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Atheism: The End of Reason

All reasoning requires faith. We tend to carry the assumption that we can know the truth, and herein lies a deep sense of faith, a belief that truth is attainable. It is this faith which drives every intellect.

Science itself relies on faith in the sense we *trust* that things can really be understood, we trust our reasoning and metaphysical assumptions. We believe things can be definitely known and so we research to know things. As Albert Einstein famously said, “science can only be created by those who thoroughly imbued with the aspiration towards truth and understanding. To this there also belongs the faith in the possibility that the regulations valid for the world of existence are rational, that is, comprehensible to reason. I cannot conceive a genuine man of science without that profound faith.”

To come to any truth you must first employ your reasoning, but reasoning is only made possible via the instrument of our mind. If our thinking is not valid then all reasoning is destroyed by its own credentials.

Is our thinking valid?

The Atheist often identifies with the naturalistic view that there is nothing beyond Nature. Nature is the arena of space and time in which matter and energy exists. Atheism denies the existence of a transcendent reality and so claims that Nature exists ‘on its own’. Since God is described as being supernatural (transcending nature), the naturalist cannot consider God as part of reality. Our minds and thinking capabilities in this view are ultimately a product of Nature and Nature alone.

If our thinking is a product of Nature, and the structure of Nature is a ‘cause-and-effect’ relation, then every event in nature must be connected with a previous event. This means our actions of thinking are caused events, meaning our thoughts would arise whether truly justified or not. So, if nature is truly an interlocked system where all causes are non-rational, then thinking has no validity since it is a product of non-rational causes. Thoughts are therefore merely subjective events, not necessarily apprehensions of objective truth. Professor Haldane put it this way, “*If my mental processes are determined wholly by the motions of atoms in my brain, I have no reason to suppose that my beliefs are true... and hence I have no reason for supposing my brain to be composed of atoms.*”

If our thinking is derived from nature, then our reasoning came to exist by natural processes. In the atheistic worldview, it’s common to believe that the sole determiner of human development is purely the evolutionary principle ‘survival of the fittest’. The atheistic view of evolution is that there is no intelligent input to our existence, no God who formulated the biological mechanism of reason. This naturalistic view would therefore cause us to develop our cognitive faculties for reasoning to evolve *only* in ways conducive or beneficial to survival, not truth. In confessing your reasoning has not evolved for truth but survival, you may have reason to think that your thoughts help you survive but

how can you trust what your mind tells you to be true? Even the well-known atheist John Gray recognises the difficulty that according to a naturalistic view of Darwin's theory it is impossible to know the truth, since *"the human mind serves evolutionary success, not truth."*

Atheism asserts that God does not exist, this a truth claim. But atheism also asserts that our reasoning faculties are not designed for truth in any way whatsoever, and if not, and if just for survival, then why search for truth when that dimension is not an evolved part of human reasoning? What basis do you have? Truth is not attainable within the atheistic worldview. It's what caused Charles Darwin to say, *"with me the horrid doubt always arises whether the convictions of man's mind, which has been developed from the mind of lower species, are of any value or at all trustworthy."* C.S. Lewis affirmed this when he mused, *"Suppose there was no intelligence behind the universe, no creative mind. In that case, nobody designed my brain for the purpose of thinking. It is merely that when the pointless atoms inside my skull react for chemical or physical reasons, that this gives me, as an irrational by-product, the sensation I call thought. But if so, how can I trust my own thinking to be true? But if I can't trust my own thinking, how can I trust the arguments leading to any worldview?"* In other words, If our mind came to exist by natural, mindless unguided processes in a pointless universe, then why do we trust it? Would you trust a computer if it was the end product of mindless unguided processes via random forces? Therefore, you may, if you like, give up all claims to the truth. You may say simply *"our way of thinking is useful"* - without adding *"and therefore true."* It enables us to build a bridge and fix a body and that is good enough. The old, high pretensions of reason must be given up, for it is a behaviour evolved entirely as an aid to survival.

The end of reason

In this naturalistic view there is no reason to trust our belief-forming faculties and therefore there is no legitimate basis for reasoning. As C.S. Lewis said, "unless human reasoning is valid no science can be true." Naturalism, and therefore atheism, undermines the foundations of the very rationality that is needed to construct or believe any kind of argument whatsoever. *Naturalism* discredits our processes of reasoning. To believe that nature produces the human mind is absurd. Nature does not produce valid thought. Therefore, the claim of reasoning to be valid is one which naturalists cannot deny without (philosophically speaking) cutting their own throat. I am therefore left to reject naturalism (and so atheism) because how could I consider a worldview that threatens the very rationality needed for science, philosophy or any subject of thought for that matter? Therefore you are left with a simple choice: anyone who desires truth must reject atheism.

Moral reasoning

Yet the dilemma for the atheist does not end here. Not only has the atheist abolished a foundation for intellectual reasoning, but also moral reasoning. Which, may I add, should be considered of greater importance.

If nature alone attunes our powers of reason and our moral sensibilities merely to aid our survival, why should we go along with it? What's so good about our survival if nature has caused it without reason? If meaninglessness produced us, our existence is also meaningless, and so is our survival. Therefore any morality based on general human flourishing is merely a pretence. In an indifferent universe there can be no real objective morality, there is only merely social constructs that help or hinder the continuation of pointless existence.

Even if objective morality was possible within an atheistic framework, we still have a problem. If there is no God and we are merely complex chemical machines controlled by our mindless genes in a meaningless universe, then does freedom really exist? If there is nothing beyond the physical, then

we don't make real choices for or against a moral standard, we just react to external stimuli based on our chemistry. We're slaves to cause-and-effect.

This would mean we have no responsibilities, no rights and no real freedom. Naturalists can't recognise morality with any 'real value', and so if all transcendental pretensions have been exposed for a fraud, why pay much attention to morality anyway? There can be no reason to encourage one impulse rather than the other, now that I know what they both are: good and evil are shadows cast on the outer world by the impulses which we have been conditioned to feel. While many naturalists are delighted to say this, fortunately (though inconsistently) most do not stick to it. A moment after they have admitted that good and evil are illusions, you will find them exhorting us to work for posterity, to educate, revolutionise, live and die for the good of humanity. Those who claim to be humanists hold a philosophy which excludes humanity, yet they remain human. At the sight of injustice they throw all their naturalism away.

Our right to freedom exists only if God exists. If there is no God, human freewill is merely an illusion manufactured by a blind and mindless nature which exists without ultimate purpose. And if we have no freewill - we can't be praised for our good work nor blamed for our bad. In this philosophy there are no categories of 'good' and 'bad', so Anne Frank was as evil as Nazi torturers, and they as good as her. However, because God exists we have accountability beyond ourselves and the ability to understand and seek out the absolutes that God has revealed. If we continue to make moral judgements then we must believe that the conscience of man is not a product of nature. It can be valid only if it is an offshoot of some absolute moral wisdom, which is not a product of non-moral, non-rational nature.

The rise of reason

Instead of suggesting that nature exists 'on its own', the Christian understands that nature came from the supernatural. In this view nature is not eternal, and so neither independent, rather, its creation is dependent upon God's eternal independent nature. The Christian view teaches that God being supernatural is the only reality that can truly exist by itself, and that our natural reality is a product of God's creation. God exists on His own terms, and we and the natural world exist because He exists. R.G. Collingwood said, *"Throughout the long tradition of European thought it has been said that nature, though it is a thing that really exists, is not a thing that exists in itself or in its own right, but a thing which depends for its existence upon something else."*

The moment a naturalist and therefore atheist thinks about nature, they forget the fact that they are thinking. The moment one attends to this it's obvious that one's own thinking cannot be merely a natural event, and that therefore something other than nature exists. The supernatural is not remote and abstruse, it's as intimate as breathing. Denial of it depends on a certain absent-mindedness. Human reason and morality are proofs of the supernatural, and so are proofs of God. God and nature have come into a certain relation, namely, in every human mind. For the Christian, God comes before nature, and this enables us to know that nature is derived. So for the theist, the human mind in the act of knowing is illuminated by the Divine reason. However, we should not consider our acts of reason as something 'above' or 'beyond' nature. Rather, reason is given before nature and on reason our concept of nature depends. It is in the Judeo-Christian worldview that both intellectual and moral reasoning finds its justified basis.

This article contains references from material by RZIM and literature by C.S.Lewis