

## **Apatheism - the belief that God is irrelevant**

Apatheism is a mix of the word “apathy” and “theism”. Strange as it may seem, there are apatheists in every religion. Some do not bother with religion at all.

Secularism is apatheistic - it acts in the name of being neutral so that hatred of God is respected as much as love for God. Being neutral with God means treating God as irrelevant.

Apatheism may be a mere psychological state of indifference or neutrality about God and his demands. It is not to be confused with misotheism. Misotheism hates God or the concept of God. If the concept implies any support for evil then it should be hated virulently.

Some feel that misotheism is not the opposite of piety for hate is not the opposite of love - indifference is. So they recommend apatheism.

In fact as God is that which ought to be loved above all it follows that misotheism and apatheism both oppose him. The latter denies his value.

Apatheism can be a truth claim - it is possible to believe that even if God exists that he doesn't matter to our lives. In that case, God has no right to order us to obey him or to command us to be moral. Even if God is a moral God, it does not follow that he makes morality relevant to us. We might think we are called to be moral beings and be wrong. We might think we have the free will to be moral and be wrong. We think we have moral free will when we are drunk or heavily under the influence of recreational drugs and we think it more than usual and we are definitely wrong.

Some atheists regard the existence of God as an important question because -

- #They feel that God is made redundant by scientific discoveries
- #They feel that God cannot have a necessarily or unbreakable link with morality
- #They feel the doctrine of God leads to danger and intolerance that can be avoided by atheistic secularism

But some say that all that matters or what matters most is living without concern for God. They know that even if God claims authority over us he cannot have authority.

Believers in God say

1. If God is real, there is meaning to your life. UNTRUE.
2. If God is real, there are objective moral values and duties in life. HE'S IRRELEVANT TO ETHICS. GOOD WOULD STILL BE GOOD IF GOD LIVED OR NOT.
3. If God is real, there is a purpose to your life. HIS PURPOSE BUT WHAT ABOUT YOUR'S? GOD HAVING A USE FOR YOU WILL DO YOU NO GOOD UNLESS YOU MAKE YOUR OWN PURPOSE IN LIFE.
4. If God is real, there is hope for deliverance from the shortcomings of our finite existence, such as suffering, ageing, and death. WE NEED TO BE GLAD TO BE HERE TO ENDURE LIFE TO HELP OTHERS.
5. If God is real, there is forgiveness for all the wrong things you have done. FORGIVENESS HELPS THE FORGIVER NOT THE FORGIVEN UNLESS THE FORGIVER GOES OUT OF HIS WAY TO HELP. BUT HE CAN DO THAT WITHOUT FORGIVING. IF YOU DO NOT FORGIVE YOURSELF, FORGIVENESS HAS NO POINT. FORGIVE YOURSELF AND ALL WILL FALL INTO PLACE. FORGET ABOUT GOD.
6. If God is real, you have the opportunity of a personal relationship with him and eternal happiness. THIS IS A GUESS - THE BIBLE SAYS SOME PEOPLE ARE CHOSEN FOR SALVATION AND OTHERS ETERNAL DAMNATION. AND IF GOD HAS SURPRISING PURPOSES THEN MAYBE WE DON'T LIVE AFTER DEATH AT ALL! ETERNAL HAPPINESS IS A PIE IN THE SKY.

None of the reasons for supposing that it is utterly imperative to find out whether God exists and has authority is a good one.

One reason God is irrelevant to our ethics and we have no duty to him is that we cannot be accused of being the kind of people who are not essentially good. If we can really choose to be malevolent and evil then we are not essentially good even if we never deploy our power to do evil.

Another is the unanswerable question, "Is what is good good because God approves it? If not then the alternative question

is, does God approve it because it's good?" The first question is really asking if morality is unreal. Morality cannot be a real thing if God can make it good to steal apples and bad to whistle. And the second question is asking if good is real whether there is a God or not?

The Christians argue that God's nature is good and so he only does good things. That is said to prove that God will not say ask you to murder babies for fun. They say it answers the objection that if good is good because God says so then morality is arbitrary. But the fact remains that if God will not command certain things the morality is still arbitrary. Morality by definition has rules. If the morality is fake and arbitrary it still has to take the form of rules. So if morality is based on a God who does not destroy then it is still arbitrary.

So God provides the standard of morality in religion. How does that work? An example is the standard letter you must use in the office. The letter is the standard. If you do the letter differently and leave out the date though the standard demands it this is bad - it is lack of conformity to the standard. So religion says that if you do not become like God you are bad. But if morality is just about a standard then whose standard? Why that standard and not another? The standard for the letter can change so that leaving the date out now becomes a good thing. The argument is viciously suggesting that the only thing wrong with using a live baby for target practice is that God's standard bans it.

Clearly apatheism is a virtue!

Apatheism is immune to disproof just as a free will that is about making moral choices is immune to proof. If there is a God making moral demands of us then it may be that we have the right to ignore him. And it may be that God does not care about morals. And it may be that God is a moral god but we are not moral agents any more than chimpanzees are. And it may be that God is a moral God and we have the duty to obey him. The last is outnumbered. So apatheism is not only immune to being disproved it is also the most likely to be true. There is more. Morality and love for evidence go together. If you have duties to God then you have a duty to love evidence and let it teach you morality which is the same as letting God teach you with evidence. The evidence makes apatheism likely to be true. Paradoxically it is immoral or bad evil to be anything other than an apatheist.

The believer argues that God is that which should be loved and obeyed. The burden of proof is on the believer. The apatheist takes the default position which is that we care for each other without regard for a God. The believer will not settle for that and must give evidence and proofs to justify that. He cannot.

Also if there was a burden of proof on saying, "God has made us to serve him and obey him" and a burden of proof on, "We have no reason to think we must obey God and thus God cannot expect us to care what he thinks", the latter is simpler and more neutral so it has the lightest burden.

And if there is a burden of proof on one who says, "There is no God" then there is a lighter one on the person who says, "I simply do not believe. I'm not refusing to belief. I just don't".

Apatheism is not a truth claim so it has no burden of proof at all. But in practice it is the same as atheism even if not in theory.

How can an apatheist justify arguments against God's existence? To argue that God has no right to tell us what to do or to advise us even is to declare that we are independent of him. To argue that he does not exist is to say we are independent of him and of belief in him. Not caring about God or what God wants does not mean you can just forget about arguments against God.

The apatheist is like the person who does not care who the murderer was but who investigates anyway. The apatheist is not investigating because she or he cares but because investigating is valuable in itself.

Apatheism has everything going for it!! Any other view just degrades the good sense that supposedly came from God!!