

COMPARING RELIGION AND ATHEISM

If it barks like a dog ...

Something may not be a religion but have religious traits. It is a religious trait to form a doctrine and not care about evidence or logic or consistency or even facts. It is religious for it is no different from something that you say a God who knows best told you. The person may not treat it as if it were something inspired by a revelation from on high but that it what it is acting like. You cannot say a doctrine is bad because it is religious if you are not going to condemn anything that acts religious though it does not look religious. We must be careful to realise that the problem of religion is much more than churches and religions and faiths – a secular person can still be a religionist and not realise it. It depends on how careful they are before forming opinions and beliefs.

Though an atheist may not be a religionist he may act as if he is. The truly secular atheist is careful with evidence.

The person who goes too far with doctrines that he only follows as if they were psychic or mystical revelations to him and outside the scope of evidence and reason is definitely mentally disturbed.

Problem

Fundamentalism - that by definition is putting belief before people

Religion

Has beliefs and in danger of leading to fundamentalism. Jesus sanctioned fundamentalism when he said that we must love God and declare that God matters more than any person.

Atheism

Has no religious beliefs. Atheism is not the denial that God exists though many atheists do deny he exists. Atheism is rather the absence of belief in god or gods. Christians are atheists after all as far as Zeus is concerned. They don't believe in the gods of paganism. There is no possibility of fundamentalism in relation to atheists.

Atheism is purely a negative stance in the sense that it is the absence of belief. The bloody regimes of say Communism were not based on the absence of belief but on their own kind of faith. Atheism cannot be blamed for what the Communists did. It was the way they had faith in themselves and not all atheists who have faith in themselves do things like that.

Problem

Dogmatism, dogmatism is the attitude that "We are right and we are not going to change no matter what the evidence says".

Religion

Based on dogma.

Atheism

Atheists all have different ideas and approaches to life. They make suggestions but do not enforce these suggestions as dogma. The atheist who is dogmatic is really approaching religion in his attitude. The proper atheist doesn't do that.

Atheists do not see beliefs as truth. Beliefs should be taught as beliefs and not as truth though you can hope they are the truth. Religion seeks control of schools to teach beliefs as truth. Jesus sanctioned this bigotry when he said that he was the Truth.

Problem

Disrespect towards religious belief

Religion

The Bible insults and mocks the Gods and beliefs of other faiths. To insult a belief is to insult a God of truth that gave the belief and must be punished under blasphemy law. Religion should not be criticised.

Atheism

Satire and mockery of religion may be necessary to stop it doing harm in the world. These tools make great impact. Religious beliefs are only human creations and everything human should be examined and we should have the right to say why we disagree with it. Religion itself has to contradict other religions and criticise to exist. For example, Islam teaches that the Christian notion of God having a Son called Jesus who is also God is extreme blasphemy. The Bible and Church says of the heretic, "Let him be anathema".

Religion

It has a mythology - whether it admits it is mythology or not. Religion is a mythological construct. Or one might say it may look like one. It is treated like one. For all intents and purposes the person who is trying to be an objective scholar has to treat it as a body or structure based on myth. You cannot ask a doctor to treat a cancer patient as if that person is set to be cured miraculously tomorrow even if that cure is expected. Same principle.

Atheism

Has no mythology or anything like it. It has no interest in creating a mythology. There is no mythology even over how we came from inanimate matter. Myth is not even drawn on to make complex difficult concepts like that more digestible to the people. Something that cannot even lead to a mythology is not a religion or a potential religion.

Conclusion

It is obvious what the best view is...

APPENDIX

Religion should be defined as a system of authority supposedly set up by a supernatural or magical being. And it may be that one religion is 99% supernatural and another is only 2%. That is why it may take some work to identify something as a religion or - wait for it - a sub-religion.

The atheist does not feel obligated to believe there is no God. It is not an authority thing. The atheist is depending on evidence and reason. The atheist cannot be considered a religious person. What adds to the confusion when atheism is taken for a religion is that some faiths are considered religious when they are not. For example, Buddhism denies that any god has the right to tell you what to believe or do thus its gods are not real gods. We must remember too that the distinction between the miraculous or divine and the magical is mere semantics. You cannot say atheists are part of a religion of their own, atheism, for there will be more differences between one atheist and the next one than there is between a Christian and a Muslim and you cannot say Christianity and Islam are really the one religion.

Most believers do not care about truth. Yes, it is obvious that most religious people do not care about truth in the philosophical or religious sense. Even if religion could be a good thing, how could it when that is most people's attitude? As an Irishman living in Ireland, one can get a savage rebuke for saying anything critical of priests or Catholicism. And its alarming how religious people can be told a truth and go on as if they are deaf and were not told it at all.

Are people insinuating: "Atheist, you think religion is so stupid? Well, your atheism is just another religion, so you are also stupid! Hah!". Believers are trying to accuse atheists of being hypocrites. The insinuation shows that believers seem to suspect that religion is stupid! If atheism were a religion it might be the only smart one! It may condemn religion without hypocrisy when it defines religion as submission to some magical authority such as God (in reality it means submission to men who claim authority was given by God to them over you!). Accusing secularism and atheism of being religions is a common religionist tactic to encourage society to oust both from the public sphere in the name of the doctrine that faith and politics need to be kept separate! The plan is to fill the vacuum with say the Christian religion! Its crazy!

Why is belief in God the most effective at brainwashing or conditioning people? We expect religion to know how to brainwash people! Atheism cannot! Surely let that be a warning about faith in God!!