

HEAVENLY DECEPTIONS

Is it good to believe that we will remain alive after death?

PREFACE

The doctrine of life after death is very popular and there is very little agreement on what this life will be like. Many ask if God will keep us alive after we die. We will test the doctrine of the afterlife to see if it is as really beneficial as most people have been tricked into believing.

It is obvious that any theory that says we will be alive for all eternity and our lives on earth no matter how long are nothing at all - not even a speck - in comparison should lead to disparaging and not caring about earth life. If it does not, then how deeply do believers believe? How much do they think it is more important to be alive forever than to have a reasonable standard of life forever? Obviously the living matters more than the quality for you have to live to have the chance to enjoy it.

We will pay little heed to the doctrine that the soul is immortal for it could be that though the soul can survive death, there might be other forces that makes sure this doesn't happen.

The need for life after death is not based on virtue. People should reason like sensible and kind atheists do. They reason thus, "I cannot avoid death. Therefore when death comes, I accept it knowing that I am going so that I can make room for another person. If we all lived forever on earth there would soon be no room and life would be hell."

The general outlook of the New Testament is captured in a line given by St Paul which says that sufferings on earth are nothing at all compared to the glory that will come. That is an evil statement. The truly good person sees suffering as an abomination and any good future is not a consideration. It is not right to use a good future - especially one that may not be real such as Heaven, to try and trivialise suffering. If there is a problem of evil, Christianity adds to the problem and is an evil religion with a smile on its face.

GOD DOES NOT IMPLY AFTERLIFE

The notion that if you believe God exists and loves you then you will not cease to exist at death but will somehow live on possibly forever is popular. But it does not follow that God will stop us going out of existence at death. People want to think injustices will be made up to us in the afterlife but that cannot be done and it makes evil people feel better. The injustice still happened. God has mysterious plans and purposes and he might intend for us to cease to exist at death.

Religion has always sought to make God and the afterlife inseparable. This served the purpose of making out that you are a person with dangerous views if you think people go out of existence at death.

NO MORAL REASONS FOR AFTERLIFE BELIEF

To believe that death is the complete destruction of the mind and body of what is more valuable than money or happiness, a human person, is to find a reason for condemning murder. Even if we will return to life, it is still the destruction of what is valuable. But could it really be evil to put a diamond out of existence for a while and then bring it back into existence again? No. So, it must be the same if this is done to a person. If we simply go to another place at death then murder is not wrong and the grief left behind would be the fault of the bereaved.

The killer who sends us to God or Heaven would be doing us a favour. And we must be ready for God and Heaven when we go to them. No divine purpose is thwarted for if we are not ready then it is God's will for he takes ultimate responsibility for all that happens for being the all-powerful creator he has to. God has the power to take care of his plans. Even if we have free will, our choices proceed from our thoughts and feelings which can be manipulated without detriment to our freedom for thoughts and feelings are not free will. They only address it and guide its direction. So if a man kills it is because God wills it. Murder would only be a sin for one who did not intend the killing to be done for God. It is fanaticism to approve of human beings being prone to death and you have to approve if you want to believe in God. You have to agree that life after death makes murder less evil than it would be if we did not live on and that is sinister.

The attitude, "Our troubles are nothing at all no matter how big they seem when we have all eternity to be happy" is a popular religious piece of sentimentalism. It is a religious doctrine. It is a dangerous way of thinking despite being comforting. It will lead to at least some apathy for your personal suffering and especially that of others. It can't give you

comfort without trying to give you apathy. And the attitude/doctrine is a natural and unavoidable consequence of the doctrine of a happy afterlife. Ignore those who try to persuade you that the attitude is innocuous. They will try to do that with statistics that allegedly prove that believers in the unchangeably happy hereafter are mentally and spiritually better than unbelievers down here below. Even if they are right the fact remains unchanged that the people supposedly helped by their faith are helped in spite of their belief. Perhaps the statisticians are able to boost the statistics by rationalizing the failures. Anyway, only greater suffering can come from the promotion of and adherence to the attitude/doctrine mainly in the long term.

Some prefer to deny the afterlife is about perfect happiness. They say you just have to grin and bear it there like you do in the present life. If the afterlife will have its ups and downs the dangers of the doctrine of a happy afterlife is avoided. Another danger that is avoided is the approval for murder implied by the concept of a blissful afterlife. The danger is also avoided if you drop the idea of divine beings or super-scientific beings that care for us and have a purpose for our deaths.

And how are we supposed to believe the doctrine makes people better when the majority of people claim allegiance to religious beliefs when we know that religion is manipulative and bad? Would the picture be much different if they did not?

The doctrine that everlasting happiness lies beyond the grave certainly makes that life more important than this one and makes normal people feel the pain of being stuck here on earth while Heaven has all these everlasting goodies.

If the next life will be better than this one that would entitle you to neglect people who are not important in your daily life on earth now? You could argue that you may as well enjoy yourself now at their expense for they will be fine in the end. This makes sense if suffering is only an insignificant blip as Christianity tries to make out.

Some would say that you would expect it to imply that you could devote yourself to them at your own expense because there are so many goodies waiting for you in the hereafter and so you will only have to endure the inconvenience for a while and then it is permanent relief. But since you would rather look after yourself and gratify your affections, you can neglect the other people for you come first for all the loving you do is about fulfilling yourself. You are surer you exist than anybody else so the only compromise would be to just help those who are useful to you. The doctrine of bliss beyond the grave is a bad influence.

If the next life will not be much better then it seems you should do all you can to help others be as happy as possible now. But is this right? Why not focus on yourself now and put off the helping others till later? Plus leaving others without help ensures that they will get tougher and will struggle better to help themselves in the rest of this life and in the next. It is not wrong to neglect their lives in this world when the next world will be no better. We know that life ends in suffering and loss and death but that doesn't stop us trying to help people now. Why should it if they live on after death? It is more natural to help people. You cannot just ignore people because life is cruel. If you ignore others, they will ignore you. It is unnatural to do nothing at all for others.

It is certain that it is better to hold that the next life will be imperfect for that is a bit more encouraging to do good works for others than is the view that the next life is perfect.

When you deny the next life, you will find it is more encouraging to help people now for we are more sure people exist and that they need help than we are that the next life exists. Then the tendency towards good is maximised. We know we have to deny some of our inclinations in order to gain acceptance of the trials of life so that we can bear them better because this life is all there is and we have to make the best of it. We have to help others even if we would rather not. Not helping people does us no good.

We must never teach that this life is nothing and the next life is more important. Making the next life more important is what happens when we see it in terms of everlasting happiness. We must not teach that we came here for some sensible purpose for that implies that suffering is necessary. Acceptance of a life after death should give us courage to do good better and if it does not there is little use in believing in it and there is no point in believing in it.

Recognise that it is not how long you live that is important but how much you enjoy the time you have got and we dedicate ourselves to help you to do that. If you fear death you are not grateful enough for the time you have here and for being born. Your gratitude should be able to handle the fear and neutralise it.

If you were content with life on earth and with helping other people you would not be even looking for evidence for an afterlife. Looking demonstrates a selfishness that is certainly unbalanced. How can apparitions and near-death experiences prove life after death when they proceed to defend a harmful doctrine?

To believe that you should endure terrible inconvenience and suffering to help others while thinking you will have a superb life after death because of it is fanaticism for this life, the life that you are most sure of, comes first. You are not as sure that

you will live on as you are that you are alive now.

It would be selfish to say prayers and do good for the sake of an afterlife. It would be selfish to spend years writing the laws down that you are going to make when you become Emperor of the world for that is not likely to happen or you can't be sure enough it will happen. So it is with the alleged afterlife.

WHEN HEAVEN LEADS TO MURDER

In 2015 Canadian man, Janzen, murdered his poorly daughter and put the following on facebook, "I just could not see my little girl hurt for one more second. I took a gun and shot her in the head and now she is migraine free and floating in the clouds on a sunny afternoon, her long beautiful brown hair flowing in the breeze, a true angel."

Naturally his faith in Heaven is to blame for this. He was not posting the above to get sympathy or to justify what he had done. He did not ask for them. He did it to show his faith in Heaven.

Atheist blogger J.T. Eberhard wrote, "The culpability for this is, at least in part, on the people who filled Janzen's head with promises of heaven – even if, like Janzen, they did it out of love."

Christians claim that he wouldn't have murdered her if he had rejected belief in a good afterlife. But only Janzen can tell us and he did. He said as much. People who would ignore a man's testimony in order to deny that faith in Heaven can harm are too biased and low to be worth mentioning. If faith in Heaven helped this man to kill we are expected to enable it to help others to kill by pretending it had nothing to do with it.

It was argued by Christians that blaming faith in Heaven is committing a logical fallacy called the appeal to consequences.

Belief in Heaven for this man caused or encouraged him to murder.
Therefore belief in Heaven is false.

In actual fact Eberhard is not committing a logical fallacy at all.

Belief in Heaven for this man caused or encouraged him to murder.

Therefore belief in Heaven is HARMFUL for some people.

Therefore belief in Heaven is always risky.

The Christians told a bare-faced lie and dished out a red herring.

Some Christians argued that true beliefs can result in terrible things and bad or false beliefs can cause many good things. This is true. You cannot work out if a belief is untrue by assessing how bad the consequences of it are.

The Christians point out that some people who deny there is a life after death have committed suicide because they felt they would never again see their loved ones who have died. You could reason then that whether you encourage belief in Heaven or not it is not going to make much of a difference.

A Christian could argue that if some of these people had known they could see their child again in heaven they would not have killed themselves.

Unbelieving people who miss their loved ones and commit suicide are doing something very odd. It is killing the memories they have of the loved ones and robbing themselves of any way to keep their memories and their contribution to life alive. It is far more irrational than killing yourself to go to Heaven to be with them again. The unbelievers do not kill themselves because they won't see their loved ones again - they kill themselves because they are excessively stupid and irrational.

There are murderers who said they killed people because they did not believe in an afterlife. But they are few and far between. The murderer who does believe is far more common and believing that you have not really murdered somebody but sent them to a better place cannot be seen as anything other than

Eberhard blogged "You want to know why I fight religion with all that I am? There it is. It teaches people to embrace bad ideas, to believe because you want to believe, to cast aside critical thinking in favor of faith."

Christianity does confess that discarding critical thinking is dangerous and claims that people should look for and equip themselves with evidence that their beliefs are true. But in practice this is a rarity. And Catholicism is careful to gain

supporters not through faith but by conditioning them as children and imposing a membership on them in the Church. Worse, nobody is told why they should stay out of the Church. An honest religion would present both sides. Catholic children are never told for example how Jesus supported the murders committed by Judaism at the behest of his God.

Eberhard is accused of saying that religion is bad because some will kill others to put them in Heaven. This is supposed to be as irrational as saying, "Do not say it is a sin for gay people to have sexual relationships with each other. Some people might be overcome with shame and commit suicide." How can religion then avoid Eberhard's judgement? It depends on how remarkably good and convincing the religion is. Catholicism for example is no better than any organisation. And all religions suffer from delusion. They care little for evidence except when it suits them. Eberhard is right and his argument is not an argument from bad consequences.

Religion says that we should not abandon beliefs that seem to drive some people to do bad things. But that depends on how well verified the beliefs are. The worse the evidence the more the religion is to blame if any members use the beliefs to do bad. Religion will say that some scientists use science to foster racism and that gives one no call to abandon science. It is not the same thing. A scientist can only distort science to foster racism. Nobody is a racist because of science.

Religion says that killers are stealing God's authority to decide when somebody should leave this world. If they think they are killing for God or that they have the divine right to then they are killing because of a false belief. They cannot be accused of intentionally sinning. You have to do what you believe. Religion is useless as a deterrent. It is a waste of time telling the would-be killers that it is up to God to end a life.

CONCLUSION

People are trained to take comfort in the idea of God who will keep them alive after death but this is a false hope for even if God existed why think that he would do that? There is no reason to think we can live on. However it is still possible that we survive death. We have no reason however to think that we do and to really care for our lives in this world we have to abandon the concept.

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