

### **What is the safest philosophy to follow?**

The good is often the enemy of the best. Bank robbers may rob to feed their children. A religion may be followed for it is careless about people's spiritual development and leaves them no better or worse than non-religious people. Jesus indicated that the good is the enemy of the best when he said your goodness must surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees before you can enter Heaven.

There has to be a system of belief and knowledge that is the best for everybody.

Could such a system be best even if it is false? No. People disagree all the time about what is best for themselves and others. It is hard enough to agree on the truth. We must strive for truth nevertheless. To start thinking that a false system should be best or could be best is turning a serious problem into a disaster. People will find out the truth.

Christianity claims that we should believe in its message and regard it as infallible for if we disbelieve we may be lost forever in Hell. It says that even if Christianity is untrue, we and everybody else will have benefited from living the virtuous way of life advocated by the religion. So it is safer to be a Christian than anything else.

They are right that we must embrace the safest kind of thinking.

Is it safe to tell people they were born defiant of God and goodness and that they always bear those scars?

No. It is safe to tell people that they are born with the power to make mistakes and that they can learn and be wonderful people.

Is it safe to tell people that they must believe certain things or they will go to Hell forever?

No. It is safe to tell them that as long as they are sincere no law has the right to condemn them. If we sincerely think fire will not burn us, that will not stop it burning us. But as long as sincerity wills no harm, it is good in itself as far as intention goes. Sincerity can have undesirable results nevertheless. We can't be punished for making mistakes.

Is it safe to tell people that the happiness of others comes before theirs?

No. Wouldn't it be wrong for you to be happy if others are making themselves miserable to serve you?

People could formulate a faith that does not have dark doctrines and which encourages people. To believe in doctrines like Hell implies you want to believe in them and you could only do that if part of you wants people to suffer in Hell.

Love is valuing the happiness of everybody whether you can do something for them or not. It is also valuing all human life. All human beings have a right to love and be loved.

Some religions say that we are all born sinners and we never deserve any love. They say that any love we get from God or any he inspires people to feel towards us is just his generosity. If we don't deserve love from God we deserve it from nobody. The crime of those judgmental religionists is in telling us that religious faith must tell us that we should love. They want us to love only to satiate a religious authority. They want us to love because we are commanded to. We have to love people because people are people and for no other reason. Love must not be based on religious faith. We must love because we let the love in us flow.

Any faith that teaches that death is a punishment for sin is to be rejected. Death is just the gateway to a new life experience. Death is so sad that if a cure for it comes we will accept it. Human life is so precious that every death is an injustice no matter how much wrong the person has done.

Any faith that teaches that God comes first is to be avoided. It is people who create faiths. To say God comes first is to say that belief comes first. Belief is not certainty – it is only thinking based on the evidence that you have got that the belief is true. The evidence could be misinterpreted or it could be wrong or there could be other evidence that refutes your evidence that you haven't seen yet. Belief is human. Religious belief must never come before people. We need to give importance to other kinds of belief so that we can help people.

Any faith that says that God sends suffering to discipline us and make us better people is to be condemned. It insults us by saying that suffering should happen. It may be objected that suffering people need the comfort of knowing that the suffering they are stuck with serves some wonderful divine purpose. The objection says we are depriving those people of a chance

to find meaning in their suffering. They are supposedly left without the comforting thought that their suffering has value. We deny that suffering has value. But we affirm not that we can use it to do good but that we can do good in spite of it. This is in no way approving of their suffering. If people see suffering as inexcusable and as something that must not happen they have the chance of being willing to do all they can to eradicate it. They do not tell anybody that their suffering has advantages and is useful to a God. What they do is look into the murky filth and find the little gold nuggets. They build on them to make the best of the situation. When that attitude is adopted, all concerned will feel more in control. They will not feel the need to pretend that God needs this suffering for a purpose. The correct attitude affirms that suffering will not be allowed to win. It will not be allowed to destroy the soul of the victim. This is about all being their own God.

Any faith that teaches that those who die in sin will go to Hell forever is to be avoided. We refuse to believe that human nature would be bad enough to choose such a fate. Nobody who does what is termed evil does it all the time. We will put our experience of human nature and people before what any faith says.

Pascal's wager says it is best to follow God for then if there is no God you are at least still virtuous and if there is you will go to Heaven. But for Pascal God is inseparable from the Roman Catholic Church which God supposedly directs and uses to show his face. So it is not about God so much as religion for merely believing in God not enough and if it is we don't need Roman Catholicism.

You cannot say that you will try to enjoy serving God because you do not want to miss out of it is the only life you have. God does not accept being treated like a backup plan and he sees your heart so if you are not serving him for him but for yourself then you are not serving him at all.