

ATHEISM - THE LACK OF BELIEF IN GOD CONSIDERED IN THE LIGHT OF HOW GOD IS A SET OR SUMMARY OF RELIGIOUS IDEAS

It is common today for atheists to say that to be an atheist you essentially must lack belief and faith in God.

You can and should add that you must also lack belief and faith in the importance of belief in God.

Critics say that to say the lack of belief is enough to make you atheist is to confuse atheism with agnosticism. It is true the atheist says, "I don't reject belief in God, I simply do not believe" and the agnostic can say that too. But there is a difference. The atheist is indirectly rejecting belief in God while the agnostic is not. To say faith in God does not matter is to imply, "God if he exists and is looking after me even if not on purpose is important so to call faith in him unimportant is to implicitly say I think there is no such being."

So this outlook which is called negative atheism really is atheism.

We will find that negative atheism is mistaken for a thing when it is things. Its a summary. Negative atheism might treat God as a word when God is really a set. Let us break up and unpack the meaning.

1 - I lack belief in a God who gives morality its authority and who makes morality morality.

Implicitly I say: I reject God's moral authority. To lack respect for any law is to reject the law.

2 - I lack belief in a God who is the ultimate cause of all for all causes must go back to something - an uncaused cause.

Implicitly I say: the ultimate cause is something as impersonal as a brick. This is no God worth calling a God.

3 - I lack belief in a designer God who made all things so cleverly.

Implicitly I say: The ultimate "designer" is just luck that resulted things being able to design themselves. Luck is not a God!

4 - I lack belief in a God who makes all things but does not use anything to make them and without him all things would revert into nothing.

Implicitly I say: Science says that energy only changes and can neither be created or un-created so I reject God

5 - I lack belief in a God who has explanatory power even if there is no evidence or proof - assuming his existence causes things to make sense.

Implicitly I say: I deny the need for God as an explanation. If it is an option it is one of many and I implicitly deny God for not caring about the God option.

6 - I lack belief in a God who I sense is communicating with me that he is there. Its a vague sense of God and it says no more than, "I am with you."

Implicitly I say: This is the second most important one for a God who is not into a relationship is not a God at all.

6 is interesting for God could be communicating and still be an impersonal thing that does not really matter to us morally or spiritually. So that is why 1 is the only real God position.

If there are more we will not worry about that. We have the important ones. 1 is the most important one for it is about what we mean by God - a loving creator of all things who deserves our love and respect. Anything else is a part of God and the part is not the whole. 2 for example could be a creator without any personal inclinations or characteristics. That is not a God any more than the cog is the clock.

Each one of the six is an atheism itself. So how can I say that after saying that only the first one gives us a God? To lack the first one is to directly lack God. To lack the others are to lack things that are less direct. If they are wrong then one is no good. For example, if God is not an explanation for existence or if he is not the uncaused cause then his goodness is no good to him or us so he is not a God.

Many atheists who say that atheism is a lack of belief prove they are more than agnostics by repeatedly challenging faith in God or God. You don't put that amount of work into attacking a belief you merely fail to share. You in some way see the belief as bad or nonsensical.

FOUR RESPONSES TO THE GOD QUESTION

"There is a God."

There are four different responses to that statement.

"There is a God".

"There is no God." (Unbelief).

"There is no God as far as I see." (Not a rejection as such. It is non-belief rather than unbelief. It is not direct unbelief but is indirect unbelief. God is of supreme importance so to say you lack belief in him is to say you believe he is unimportant so in that sense a lack of belief and a form of unbelief are inseparably connected. You can't have one without the other.)

"I do not know." (Withholding judgement).

It is up to the person who says there is a God or that their cat is God incarnate to provide the case for that being true. It is not up to the person who does not believe to disprove it.

A lack of belief is not a true or false matter. It is not a belief or propositional stance. Lack of belief in God is different for it has a hidden premise: God is unimportant and therefore being denied. It inevitably and immediately leads to implicit denial.

Atheism is a belief that you should lack belief in God. It is a belief about belief not just a belief about God.

A positive atheist rejects the existence of God because the evidence says there is no God.

A negative atheist is a person who does not reject the existence of God but who acts as if there is none. That is rejection in another way.

Lack of belief in God is not in itself denial of God but it inevitably forces you to deny God other ways. That is why it is not to be confused with the notion that you simply neither believe or reject belief.

We see that if we are forced to presume and there is no positive evidence for atheism or agnosticism or theism then theism is the last thing we should presume.

Atheism when understood as a lack of belief or the absence of belief in God is not being confused with agnosticism. The difference is the atheist believes what a God would be and the agnostic claims not to know what a God would be. Atheism then is the belief what a God means and the absence of belief in that God. Atheism for some atheists is just a lack of acceptance of the existence of God but for most it is that and also a belief that there is no God.

Theism is an insult to the intelligence. Agnosticism is half-theism and is an insult too. Only atheism isn't ...

