

Myths about Atheism Examined

Atheism can mean anything from actively believing gods do not exist to passively not believing gods exist. Most atheists believe gods exist only as ideas in human minds. Some atheists believe the very idea of a god is incoherent.

Atheists are victims of religious myth making. Religion tends to show atheists in a bad light.

We atheists do not need to invent gods to explain either what we know or what we do not yet know. It makes people feel important when they think they know something for God said it. Hence the need to blacken and misrepresent atheists.

MYTH - ATHEISM IS A RELIGION.

Atheism is not a religion. Religions, creeds and scriptures are supposedly revealed by God or magical beings. Atheists base their beliefs on their own thinking and opinions and speak for themselves as opposed to a god. No atheist tells another atheist what to think or believe. If an atheist does that, the atheist only looks ridiculous and she or he will feel ridiculous. If you want to claim to be infallible you cannot really do it unless you pretend a God is inspiring you. All atheists do is provide evidence that people must consider for themselves. That is as far from religion as you could imagine.

Atheism is not a religion for atheism is not spiritual. Spiritual is a very vague term but everybody agrees that it involves prayer in some form or another. The atheists encourage themselves to feel that they want a person in trouble to get through it and do well. That is what they prioritise. That is why even if they thought of trying prayer out they will not do it. Why? Somebody is very ill. What matters? Is it wishing and hoping they will get well? Or is it praying for them? Praying for them is pointless if you don't want them to get well. So your good wishes are what matters. If a choice is forced on you - good wishes or prayer what do you choose? The good wishes. To say that God alone matters or even comes first is simply to implicitly insult the sick people.

Religion likes to boast that human nature abhors a vacuum meaning that the space left when you abandon religion will be filled with another religion. So it makes out that you are religious by default or have a religion by default?" Really? Religion by default? Is there such a thing? Are you religious by default even if you don't have a religion? That is pure rubbish. If we can keep religion out of many things - the religious person can have her non-religious moments such as when she is clearing a jam in the photocopier we can keep them out of all. The argument that religion is a default is both stupid and insulting.

Atheism is merely a single claim, "I do not believe in God or there is no God." It is not a religion for it is not a set of beliefs.

MYTH - ATHEISM IS A BELIEF SYSTEM.

Atheism is not a belief system. Each atheist has a set of beliefs and ideas that differs from the next atheist. And the atheists change their system all the time. They add and subtract as they adhere to whatever evidence and proof indicates they must accept. Atheism holds that moral laws are not made by God or gods. We have to discover them for ourselves. Atheism is most often the lack of belief in God. A lack of belief does not mean a disbelief in God. You may lack belief in the existence of a rat in your attic but that doesn't mean you disbelieve in the rat.

MYTH - ATHEISM REQUIRES CERTAINTY

It does not for strictly speaking, we cannot be certain about anything 100%. But we try to found our beliefs on evidence and logic. That is all we can do.

Ignorant Christian Argument: "An atheist must claim to know everything that exists in the universe and beyond in order to claim that no God or no gods exist. The atheist is lying for nobody can really know. The arrogance is perturbing."

This assumes the atheist must claim to know there is no God. Or that you can only be an atheist if you know there is no God.

What if the atheist claims to know there is no evidence for God? What if the atheist knows evidence that there is no God? He is claiming that God is as good as disproven even if he strictly speaking is not. Most atheists do not claim to know 100% that there is no God. But having enough good evidence means that it is practically disproven. The 5% or whatever

chance of being wrong can be dismissed.

Surely the believer claims to know things too! If you say belief in atheism means the person is claiming to know there is no God then surely you must be implying and saying that belief in God implies you know there is a God.

If the atheist thinks she knows and so does the believer then it does not follow that both are equally irrational or arrogant. Irrationality and arrogance have different levels. The person who thinks they know there are no goblins is more rational than the person who equally thinks they know there are. Why? Because neither of them see goblins. The atheist is still more rational than the believer in God. There is something else. It is irrational to say you know when you in fact do not know. The believer in God has to hold that God is sensible. Anything daft would not and could not be a God. It speaks of you trying to create a God in an image that suits you so the end result is an idol not a God. If you hold your God wants you to claim to know what you do not know then it is more rational to be an irrational atheist who thinks she knows what she does not.

MYTH - ATHEISM IS FOR NO-HOPERS AND TAKES AWAY MEANING IN LIFE

If it is true that atheism leads to the feeling or belief that there is no point in trying to help others for we are all set to die or the world will be destroyed by nuclear war how come believers are such experts on how an atheist feels? Are they closet atheists? Even an atheist thinking there was a point in helping but not a lot of reason to that would be worrying and dangerous. But the reality is that most atheists worry a lot about the future. They worry so much that they want us to act and not be hoping that prayer or a God may do something for what if we are really on our own? Are believers in fact atheists of a bad type? They won't tell us if they are.

Many religious people get meaning without it being specifically grounded in religion. We are evolved to create our own meaning. Meaning is just a feeling. If the right pill existed, we would take it and get the feeling. If you fail to work and contribute to society, you will not get meaning in life. All the religion and prayer and theology in the world will not help. Religious people get meaning in life the same way as atheists do except the religious pretend its down to their faith. Religion conditions people to block their self-knowledge. People tolerate that for they are afraid of being too different from others in their religious community and not fitting in.

It is when we work to feel happy and valuable that we fail to obtain these things. If we just get on with helping others and distract ourselves in doing so that we will find our lives become happy and fulfilled. They get meaning. Religion urges you to work for meaning instead of simply letting it happen. Both religious people and atheists get meaning in life the same way. But religious people tend to delude themselves that it is belief in God that is bestowing meaning.

Religion is trying to condition atheists to believe that they should become suicidal for not believing. That is vile. Some atheists feel repulsed by religion and forced by their community to participate in it and this can lead to anger and depression and suicide. Just like the failure of society to celebrate the gay person can lead to that person developing a disorder that leads her to suicide or him, so to the failure of religion to celebrate the atheist can kill that person. And even more so when the religion demonises atheists and says they will suffer horrendous torments in Hell forever.

MYTH - ATHEISM IMPLIES YOU HAVE NO REASON TO BE GOOD

If most believers always have and always will do good only because they think God is watching and would go off the rails if he stopped looking that is a utilitarian argument for opposing God. The believers are not good inside though they act good.

Believers in God do not like the suggestion that the atheist can do good just because it is good for there is no God to see it to approve of it or reward it. Why? For it says that atheists should be and can be better people than believers in God.

Good exists and is real whether there is a God or not. We do not need religion to be good. The atheist rejects the idea that the Bible is the word of God because it orders genocide and evil. Atheists can and should promote secularism: the idea that the state should be neutral on the issue of theology. It important to keep religious faith and dogma out of political decision-making. This is the only way to protect equally the right of everyone to believe what they want as long as it does not harm anybody else. For example, atheists campaign to oppose the harm caused by religion, from Christian belief in God's right to torment you forever if you die in sin to Islamic floggings and stonings. The atheist should do good to show the beauty of good. The atheist does not do good in order to attract people to a system of religion like religious people are meant to.

We can ruin our goodness by being captivated by faith and dogma. We can test our theories right here and now and discard them if they fail. That is why fascism lost its power. But religion says you have to pray and obey and you will see the proof that it is true. That is not testing. It is manipulating. They even go as far as to say you will know they are right when you end up in Heaven because of your obedience to and acceptance of their teaching.

An example of how the Catholic Church in Ireland prevents human rights follows. An atheist cannot be president or a judge. The Catholic Church controls 90 per cent of our primary schools and religions are exempted from tax and equality laws.

Whatever we believe about gods, we should all support a secular state that promotes neither atheism nor religion but advances human rights and equality.

Some believers claim that atheism is too simple to be true. Simplicity would imply that it is true. You must keep things simple for its an error to think you need anything more than that. The charge of being over-simplistic is directed at those who do not believe in God because of the suffering in the world. But clearly, the right thing to do is to see evil for what it is instead of trying to rationalise it or water it down in order to be able to believe in an all-good God of infinite power.