

Deism Today...

The Deist Alliance Bimonthly Newsletter...



Volume 1, Section 2, June 1, 2006

Weekly Chats...

Unless otherwise noted weekly chats will be held on Friday evenings at 10:00 p.m. central time. You can join in on the chat by going here...

www.positivedeism.com/chat

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The Divine...

Legs and hips and shoulders and arms uncoiling spring forward, the axe firm in one hand, the other hand sliding down the shaft propelling the axe head faster, faster towards a bottom cut on the tree. The axe head at the bottom of the arc slams into the tree, cutting into the wood more than an inch deep. The tree shudders, birds draw back, and the woods echo with the gasp of the axe and the pop of the axe-tree. The next blow is directed above the first: sinew and eye and brain combining to bring the axe head tearing down about 6 inches above the first cut, exploding into the wood, ripping out a chunk of wood half pound six inches long and wide that flies across the clearing. Muscles better, nerves more: drawing back the axe, aiming another horizontal swing at the bottom of the yellow gash, my back throwing the axe forward, plowing deep into the wood, the tree shudders once again, and then again the overhead arc of the axe accelerating down to rip out another yellow chip. I shift my feet a little to line up a swing on the far side of the cut and complete another cyclic blow. Now I change hands on the axe handle, my right on the hilt, and my left higher up on the handle near the steel, I raise the axe, tensing my biceps and shoulder muscles. I aim for the side of the tree opposite the first cut and begin the horizontal swing: shoulders first, my left hand pushing down the shaft adding velocity to the axe head, pushing the axe faster, arm's muscles extending, then stomach muscles and hips pulling, and rolling to add more velocity, left hand nearly to the hilt of the axe, the axe head at maximum velocity and then the whaump of the axe entering the tree. With some effort, I pry the axe from the tree and draw it back for another blow. Ten more times the axe raises and falls on the tree until, wobbling and unsteady on just a splinter of wood, the tree rests amid the forest supported by the tiniest branches of the canopy.

Stepping back, breathing deep, pulling in air that rushes thru nostrils and mouth to fill a vacuum in my lungs, sucking up the coolness and aromas of the forest floor. Two, three, four times I breathe so deep to parts of my being, all of me rejoices at each gasp of air, filling parts of me down deep and hallow. My chest raising and falling in rhythm with the breathing. Deep long inhalation, rising chest and cool lungs at the center. My chest expands to allow the inrush of air, and then relaxes to let the air burst out.

In this, I know the divine...

~Beowulf...

Refraining From Ridicule as a Deist...

Recently someone said...

“...Isn't part of Deism helping people realize the false claims and superstitions of the "revealed" religions?...”

Is it? Or is that just a side item born of zeal?

In my mind, Deism is "Belief in God through reason and nature". In addition to that, we don't have a tenant, or missive from God saying, "Go ye unto all the world preaching the Deist gospel to every creature".

There's certainly nothing wrong with zeal. I wish more Deists had it. But I think that zeal needs to be channeled in the right direction. Advertising who we are, as well as what and why we believe what we believe, is a good direction. Sharing our beliefs with seekers, the curious, or those open to our ideas, is a good direction. Publishing essays and newsletters focusing on what we do believe, and why, is a good direction.

Ridiculing the beliefs of those who are happy and content with their own beliefs is counter-productive to our movement, in my opinion. It gives others a bad taste about us. It pigeonholes us into a category of "those Christian bashers". It gives the impression that our theology is solely based on what we don't believe, rather than what we do believe. It violates Golden Rule principles (Do we want others ridiculing our theological beliefs and trying to push theirs on us? If not, then we shouldn't be doing that to them). It puts us in a position of looking backward rather than looking and moving forward. It puts us in the fundy position of "We're right. You're wrong, and we won't rest until we make you believe like us". And on top of all that, it lacks a respect toward the right of religious freedom that all people should enjoy (without constant badgering or ridicule).

When you tell a person that their beliefs are stupid, you're basically telling that person that they are stupid. They'll immediately become defensive and shut you out.

Basically, I don't think a worldview based on Reason can be forced on someone whose

worldview is based on revelation. It just doesn't work, and in fact, more often than not, is actually counter productive. I believe people have to come to the Reason worldview on their own. And when they do come, we should be standing there with loving open arms welcoming them in.

This is a topic that I'm personally very passionate about... Zealous if you will. I want to see Deism develop and grow, and I'm afraid that if we go about it the wrong way, we'll alienate ourselves from the very people we desire to reach. I believe that if we present ourselves, and our beliefs, with an attitude of love and respect, we'll attract those who are open to our message. If we constantly badger and ridicule others beliefs, and show an attitude of disrespect, I fear we'll drive away more people than we attract, and basically do our cause more harm than good. Even people who are disillusioned with their Christian beliefs can get defensive if you ridicule. After all, if they are coming out of Christianity, then it's likely that many of their family and dearest loved ones are still Christian. If you ridicule, they're likely to resist. Who wants to join a movement that actively offends all your loved ones?

Deism needs to be perceived as a community of loving, respectful, rational, moral people. Not a group full of anger and disrespect. And that's exactly what'll happen if we do nothing but focus on ridiculing others theological beliefs.

I want to reiterate a point... Showing a respect for others religious freedom doesn't mean that you in any way agree with, or approve of, their beliefs.

My intention is not to force all Deists into submitting to my view. I don't expect everyone to agree. But I am passionate about this subject, and wanted to at least present my case a bit further, and point out that there may be a better way to approach it than badgering and ridicule.

~Steve Dowell...

Deist Alliance Links and News...

Deist Alliance Member Sites...

- **PONDER: Presence On the Net of Deists for Enlightenment and Reason...**
Promoting Deism and Deists' Communications Worldwide
<http://www.deistnet.com>
- **Modern Deism: Reason, Nature, Free Thought, Liberty, and Respect...**
<http://www.moderndeism.com>
- **Deist.Info...**
<http://www.deist.info>
- **POSITIVE DEISM: Promoting Online Deist Community and Friendship...**
"Reason and Respect in all you think, say and do"
<http://www.positivedeism.com>
- **Dynamic Deism: Belief in God Through Reason and Nature...**
<http://dynamicdeism.org>

Editor's Note...

"The views expressed by the authors of the articles in this newsletter don't necessarily reflect the views of all Deists, or of the Deist Alliance"

Dynamic Deism News...

This month marks a transition for Dynamic Deism, and what hopefully will be a chance for us to grow better serve the cause of promoting Deism in the world.

Dynamic Deism is, as of June 3rd, no longer headquartered on Galveston Island, in Texas. We are moving everything to a temporary location in Knoxville, Tennessee... and at the end of the summer DD will find its HQ on the campus of the Meadville Lombard Theological School in Chicago.

To fit in with our future home in Chicago, we have changed our Dynamic Deism voicemail to a Chicago number. You can leave voice messages for DD at (773) 598-8861.

We are also in the process of a complete re-design of the Dynamic Deism Library. Hopefully, when it is completed it will make for easier access to Deist works, make for easier online reading, and also allow us to have a dedicated DD Librarian. There is someone who is working towards taking that role, and it will be announced when we debut the new library.

We have many new members, and we continue to grow. As always, we want to thank all the wonderful people that make Dynamic Deism the Community and Fellowship that it is.

~David Pyle (Administrator, Dynamic Deism)...

Personal Announcements...

Byron Arnold from Dynamic Deism would like to announce his new website called "[The Dynamic Deist](http://www.thedynamicdeist.bravehost.com)". The website is a Dynamic Deism affiliated site. It can be visited at the following link...

www.thedynamicdeist.bravehost.com



Deism in History...

Deism's Influence On The American Republic...

If we were to narrow down the overriding principle of the American Revolution to a single word, that word would be *liberty*. What many of the influential founding fathers saw as one of the sources of tyranny was ancestral executive authority whose authenticity was wedded to divine favoritism enforced through the religious establishment. The general population was in large part forced to comply with an official state religion, that religion then granted authority to rule the populace to a selected family deemed *royalty* who in turn levied taxes with some portion being designated as a *gift* to the said religious establishment. Within this arrangement, both the people's spiritual opinions and their earthly actions were in effect enforced by the same entity, the two-headed monster of government and religion.

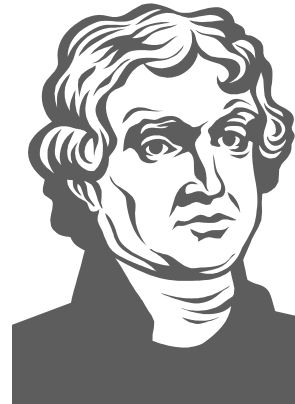
When Thomas Jefferson penned the list of grievances against the crown known as The Declaration of Independence, he addressed this two-headed beast.

When in the Course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

The early Deist conception of God was that it was a God not given to a particular sect or religion and could therefore not be claimed by a particular government as the official proxy of such a God. God was Creator and had created the natural laws, which comprise the world of nature. He gave men freewill to make their own choices within this world. The *laws of nature and of Nature's God* reflects this concept. If Jefferson

had intended this to be the Christian God, he would have used *Jesus Christ or the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*. Instead, this more generic description of God allows the individual the liberty of applying the liberty of their religious opinions to the general description.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness...



Once again, the more generic Creator title is used to provide each person his or her own concept of God. It further expounds that governments are *instituted among Men* from *the consent of the governed*. This again is a departure from the idea government is given by divine right and its authority from divine law. The Deists did not believe that authority was given over in the form of Ten Commandments written by God but rather from a mandate of the people who would agree to be governed.

Deists in America took exception with this concept they considered religious tyranny. Government, by its nature, is a coercive entity. Its function is to regulate behavior to promote the general common good. But this coerciveness overstepped its bounds when it tried to extend its influence beyond actions and into opinions. Every man ought to have a liberty of opinion on religious and other matters; only actions predicated on those opinions ought to be regulated, especially if it interferes with the liberty of another. So one of the great problems to solve for this new republic would be to address this problem of religious establishment.

An establishment of religion in colonial America was a bit different than the concept in Europe. Many colonies had in fact been a refuge for religious sects who fell out of favor with the state religions of European countries. While some colonies established only one sect, others recognized many such sects, while others simply did not address the issue at all. One idea was that instead of recognizing just one sect as the state religion, the state would recognize them all equally. So, in the early days of the American Republic, an establishment of religion was known as public support (taxes) collected for religious entities, not just an official state religion. This is the concept that the framers of the Constitution had to decide what the official position of the federal government would be.

In 1787, the Federal Government adopted the Constitution of the United States with the following provision Article 6, Section 3:

The Senators and Representatives before mentioned, and the Members of the several State Legislatures, and all executive and judicial Officers, both of the United States and of the several States, shall be bound by Oath or Affirmation, to support this Constitution; but no religious Test shall ever be required as a Qualification to any Office or public Trust under the United States...

No public official is required to swear an oath to God for an office in the United States, only to

uphold the Constitution, which is instituted among men and has been declared as the *supreme law of the land*. Further, one's religious opinion cannot be held as a reason to deny one office. This clause states the government's position towards religion, it has none; it is neutral. Some, however, did not feel this was explicit enough, however, so in 1789 it was further addressed first in the First Amendment to the Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...

Remember, an *establishment of religion* means a public support (taxes) of religion. Notice also it does not say *of a religion*, it says *of religion*, it is a generalization of religion not just a particular construction, such as a state religion. This first part is a freedom from religion. The second part addresses one's right to a freedom of religion. One has the liberty to practice (or not practice) the religion of their conscious. The United States cannot tyrannize the liberty of your choice it can only regulate actions predicated from such (human sacrifice can still be punished as murder and cannot hide behind the freedom of religious choice).

Just because Deists were instrumental in forming many of these laws does not mean they were not also acceptable to other sects. Most religions of the day championed the separation of religion and government. As if to underscore that sentiment in 1797 the United States signed a Treaty with Tripoli which states:

The government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion...

Per the Constitution, all signed and ratified treaties become the supreme law of the land. It should also be noted that this is only one of three ratifications that were unanimous in nature.

~Travis Clementsmith

Selected Deist Glossary...

- **Agnosticism**- Belief that human beings do not have sufficient evidence to warrant either the affirmation or the denial of a proposition. The term is used especially in reference to our lack of knowledge of the existence of god.
- **Atheism**- the belief that god does not exist.
- **belief**- conviction regarding, the truth of a proposition, whether or not one is in possession of evidence adequate to justify a claim that the proposition is known with certainty.
- **Deism**- belief in God based on reason, experience, and observation of nature.
- **dogma**- is belief or doctrine held by a religion or any kind of organization to be authoritative and not to be disputed or doubted.
- **experience**- knowledge acquired through the senses, and not through abstract reasoning.
- **faith**- a strongly held belief in something that has not been proved or is not capable of being proved.
- **Freethought**- is the practice of forming one's beliefs independently of the perceived factual/logical falsehoods and intellectually limiting effects of conventional wisdom, urban legends, popular culture, cognitive bias, prejudice, tradition, and authority.
- **God**- **1** the supreme or ultimate reality: as **a** : the Being perfect in power, wisdom, and goodness who is worshiped as creator and ruler of the universe **b**: the incorporeal divine Principle ruling over all as eternal Spirit : infinite Mind; a being or object believed to have more than natural attributes; **2** a person or thing of supreme value
- **Monotheism**- the belief there is only one god, or that the gods of different religions are really just different manifestations of the one true god. Monotheism is opposed to both henotheism and polytheism.
- **Nature**- the physical world including all natural phenomena and living things.
- **Panendeism**- a view which combines the insights of Pantheism and Deism by arguing that the world is included in God's being or the analogy of cells in a larger organism.
- **Pantheism**- Belief that god is present in all of nature, rather than transcending it.
- **Polytheism**- a kind of theism which holds that there is more than one god.
- **Reason**- the ability to think logically regarded as a basis for knowledge, as distinct from experience or emotions.
- **Theism**- Belief in the existence of god as a perfect being deserving of worship.
- **Transcendentalism**- a system of philosophy that emphasizes intuition as a means of knowing a spiritual reality and believes that divinity pervades nature and humanity.

What is the Deist Alliance?

The Deist Alliance (DA) consists of various Deist groups who have formed a friendly alliance with each other in order to open channels of communication, share information, resources and advice, and generally work together toward a higher goal of promoting Deism to the world...

For more information about Deism or the Deist Alliance check out the following website:
<http://deistalliance.org>

Deist Testimonial...

My Walkabout...

This is an essay of my journey to the realm of reason and spirituality, and a continuing walkabout on the never-ending path of free-thought. The definition of “walkabout” is: an Australian Aborigine's period of nomadic wandering. It is sometimes considered a rite of passage. For me this walkabout is a rite of passage.

I was born to and raised in a Christian family and home. We weren't evangelical, just the plain vanilla protestant variety. During most of my early years and into my mid teens, making it to church on Sundays and Wednesdays seemed to be a requirement. After I turned sixteen years old, my attendance turned sporadic for the next few years, mainly attending with my parents or girl friends for special occasions only. At twenty-two years of age when I left for boot camp after enlisting in the U.S. Navy, seemed to mark the end for my attendance at church. With the exception of either weddings or funerals, I only attended a regular church service three or four times over the next twenty-seven years, but none in the last fifteen.

When I first started to question Christianity and the bible in general, I was pretty young. With questions like, how old is god or why doesn't the bible mention the dinosaurs. Even at an early age, the answers I was received wasn't at all satisfying. As I attained the age of understanding, the bible made less and less sense and the logic of nature was making more and more sense. Good example is “the fossil record versus the story of Biblical creation.” During this time I sometimes caught myself giving excuses to my own questions of why the stories of the bible just did not add up. I was trying to use science to make it fit. I think by the time I was thirty or thirty five, I was only a Christian in name only.

After retiring from the U.S. Navy in February 2002, I had a chance to pay much more attention to world events and politics. During this time I became much more aware of how a certain type of evangelical Christianity fundamentalism was starting to influence politics and all other parts of living. What I noticed was this type of Christianity, like its self-proclaimed leaders were very self-centered, hateful and demanding, the whole time implying that their belief was the only true word. In April or May of 2005, I had finally had enough of the hate, lies and bigotry of the likes of Pat Robertson, Jerry Falwell and James Dobson and anything that could associate me with them, even being Christian or the label.

From a forum discussion I had heard the term Deist in association with the founding fathers of this country, but I did not know what it meant. After completing an initial information search on the subject, to my surprise, I had found a philosophy or belief that was very similar to my own way of thinking. The more I learned about Deism and other free-thought philosophies, the more I realized, that I just had an awakening. My witnessing of a new and spectacular sunrise of free thought on the first day on my road to enlightenment. I also realized that I wasn't alone in my beliefs.

During the journey along my free-thought walkabout, I found my other beliefs also lined up with Agnosticism, most of Pantheism, Secular Humanism and Taoism (or Daoism). When I look closer at my Deistic beliefs I find that am a Agnostic Panendeist (most closest). But using a more positive and dynamic description of it I would be a Modern Deist. I also find I am still evolving and on a walkabout in my belief processes. Time will tell when this journey ends.

Part of my transition from a Christian to a Deist gave me a thirst for the true knowledge and history of the bible. Being recently retired from the military with some time on my hands I decided to embark on a quest for that knowledge. Through recent research, I have discovered much information of the real history and nature of the bible. I now believe that the Jesus of the bible never existed. Most every story in the books and gospels of today's bible has been rewritten, falsified or stolen from earlier cultures. Even the four gospels disagree with each other on several main points. I see it now as a perversion for the sole purpose of creating a myth of Christianity to use as a tool of deception, coercion and control of the people. Even Pope Leo X had confessed in the early sixteenth century that, "*It has served us well, this myth of Christ*".

I guess I should thank Pat and Jerry for helping me down the road to enlightenment. To finally setting me free from the bonds of deception and dogma. Inspiring me to take the journey on down the road to knowledge. Being the impetus to finally helping me see the light of my new sunrise. The start of my new day... My new Deist day...

~Curtis L. Eller (B1rdman)...

Famous "Freethinker" Quotes...

This section will feature quotes from famous deists and other "freethinkers". In this edition we will focus on quotes from Thomas Paine...

"My own mind is my own church..." ~The Age of Reason

"To argue with a man who has renounced his reason is like giving medicine to the dead..." ~The Crisis

"I believe in the equality of man; and I believe that religious duties consist in doing justice, loving mercy, and endeavoring to make our fellow-creatures happy." ~The Age of Reason

"Independence is my happiness, and I view things as they are, without regard to place or person; my country is the world, and my religion is to do good." ~The Rights of Man

"I have always strenuously supported the right of every man to his own opinion, however different that opinion might be to mine. He who denies another this right makes a slave of himself to his present opinion, because he precludes himself the right of changing it." ~The Age of Reason

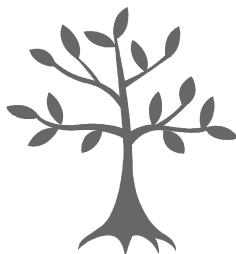
"Everyone has the same right to their belief as I do. But for man to be truly happy, he must be mentally faithful to himself. Infidelity does not consist in believing, or in disbelieving, it consists in professing to believe what one does not believe." ~The Age of Reason

"Every religion is good that teaches man to be good; and I know of none that instructs him to be bad." ~The Rights of Man

"The most formidable weapon against errors of every kind is reason. I have never used any other and I trust I never shall." ~The Age of Reason

"The creation is the Bible of the Deist. He there reads, in the handwriting of the Creator himself, the certainty of His existence and the immutability of His power, and all other Bibles and Testaments are to him forgeries." ~ The Age of Reason

"In Deism our reason and our belief become happily united. The wonderful structure of the universe, and everything we behold in the system of the creation, prove to us, far better than books can do, the existence of a God, and at the same time proclaim His attributes."



Why I'm a Deist...

I never really gave much thought to religion growing up. I was raised in the Southern Baptist church, but we didn't attend services very often. I considered myself Christian but like most people my theology extended no further than the Bible stories I learned as a child. That changed, however in 1981 when I found myself in college in Arkansas majoring in biology the same time the legislature of that state enacted into law a bill mandating the teaching of Biblical Creationism whenever evolution was mentioned in public schools. This put me in a unique situation and as I followed the trial that eventually resulted in the laws dismissal as unconstitutional, I found myself wondering which side I should believe. Science could explain how the world worked, but said nothing at all about why it exists. And the explanations religion offered seemed woefully inadequate and inconsistent with what I saw in nature. But I had no proof God *didn't* exist. I resolved then and there that I would seek the answer for myself and accept it without prejudice – whatever it turned out to be. To that end I was determined to be as coldly logical as I possibly could be and examine what both science and theology had to say. This is the argument that came from that vow:

Many philosophers have determined that to prove that God exists you have to do two things. 1: show that the universe could not explain itself and 2: show that God is the only alternative. As to the first of these I offer an excerpt from my book [Toward a New Religion](#) (Authorhouse, 2006) dealing with the Big Bang Theory:

A cosmos which assumes the conservation laws are absolute and has enough matter in it to create a gravitational force equal to the outward expansion has been put forward to explain its existence (and I admit this argument does *seem* to make some sense being that is its simplest possible *physical* description). It goes like this: The universe is an energy field. The amount of energy in the field depends on the total curvature of space within it. If there is a zero net curvature because the outward push cancels out the inward pull, then there should be zero net energy, or in other words, nothing since matter is just a form of energy. If true under the rules of uncertainty this could reduce the cosmos to nothing more than a fluctuation in the vacuum. That is the universe just appeared like a virtual particle out of the void. This argument attempts to make a connection between something and nothing but in my opinion it actually fails because it uses the term zero (0) incorrectly.

To see for yourself what kind of problems can arise from the improper use of zero in mathematics study the problem below:

start with the equation: " $a=b$ "
next multiplying both sides by " a " gives us " $a^2=ab$ "

subtract " b^2 " from both sides to keep it equal
" $a^2-b^2=ab-b^2$ "

then factor " $(a+b)(a-b)=b(a-b)$ "

now divide both sides by " $a-b$ " " $(a+b)(a-b)/a$
 $b=b(a-b)/a-b$ "

giving us " $a+b=b$."

If " $a=b$ " and we make " a " equal to 1, then " b " also equals 1, but the last line of the equation states " $a+b=b$ " or substituting 1 for " a " and " b " then $1+1=1$ or $2=1$. How can this be? If you go back and check all the steps there are no apparent mistakes in operation. The contradiction arises when the equation " $(a+b)(a-b)=b(a-b)$ " is divided by " $a-b$." If " $a=b$ " and both are equal to 1 then " $a-b$ " is the same as $1-1=0$ and dividing by 0 or dividing 0 by another number is not allowed because it leads to contradictions and fallacies just like this.

It would appear the proponents of this argument confuse 0 meaning "nothing" with 0 meaning "no difference". In other words, it is ambiguous. It also violates a fundamental rule of mathematics, that is, zero divided by any number equals zero (half of nothing is still nothing).

In this case zero obviously means equilibrium, like a scale with 1 ounce of gold in each pan. The scale would read zero meaning no difference, but there would still be 2 ounces of gold. So I have no reason to conclude that uncertainty could explain the world "popping" into being like a virtual particle for the simple reason it seems that you must first have something to be uncertain about (besides even virtual particles need an infusion of energy in order to become stable and thus "real"). This doesn't mean the universe isn't flat. It very well could be, but this argument cannot be used to explain it...

Because of the reasons outlined in the above excerpt I am forced to conclude that the universe cannot explain itself. But is God the only alternative? The following is an argument I developed (which I call the "paradox of nothingness") that I believe shows why the answer to that question is *yes*.

To preface, the value (positive or negative) ideas have are determined by applying the terms "is" or "is not" to them. By applying the term "is not" to the cosmos as a whole we will arrive at the

definition of nothingness. But for something to come from something else there must be something in common between them or you have a non-sequiter. In the syllogism, it is the middle term that unites the major and minor premises and allows for a conclusion. In life, it is the DNA passed from one generation to the next. But what do existence and nonexistence have in common? They are complete opposites – aren't they?

The answer is they are both concepts. They are both ideas. That is what they have in common. That is the only thing they have in common. Nothingness is a concept – *you're thinking about it right now!*

For nothingness to be absolute it cannot have any properties at all no matter what they are. That means it cannot even be thought of. Therefore, if nothingness is a concept that *can* be thought of it cannot be absolute, which means nothingness is *not* nothing. That is a contradiction and contradictions cannot exist in logical systems. Just saying, “nonexistence exists” is absurd. Thus the concept of nothingness is unstable and must collapse into a state that is stable. In order to do that it must have something in common with that state. Since the only property nothingness has is that of a concept it can only be reduced to something else that is also a concept. It may be a triviality but saying, “existence exists” offers no problems at all.

Now *all* the evidence I have says that for a concept to exist there must be a mind similar to my own to consider it. For instance, I could hold 9 coins or 9 stones, but where is the number 9 apart from what I have in my hand? 9 has properties of its own apart from each of these groups. It is the square of 3. It is an odd number. None of these traits are intrinsic to either the stones or the coins. I can add or subtract from each group but as far as I can sense their physical properties stay the same. But even though it has characteristics of its own that are different from, say, the number 8 (which is an even number and not a square) and is, therefore, *something* I cannot point to anything in nature and say, “this is the number 9 by itself.” I can only think about it.

A materialist may counter by saying 9 can only exist through a medium like the stones or coins but what are they made of? Science tells me Albert Einstein proved that matter is just energy in particle form. Then Erwin Schrodinger demonstrated that energy could be manifested as a wave. Finally, Max Born showed that waves are just probability distributions that are mathematical in nature. And mathematics is just the logical manipulation of numbers which are *concepts*. Thus I have no reason to believe materialism is true since all it does is lead me into a circular argument. Because of this I have no choice but to conclude the world is basically idealistic and concepts must be observed by a mind in order to

exist which means that fundamental concept must be self-referential or self-aware because there is literally nothing else to see It. Therefore I may reasonably conclude that God does exist and holds Itself in existence because It can say, “I AM.”

But what can we “know” about “God”? Again I offer an excerpt from my book.

Now, if God is perfect (a claim common to many religions) that perfection must be in what God actually *is*. A circle can be perfect and so can a square but they are perfect in what they are, not in what they are not. A perfect square must have 4 corners each measuring exactly 90 degrees, but a circle cannot have any corners even if they are perfect. Likewise, we must not assign properties to God because it *seems* to complete Its' perfection as they may result only in contradictions.

For instance, it is logical to conclude that if God is perfect, and the reason for the existence of the universe, and perfection includes omnipotence then the universe must also be perfect (because a perfect being could do no less) and if the universe is perfect, there is no need for God to intervene in its operation, therefore no need for miracles. Because as Hume pointed out, any interference in the workings of the universe by God would be an interruption of the very processes set up by God in the first place. Why would God need to alter something It created Itself? This would imply an *imperfection* on God's part in the act of creation, which is inconsistent with the assertion by most religions that God is both omnipotent and all knowing. Surely a perfect God would have foreseen any potential problems and would have compensated for them at the beginning.

For this and other reasons I expound in my book I must conclude that God is neither omnipotent nor omniscient and accept a Deistic philosophy that maintains that even though God is the “cause” of the universe it operates and evolves through natural law as described by science without interference. But what does that mean to us?

Simply this: Whether we like it or not, if God holds Itself in existence because It can say, “I AM” then that part of us that is self-aware and says, “I AM” must hold itself in existence for the same reason. Even after that which we call our “physical” body deteriorates and dies just as traditional theology predicts. So if we wish to have a harmonious relationship with those whom we will share this journey we should follow the so-called “Golden Rule” and at least try to treat others as we would wish them to treat us. Only this way may we find *true* meaning and purpose...

~ Stretmediq...