

WHEN RELIGION FOLLOWERS MUST BE EITHER IGNORANT OR LYING OR A BIT OF BOTH!

Religion cannot ask for your devotion unless it comes from a supernatural higher power. Otherwise it would look ridiculous. Man cannot demand your worship and devotion to what man creates. That would be unfair and exploitive.

Divine inspiration is needed then if you want to start a good and godly religion.

But sceptics say that if something is the truth, then it does not need to be divinely inspired.

Religion says that the problem is that we are prone to error so we need God to tell us the truth.

If God writes books, through man, that is because he wants us to believe in them because he gives witness. It is about testimony.

If God writes a book of truth, what matters most?

Is it that the book is true? Yes - inspiration is no good unless it is about revealing the truth.

Is it that the book is inspired? No. And besides anybody can create a book that seems to be the truth when it is actually invented.

Is it that the book is both true and inspired? So being true matters as much as being inspired. To say that insults the truth. Inspiration as we have seen is no good unless it is about telling you what is true.

If the truth of the book is what matters most, then it is no big deal if you think the book is not inspired.

If truth comes first as we have seen, then if God gives you a book, it will not be that hard to see that it is probably correct and trustworthy. Christians lose a lot of sleep trying to make the Bible fit forces such as science and history that show its tales cannot be true. Nothing is gained from God making a true book hard to believe.

Many religions have ludicrous scriptures and their followers claim that those scriptures have no errors and are written by God.

The followers would need a spectacular degree of ignorance to really believe. The educated ones must simply be lying to themselves and everybody else. They feign belief. They mistake feeling that it is true and their enjoyment of the religious culture such as prayers and festivals for belief. Sometimes lying to ourselves keeps us sane.

In relation to nearly all of the stuff that can be known, the individual person no matter how well educated, will not know it.

If religious people are lying to themselves, rationalists may be doing it too. But it is wise to remember that if that is true, it is wrong to argue that all religious people or all rationalists are lying to themselves. One camp must have fewer self-deceivers than the other. One camp must have a lesser tendency to lie than the other. It depends.

Some people are indoctrinated and conditioned so that it is very difficult for them to get a way out of their delusions. They make assumptions that lead them into these big errors and they may find it hard to work out what assumptions are behind it. Or so we are told.

If a financial expert made disastrous mistakes we would not call him ignorant. We would call him careless and selfish. We would not blame conditioning for it. We should not blame conditioning in the case of the knowledgeable Christian believer either.

It is true that we tell lies to ourselves and consequently to others to keep sane. I mean that atheist and believer alike feel that however bad things get they will get better and happiness can be found. That is the only lie we need - if it is a lie. I would get a Christian to agree with that before I'd try to dismantle their faith. That way the goal is to help them have a simple straightforward faith that reminds them it is up to them to develop the right attitudes to cope with life and nobody else. A sense that things will get better is what you need not faith that Jesus is caring for you or that he died for you. Anything outside of it is clutter. It denies your own power. Relying on faith in Jesus to save you is trying to tell yourself that you are not helping yourself. You are for the faith is your work. Own up to it and celebrate the fact that only you can help you cope. Nobody else helps you ever. If you think they do, don't forget it is all because you let them help. You only help yourself.

Here are the rules for assessing if a religious believer is lying rather than ignorant.

The believer says that without belief in God or religion his or her life has no meaning. In other words, belief in God or religion or both gives the feeling that life has value and worth. But we know our feelings prove nothing. This sense of meaning is the bottom line. It is based on a deliberate lie. Faith or belief based on a feeling is not faith or belief at all.

The believer is bad at practicing his values - real faith is more about actions than words and creeds.

The believer did or did not have a strict religious upbringing. The believer may be ignorant if he was raised in a faith and he may be conditioned.

The believer is a recent convert - if a religion is ridiculous and everybody knows it I would be suspicious about the convert.

The believer is intelligent in religious matters and shows sound logic - intelligent people do not believe in fairy-tales even if they say they do.

The bigger the fairy-tales the more likely the believer is lying.

The believer is part of a religion or a leader in it - it is easy to imagine you believe or to act like it when you put yourself in the middle of believers. Being part of a group should make your faith more suspect not less.

The believer who claims to have no difficulties or doubts is a liar. When you believe something there is part of you that is not sure. Be wary of ex-Christians or ex-anything who claim that they were conditioned to accept the doctrines and use that as an excuse. Conditioning was not the whole story. They let themselves be conditioned and they did not try to break away from it often enough.

The argument that educated Christians believe and they are not ignorant is a strange one. They are ignorant of how absurd the faith is and they are not in religious matters any better than the man in the street. And it is the latter who will be called ignorant! There are shocking examples of extremely smart people who believe absurdities that shock even their own religions. Remember what a presidential candidate for the USA said about the pyramids of Egypt?

The person who favours good religious feelings and his own spiritual ideas over the truth and who is not searching very well for truth is a fraud. He will tell you that you have insulted his faith but not all faith really is faith. His certainly is not.

Belief claims to be about evidence even if it denies it or the believer does not realise it. Thus the believer should be humble and willing to be corrected. People usually misreport their beliefs. Believers who make do with less evidence for their belief than they need are most likely to be doing that. We can only guess that others really believe what they say. And it is our business to guess what makes them tick for that is what being a society entails. You are entitled to guess or believe that a Christian who hates half her community and disparages them as sinners and corrupt is not really a Christian at all if Christianity is about loving sinners. You can guess that she is misreporting her Christian belief and needs to realise she is not a believer at all.

A person who understands the facts and still claims to believe in his religion that contradicts the facts is best understood as a liar. You get that attitude in every camp not just in religion.

Arguments from ignorance

Religious people insist that science should be open to the supernatural as a possibility. They say real science is open to it.

But science can be open to the supernatural without permitting belief in it. If you are open to your wife leaving you that is not permission for her to go.

Real science is not open to the supernatural but open to the evidence for it. If the evidence says nothing then science is not a supporter of the supernatural or an enabler. Its being open in fact means nothing.

So the believers demand that science be open to religious supernatural claims. What do they mean by open to it?

Does real science have evidence that the supernatural exists or may exist?

Science says X is dead. But what if X comes back to life supernaturally?

Even if X did rise again magically or miraculously there is no way of being even slightly convinced that the supernatural was involved. There can be no evidence for the supernatural.

We think things are supernatural when we cannot know all about why they happened. It may have been natural after all. Belief in the supernatural is based on, "I don't know how this happened therefore it is supernatural." That is an argument from ignorance. Arguments from ignorance are nonsense but to argue, "Okay 70,000 people saw the sun spinning at Fatima. In some unexplained or perhaps unexplainable way, it is not supernatural" is less bad. So if you want an argument from ignorance choose one that has more rationality in it than the alternatives.

Another argument from ignorance is, "I don't know how this supernatural thing happened therefore it is a miracle". You need to add, "or magic".

Is science to say that evidence or not, it will be open to the supernatural? If so, will it ever use this openness? Will it ever mean anything? A man who is open to taking a wife may still not marry. It does not mean he makes an effort to get a wife. The alleged openness of science to the supernatural is actually unimportant and makes religion unimportant.

Also the openness believers want scientists to exercise is bringing in an argument from ignorance again. To say "I don't know how this happened therefore it MIGHT BE supernatural" is yet another argument from ignorance. It does not seem to be as bad as saying it is supernatural. But is it? This is theoretical and hypothetical. If you have scientific evidence that something might be supernatural then you are limiting your assertions to the supernatural to what you have evidence for. It is far worse then to say that you have to assume possible supernatural interference all the time.

Evidence cannot tell you if something is supernatural or might be supernatural. That is not its job.

What if hard evidence showed a man rose from the dead? It only says the man is alive again but not how it happened. If you are going to ask how then you need evidence for the answer. But you cannot explain the supernatural.

What if good testimony was the basis for being sure that he rose? You need hard evidence for some things and a man returning from the dead is one of those things. Testimony is not enough. Even if it were okay, it would not be enough to build a religion on. It would not be enough to justify regarding the man as saviour or God.

Surely if there were a God, he would be found in what you know is true or in what you know is probably true? Believers try to find him in what they do not know but that makes no sense. They are really trying to imagine a God into existence who fits their prejudices and preconceptions. If their faith makes them good for a while it will not last for it cannot.

Believers say that an atheist cannot say on authority that God is fiction. Such authority would depend on what you know. The atheist cannot know all things and that knowledge would be necessary before the atheist can be totally definite that God is nonsense.

But you can be certain that somebody or something does not exist even though you don't have all knowledge of the universe.

And if God is full of contradictions he cannot exist. He is. That is another reason for not needing to know all things.

We know there is no ghost down the road when we know why and how we created the legend of the ghost and manipulated people to suspect he was real.

A lot of the time we have to work out why others might create something such as Santa or God or whatever. Often that is enough to show that the entity is not real.

People think that God is a good idea. That could be why they create the stories about God. So that is a warning bell.

If they are wrong about God being a good idea, does that make the bell noisier or not? It makes it noisier.

We see that if we can work out why people might invent something such as God then we are entitled to see God as an invention, but if their reasons are totally stupid we are even MORE entitled to see God as an invention.