God exists." But you could say the same thing of the tooth-fairy. The burden of proof is on the believer. He or she has to prove that no evidence against something's existence is evidence that it exists! That of course is incoherent and unintelligible.

AGNOSTICISM THAT SIMPLY PLEADS IGNORANCE

Many who fall into either camp of agnostic may be just pleading ignorance.

Many agnostics say they do not know if God exists or not and that they do not know what to believe.

But when they say they don't know but do not rule out the possibility that some day they will know or could know, this stance has an aura of open-mindedness about it. But atheism is true and the informed person who is really open-minded will agree with it.

Agnosticism appeals to people who want to pray when they feel they are in dire straits or a very tight spot but who do not want to be committed to God. Coincidence and not God is the only thing that could respond to such exploitive prayers.

If they are not sure that God exists then they should act and pray as if they are to be on the safe side. Atheism would not be the safe side because it could be ignoring a person, a personal God, and it is wrong to take unnecessary risks that harm or may harm while to ignore a non-existent God harms nobody. So agnosticism tends to be idolatrous and immoral in this.

BEING AGNOSTIC FOR YOU WANT TO DO WHAT YOU WANT

Religious people complain that the agnostic says he is proud of not knowing that God exists. They say that that is a disgrace because it means he is admitting he is proud of not knowing the big things – the existence of a God of infinite love and the purpose of his or her own existence. They are indicating then that he or she should know meaning he or she has not been trying very hard to discern the facts. They are indicating that he is trying to ride two horses at the one time which cannot be done for you cannot live as if there was a God and if there was no God.

To this narrow bigotry, I have this to say.

First, believers in God could not be expected to say anything else.

Second, we should all be proud of our opinions for they are our opinions and they say something about who we are. We should also be proud to change them and adopt new opinions. If we can't get convinced that there is a God that is not our fault.

Third, the agnostic could say that it is the believer and the atheist who are not trying to discern the facts for the fact is that it is impossible to know if God exists or not.

Fourth, if you live a good life it does not matter if you believe in God or not or are simply undecided.

The nice thing about Agnosticism is that it is more socially acceptable than atheism and is quite fashionable. It does a lot to dispel the hate propaganda of the Church which goes something like this: "Without God you have nothing", which suggests that non-theists are of less value to society than believers. The propaganda makes us look like a burden on society.

AGNOSTICISM THAT DOESN'T CARE

Christians mock Agnosticism as saying, "I will live as if God doesn't matter." Every Agnostic will do that up to a point. Many pray and go to Church and try to keep religious directives. Every Christian cleric must have Agnostic phases and Christians won't agree that they live as if God doesn't matter so the mockery is quite insulting and bigoted.

Agnostics should care if there is a God. To say you don't care if an all-good saving and loving God exists would be far from commendable.

Belief in a loving God is to be acted upon. So you cannot say it is okay to have no opinion on whether there is a God or not. If you say it is okay to neither believe or disbelieve that you should wed the person you are with that will get you nowhere. These beliefs are not the same thing as, "I have no opinion on whether Adam's had hair or was bald." They demand and have consequences.

If atheism and belief in a loving God were equally rational and equally supported by evidence then it seems the rational person ought to choose faith in God for it gives meaning to life. But if God is almighty and all-good he can give you meaning without explicit faith. No one thing or belief can really give you meaning.

DOES IT MATTER?

Agnosticism says that God could exist but it admits the God theory is not essential. It is really holding on to the two theories, Theism and Atheism, at the one time for it says that belief in either is not possible meaning that one is as plausible as the other which is foolish. It cannot say which one is right. If we do not need the God theory it should be abandoned. Reason counsels us to stick to what is simple and what is necessary for to deny God outright allays the fear of hurting him or of his vengeance while theism maximises the fear and Agnosticism means you have half the fears that theists have. All needless fear is bad.

Agnosticism gives too much importance to the God theory. It is saying, "God is an important idea but we don't know if it is a true idea or not." But who says God is important? After all, God or no God, we have to judge what is right or wrong. We cannot even accept any theory of God unless we judge the God as worthy of worship and reverence. So its goodness the Agnostic should care about.

Suppose we start a worldview like the following. Zoroaster was a minor prophet of a dying religion. Would it make sense to start a label, I-haven't-made-up-my-mind-if-Zoroaster-was-a-prophet-or-not-ism? No for he is not that important.

PROBLEM OF EVIL

Augustine said that evil is just good in the wrong place at time and evil is the absence of a good that should be there. God is not to blame for evil for evil is the misuse of good and God only makes good. Evil is not a power. But evil is a power - depression is a power. It is not merely an absence of good feelings. We cannot insult the depressed person by saying that is all that it is! Evil and a perfectly good God cannot co-exist and to say they can shows that like too many people in the world, you lack empathy towards a lot of the suffering that goes on in the lives of others. Doing great good does not prove your empathy is up to scratch except in relation to the people you help. There are certain things that should be rejected at face value. Augustine said you must believe in God because of evil and not in spite of it for evil is faulty good anyway. This doctrine needs to be rejected just like you would immediately reject any suggestion that a child should be molested. In fact it is all the suffering in the universe we are talking about so the doctrine should be rejected an infinity of times faster if possible.

THE FACTS

Agnosticism ignores the fact that the only thing that has any authority over you is your own conscience. Thus God is not important to our morals. By saying there could be a God it is saying that he might be. It would be odd if God is very important and we have no way to tell if he is there.

Agnosticism ignores the absurdity of a God who does the impossible and turns 0 into 1, that is creation out of nothing.

Agnosticism ignores the fact that as we so often go along with and collude with evil (eg animal suffering in particular) we only insult people by suggesting that despite human suffering there could be an all good and all powerful God. We collude with evil and to suggest there is such a God is to ask to be suspected of colluding with him too and of pretending that his allowing evil is good.

Agnosticism tolerates the intolerable aspects of belief. The agnostic after all is a kind of believer. He believes and he doesn't believe. The believer in God is asked by religion to trust God even when he suffers the pains of Job. The believer is asked to torment himself by trusting even to the extreme. As God comes first in the Christian scheme, it follows that this trust is to be exercised by the believer chiefly or totally for God's sake and not his own! This worsens the difficulty. The trust is not that that the believer will be delivered from the suffering but that the believer must be left to suffer forever if it is the will of God for God always does and sanctions the right thing.

Agnosticism tends to accuse atheism of arrogance. Let us assume for the sake of argument that it is right. Atheists who say they know the existence of God is very unlikely are targeted. But surely it is arrogant for agnostics to tell them they don't know as good as know there is no God when it could be that they do? Agnostics do not strenuously advocate for the legalization of rape, arguing that it might be moral in some other universe – yet they strenuously oppose atheists who deny the existence of God. Hypocrites.

Atheists are merely saying there is no supernatural power running the universe. The believer in God claims to know more than she knows that God became man and that God created all things etc. The believer then is definitely more arrogant than the atheist. If neither the atheist or the believer can know, the atheist is less arrogant for the atheist can say he merely has the absence of belief in God. Saying that you have no reason to believe in God is claiming to know a lot less than the person who says there is a God. Absence of belief in God is not the same thing as lacking belief in the man on the moon. The man on the moon doesn't claim to be the best moral force and the grounder and enforcer of morality. So it is a lack of belief in God yes but also more. It is a belief in an indirect way.

FINALLY

Atheism makes more sense than Agnosticism. The agnostic refuses to make absolute statement about God existing but in fact agnosticism is making an absolute statement that the person is so much wiser than God if God exist that he knows God cannot be known! Agnostics think that “If God exists he is smarter than me but is he when he hasn't managed to reasonably convey the truth of his existence and the reality of his love to me?” Thus agnosticism involves arrogance. The agnostic is an atheist in the sense that he thinks as smart as God would be that he is better. Atheism at core is about man being in the place of God for God is not there.

An agnostic is an atheist to all Gods but doubts one version of God. It needs to be said that this person is an atheist when it comes to any God who is credible enough for you to worry about what he demands or wants.