

Scientist Victor Stenger shows that religion is the enemy of science

Popular perception is that science and religion cannot and do not agree.

Victor Stenger says "science and religion are fundamentally incompatible because of their unequivocally opposed epistemologies".

Faith claims are sometimes not based on evidence. Sometimes they are based on selective evidence. Both forms of faith create an immunity to what the evidence is telling one. They function as a filtering lens. They see the evidence they want to see and the evidence that refutes the faith will not be thought about or considered.

Science however seeks to be proven wrong. It only accepts something as true because it considers all the evidence - pro and con - and is open to what new evidence will say. Science will cease accepting evolution if strong enough evidence comes to light that it is in fact false. But faithful believers in religion don't do that - Christianity would still be powerful if proof appeared that there was no God and that the Devil wrote the gospels for a joke. It would just carry on regardless like it does with Adam and Eve. It ignores the fact that they have been proven to be pure legend with no basis in fact. It would carry on regardless like Mormons do despite the proof and evidence that the Book of Abraham is not what it claims to be. Mormonism ignores the fact that the miraculous translation of this book from Egyptian was a fraud.

Science is based on a doubt-everything kind of attitude and seeks evidence that is contrary to its theories. This is about avoiding the bias of faith. Faith and trust are not the same thing. Instead of having faith in science, we trust it because we see its proven track record. Stenger asserts that as religion and science have opposite ways of trying to work out truth they are incompatible. Later in the book we read that "the term faith is used when one assigns a higher confidence value to a belief than is warranted by the evidence." To me, even if faith is needed it is dangerous and you should not go beyond what is needed. The happy person with a little faith is better than the pope with a huge faith.

Stenger says that moderate Christians though they claim to believe in Darwinian evolution do not accept it but something like it. They deny "unguided Darwinian evolution". Their notion that God guided the process of evolution contradicts what the theory of evolution says, the theory rejects intelligent design. It is based on it being rubbish. It is based on things changing on their own without supernatural help.

He points out that science can concern itself about morality and purpose by observing human nature.

Stenger refutes the popular notion based on quantum mechanics that it is your decision if an object becomes a particle or wave - it will become either depending on what you want to measure. "This is wrong. No one has ever measured a wavelength property associated with a single particle. Interference and diffraction effects are only observed for beams of particles, and only particles are detected, even when you are trying to measure a wavelength."

He points out that some scientists think that God can manipulate the particles without you noticing because the Heisenberg uncertainty principle of quantum mechanics says that you cannot always measure the motion of particles. He says that would mean that God is tampering at the atomic level and thus contradicting the laws of physics.

This refutation is important as many people think the new physics vindicates supernatural and psychic claims. Indeed, if it is up to you if something is a particle or wave that is pk - it is mind over matter.

Stenger says that since the late seventies, physics is more reductionist (devoid of spiritual/supernatural theories and beliefs) than ever.

"Today cosmologists can provide a variety of plausible, mathematically precise scenarios for an uncreated universe that violates no known laws of physics." He dismisses the notion that the big bang is synonymous with the creation or origin of the universe. It had no beginning. Something had to be there to explode in the first place. There was a universe of a very different kind that changed into what we have at the big bang. This version of the universe was made in the big bang but the universe was not created in the big bang.

He mentions that the laws of nature are so delicately balanced that any slight deviation would have meant life could not emerge. He says those who claim the universe is fine-tuned by an intelligence cannot use this fact as evidence for the existence of this intelligence. He says it is an argument from ignorance. "I don't know how the universe seems designed so it must have been designed" makes no sense.

He says there is no evidence against the notion that near-death experiences "are all in the head." One evidence that they are is that people who should have been able to read numbers on a shelf after they allegedly left the body uniformly failed.

Stenger gives an excellent and authoritative explanation as to why science and religion are enemies.

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