

SAY THERE'S A GOD? GOD IS A SET OF CLAIMS EACH ONE GIVING YOU A DUTY TO SUPPORT IT

There is a duty to back up any claim that something is true or probably true with evidence and deal with the evidence against and explain that. This is called the burden of proof and applies in religion to those who say God exists and also those who say that it is true that God does not exist.

Believers claim there is a God and sometimes try to argue that it is not up to them to show they are right or probably right but up to the critic or unbeliever to show they are wrong.

They try to shift the burden of proof.

In reality, the burden of proof for God though handy is too simplistic. Its more complex than the believer makes out.

All the unbeliever has to do is argue that there is no supernatural and that takes care of God in all the variations of God.

The believer has to argue for a particular type of God.

The simplest claim has a weaker burden of proof than a more complex one. Occam's Razor suggests that.

You need more evidence that its best to join two dots with a curvy line than you do for that it is best just to draw a straight line.

So believers then need to disprove anti-supernaturalism more than they have to prove that there is a God. Or if you like they need to start with proving supernatural non-believers wrong.

They have the burden of proof first to refute them and then they have the burden of proof to say there is a God.

The believer demands that atheists give evidence and its their duty to do so simply because both sides are meant to presuppose that God is vitally important. So for that reason the believer is biased and the unbeliever is urged to be biased too. The unbeliever should search for evidence yes for God but without presuming God matters. The bele

A burden of proof based on evidence for an answering the evidence against has two parts.

Listen to a top Christian theologian

"It is a basic principle of knowledge...that we ought to believe that things are as they seem to be, until we have evidence that we are mistaken. If you say the contrary - never trust appearances until it is proved that they are reliable - you will never have any beliefs at all. For what would show that appearances were reliable, except more appearances?" Richard Swinburne, Evidence for God.

Let us assume we should take his advice in relation to God and religious doctrine. Swinburne shows that the working assumption that things are to be believed until evidence or proof appears and refutes them is more important than God. It turns God into a convenience not a God. God by definition is that which is wholly good and so alone matters.

If Swinburne is right it does not follow that what he says applies to God. Believing in God is not the same as believing there are 24 hours in the day.

If he were right, what he says would apply better to the idea of an impersonal intelligence making and running the universe than God. You don't need to assume that something doing something is a person when it could be impersonal or mechanical.

It is evidence that tells you what seems to be. His advice could be reworded as saying that you should believe what the evidence seems to say until you find out that the evidence does not say it or is faked. It could seem to you that Santa is real. Where do the toys come from? But that does not mean you should believe in Santa when you get another explanation for the evidence for him.

Swinburne is in fact right. He is just wrong to imagine that the principle of knowledge can include God.

Also it only applies to something that is testable. If you make excuses to avoid accepting evidence against what you believe, you are opposing knowledge. For example, if you start to reason that your parents are lying about pretending to be Santa or that even if they are leaving the presents it is because Santa hypnotises them to get and give the presents to you for him. God as a non-testable idea is out. For example, even if there is total evil in the universe believers say it will not refute God because evil is merely misplaced good and God does not make evil.

There are several burdens of proof demanded by the suggestion that if a belief say in God, why is it only God!, is commonplace then the burden of proof is removed from the believers and its up to agnostics and atheists to provide the case against faith.

Can't show what version of morality God is about

With morality you have different definitions.

Morality is the greatest happiness of the greatest number

Morality is following a categorical imperative - an act is immoral if life can't function if everybody did it

Morality is written down for us in a holy book by God

Morality is the fixed rules that promote the best wellbeing of most people

Morality is just living out virtues such as temperance, chastity etc

That is only some of them.

You have a burden of proof to show why any of them is for or against God. Getting it right amounts to getting the right God.

And if you get that far then there is a new problem.

Take big issues like abortion, capital punishment and euthanasia. There is so much more to worry about but you see the point.

If God is say virtue then you know that wrongly thinking he blesses say abortion makes that virtue meaningless.

Atheist's moral duty to take the burden of proof?

The person who says there is no God is told to accept he has a duty to prove or support this reasonably. He has to come up with atheism being beyond reasonable doubt. This totally contradicts the notion that you cannot have a serious belief in duty without belief in God who makes duties. Even God would agree that the sceptic must see he has a duty to find him if he is there and a duty to find his absence if he is not.

Now what has happened. We have proven there is no point in looking for God for morality is what matters and it is independent of whether there is a God or not. It is for moral reasons the unbeliever must discard God but challenge faith in him.

The "But God is a major claim, others are lesser" excuse

"I believe there is no God" is not an island. It connects to other things. It says loads of things in a few words. It implies a lot. With science, you proclaim that chemistry and physics and everything will never need to ask if God could be at work. So even if saying it is not making a claim about God, it is making positive claims ("I claim so and so is true") by implication.

Some say that because that statement has such a big and broad impact it needs to be backed up with great evidence. Christians say so. They are trying to shift the burden of proof from themselves and lay an impossible burden on atheists. Or they could be trying to lighten their own burden of proof and laying a heavy one on atheists.

The reality is that if Christians say there is a God then their burden of proof also becomes burdens.

Whose burden is the biggest? If you can understand how things work without God then you don't need God. If a person says they understand home heating when they don't know that somebody lights the fire they are wrong. They are approaching understanding but do not really understand. So "There is a God" and "There is no God" are loaded yes and tie in with great complications but the fact is the believers are the one over-complicating. Their BURDENS NOT BURDEN of proof is worse for they have more to work through.

Worse, even without the burdens issue the godly are inherently carrying the worst load. That is proven by how the godless can avoid having to give proof or evidence.

You can avoid the burden of proof while being a practical atheist (what you claim about atheism or God is not the subject right now) and insist that religion delivers. If you simply say you will live as if there is no God for there is no evidence then that needs no evidence. The consequences stand on it. But the consequences are to be dealt with separately. They do not change the fact that if you are claiming nothing about God then you don't need to take on a burden of proof. They have nothing to do with the issue which is, "Who has the burden of proof for God?"

Positive claims implied by a non-claim have to be dealt with by themselves. There is still no right to treat a non-claim like a claim. For example, if it is true you need faith in God to have hope of being moral then what if you just ignore God instead of claiming he does not exist? That is making the positive claim that God does not matter. That is making the positive claim that if a ban on abortion goes with faith in God then you are pro-choice. And so on and on.

Positive claims come in dozens with the claim that God exists. This makes the burden heavier for believers. Unbelievers don't need to do as much work.

God is not about a burden of proof but a burdens of proof

Burdens of proof for God believers:

Need to prove that spirit – that which is there but is made of no parts is possible

Need to prove that spirit is real.

God is spirit. Proving that spirit is real is not the same as proving God but proof is necessary for spirit. If you claim the right to prove matter and energy are real then you lay claim to the duty to prove that spirit is real too.

What kind of spirit is another and separate question totally. Solid proof would be ideal from now on but proof as in getting beyond reasonable doubt would seem to do.

If spirit is a fact then does it mean there is a God?

I need to prove God is love.

I need to know he knows he is alive.

I need to prove he wants a relationship with me.

At this point we have six burdens of proof. Religion has a heavy burden and is lying when it sums up all these questions as God as if all you need to prove is God. It is not simple for God is a sum of many questions. There are far more questions than what we have listed.

Take the problem of evil. Each bit of suffering is so abhorrent and vile that even if we show evil fits God we have to try to make every INDIVIDUAL case fit too. This is only out of respect for the person and because if you can justify the suffering of 99 people that does not mean in the slightest that you can justify that of person 100. The latter could be the proof that God is evil or that we are right to take the risk of being wrong and just condemn him.