

How many of you have ever been in a debate with an Atheist?

I have a few close friends who are atheists and sometimes they broach the topic and we get into discussions.

In these debates, there is a question that is raised by the atheist that sometimes even Christians ask.

If God is so all-loving, all-powerful God, why is there evil in this world?

This apparent contradiction between a good God and the existence of evil was famously articulated by the eighteenth-century skeptic **David Hume**:

Is he willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then he is impotent. Is he able, but not willing? Then he is malevolent. Is he both able and willing? Why then is there evil?

I saw the same questions posed on the **renowned Christian apologist Ravi Zacharias** by an indignant atheist in a large crowd: "How can God exist if there is so much evil in the world?"

Zacharias asked him, "If there is something called evil; then there must be something good, right?"

The student concedes.

Zacharias continues "Then how do we differentiate between that which is good and evil. There should be a universal, objective standard, right?"

The student reluctantly concedes, "uhm yes."

Zacharias then responds, so

- **If there is evil, there must be good**
- **If there is good, then there must be a universal, objective standard – a moral law to determine if something is good or evil.**
- **If there is an objective moral law, there must be a lawgiver (God).**

Conversely,

- If there is no moral lawgiver (God), there is no moral law.
- If there is no moral law, there is no good
- If there is no good, there is no evil

Zacharias concludes, "Thus, you are using evil to disprove the point you are making."

The student stammers in confusion, "W-w-what then, is my question?"

This same conundrum also confounded the once-atheist, turned-Christian **CS. Lewis**:

"My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust? ... Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too--for the argument depended on saying the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my [subjective] fancies. Thus, in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist ... I was forced to assume that one part of reality - namely my idea of justice - was full of sense. If the whole universe has no meaning, we should never have found out that it has no meaning: just as, if there were no light in the universe and therefore no creatures with eyes, we should never have known it was dark. Dark would be without meaning." — C.S. Lewis

Without an objective moral law from an absolute moral lawgiver, none of us could say that **Hitler** murdering some twelve million people is wrong.

And none of us could say that **Mussolini**, who justified war on his belief that it sped up the evolutionary process, was wrong in murdering hundreds of thousands of people, not to mention the millions murdered in atheistic regimes led by **Stalin**, **MaoTze-tung**, **Pol Pot**.

If there is no God, no absolute law giver, no objective law – if man is the ultimate author of what is good and bad — we cannot objectively say that something is evil.

Taking the atheists' worldview to its logical conclusion, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Mao Tze-tung and Pol Pot are perfectly justified in defining “morals and ethics” in a way that fits their own desires, even if their “morals” demands that you, or your family, or your race all be murdered. These leaders, according to atheists, are just following the dictates of their evolution. They are as the famous atheist Richard Dawkins put it, “dancing to their DNA.”

If this is the case, the Darwinian evolutionary system has no guiding moral agent.

Darwin's Origin of Species or the Preservation of Favoured Races in the Struggle for Life presumes the strong must overpower the weak. The survival of the fittest. Natural selection.

If Darwinian evolutionary theory is true, then nobody can claim that murdering your grandfather out of hatred or raping a teenager to propagate your seed is wrong. These acts would simply be natural, not evil.

So when atheists pose the question of evil, they actually contradict themselves.

When the evolutionist says something is evil, we can ask them, "Who says?" "Who has the ultimate authority to judge what is evil?"

In an atheistic framework, good and evil or right and wrong are just subjective – merely an opinion.

Many militant atheists such as Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris feel this tension. And so, contrary to the logical conclusion their Darwinian should take them, they are actually anti-Darwinian when it comes to morality.

Sam Harris, for example, sheepishly admits, “Evolution could never have foreseen the wisdom or necessity of creating stable democracies, mitigating climate change, saving other species from extinction, containing the spread of nuclear weapons, or of doing much else that is now crucial to our happiness in this century.”

As much as atheists want to deny a moral lawgiver, we all know that all societies (including atheistic regimes) have had standards and moral laws.

Romans 2:14,15 declares the standards and moral laws we all – including self-proclaimed atheists -- possess,

... when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law ... show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them

Thus, because, as Scripture affirms, the moral law is written on all our hearts, on our consciences, we all know there is a universal moral law.

And even though we fail to abide by the moral law, deep inside, we all know we shouldn't lie.

We all know it's wrong to murder.

We all know it's wrong to steal.

Why?

Because we are made in the image of God and these laws have been written by the “finger” of God onto our conscience.

Romans 1:19, 20 states,

... what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

All people, including the self-proclaimed atheist, all know – deep inside -- that God exists, so all people are without any excuse.

Then why do people like atheists still deny the existence of a holy, righteous God?

Romans 1:21-25

For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles. Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. They exchanged the truth about God for a lie.

This passage is illuminating – all atheists deep inside know that God actually exists but because of their darkened hearts and minds, they have exchanged God for idols, they have exchanged God for their sinful desires, they have exchanged the truth for a lie.

Why?

Because of the idols of their hearts – they would rather live their way than live God's way.

What Atheist and Professor of Philosophy Thomas Nagel says is so revealing of the motive behind much of Atheism: "I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; ... this cosmic authority problem is not a rare condition and that it is responsible for much of the scientism and reductionism of our time."

If you continually hope there is no God and don't want there to be a God and want atheism to be true then God will not force you – He will eventually give you up to your sinful wants and desires. And that is why, atheists like Thomas Nagel, Richard Dawkins and Sam Harris despite the current evidence for the existence of God and a dearth of solid evidence for His non-existence would rather exchange the truth of God for a lie.

Unfortunately, this desire to exchange the truth of God for a lie is running rampant among young people today. Frank Turek, a famous Christian apologist, who speaks at secular universities

often asks this question to atheistic college students, "Yes or No? If Christianity were true, would you become a Christian?"

Do you know what these non-believing university students almost always say?

"No!"

That's astonishing!

Even if Christianity were true, they would rather stubbornly cling on to a lie than to the truth.

Wow, the Bible is exactly right here.

It says in Romans 1:25,

They exchanged the truth about God for a lie. Romans 1:25

Deep inside the atheists' heart of hearts the issue is not reason or evidence or truth.

No, it all boils down to an emotional dislike - a volitional objection to - the true, living God.

This hostility towards God is described in Scripture.

The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Rom. 8:7

Sure atheists may claim the reason for their unbelief was due to their bad experience with a hypocritical or overly judgmental "Christian" (and yes we have many supposed Christians like this in our churches) or perhaps they've been let down by their personal expectations of God (whether or not their expectations of God is biblical is another question), but more often than not, atheist object to God simply because they don't want to give up their freedom to live out their fleshy desires.

They don't want to live under the objective moral standard of God, revealed through His Word.

And so they have become hostile to God and His laws.

And that is why in Romans 3:11 it states,

... there is no one who seeks God. Romans 3:11

And no one includes ... all of us
because we are all dead in our sins!

The reason is that,

... [We] are all under the power of sin. As it is written:

“There is no one righteous, not even one Romans 3:9,10

Because of our sin, we are enemies of the true God
and that is why “no one seeks God.”

Romans 3:12 further explains,

All have turned away,

they have together become worthless;

there is no one who does good,

not even one.”

And this is bad news for us because one day, for we will have to
take account for all that we have done:

2 Cor. 5:10 says,

For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that
each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in
the body, whether good or bad.

All people including atheists, although we suppress this truth in
unrighteousness, know in their heart of hearts that they will get
what they deserve after they die.

We know that Hitler, who according to witnesses took a pill to
commit a painless suicide; and Stalin, who died at 74 after
randomly killing millions of his own people, will not escape justice
but will both be punished in full by their Maker – the lawgiver.

We know deep inside that these evil men (although they were not
brought to justice on earth) will not get away with the evil they did
to millions of people --- we know that justice will be served! -- in the
age to come.

Sadly, this justice is bad news not just for Hitler and Stalin but for all of us and this is why we are all afraid to die. Because we know we will all be judged.

But we suppress the truth in our unrighteousness, we do everything we can to believe that God does not exist, we cling to any word – even if it is false -- to justify God's non-existence so that we can continue to live the way we want to live.

And so our lifestyle, our pleasures, our felt needs, becomes our idols, and that's what atheism is – today's idolatry.

The idolatry of atheism is to live without God, without laws, without limits, without bounds so that we can freely live the way we want to live – without guilt, without a prick of our conscience, without any consequences.

This is, however, not true freedom, it is slavery – slavery to sin!

One day we will all face God and all of us will be accountable for our sins – and our consciences tells us that will happen.

I want you to close your eyes and picture yourself on the last day, on that day of judgment, standing in front of a holy God, ready to be judged. All your sins, including the ones you don't even know about – and all the pain that you caused others will be laid bare; all your hatred towards your enemies and even your anger towards God will be disclosed. Nothing will be hidden.

What will you feel like? What will you say to the judge? What will happen?

Now to get a taste of Jesus second coming, I want you to now open your eyes, but close your mouth.

... every mouth [will] be (closed) silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God's sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin. Romans 3:19-22

On that day of judgment, as God's holiness and glory is revealed, every mouth will be closed because on that day, no one will be able to complain to God because we will be ashamed of our sins, naked in front of a holy righteous God.

All our sins exposed, we will have nothing to say. Even the most outspoken, the most clever of atheists will shut his mouth and wish he had never, ever opened his mouth against God.

He will regret he ever denied the existence of God.
He will feel the horror of all his unrepentant sins.

On that day, if there is anyone I would hate to be, it would be influential atheists like Richard Dawkins or Sam Harris who have played a major role in shipwrecking the faith of many once-professing Christians including many of my friends.

I'm sure atheists like them will shudder and shut their mouths in horror for their deception, for their temporary fame and fortune.

But not just that, they will be horrified for how they had rejected and treated our Lord.

A story is told of a very beautiful female on the **slave auction** block. Her hands are tied behind her back, she is helpless – at the mercy of the one who will eventually purchase her. A crowd forms and among the crowd two young men, like ravishing wolves, begin salivating as they whisper to each what they're going do to the beautiful slave girl. With sinister grins, they relentlessly bid for the slave.

An older gentleman standing behind them overhears the two men. He is appalled and wants to protect the slave girl, so he sticks up his hand up at every bid.

Finally he says, "I bid twice what either of these men offer for that female slave."

So he wins the auction and decides to carry the slave on his shoulder to the office at the top of a hill to buy her freedom.

But because the slave girl doesn't understand his language, she doesn't understand what the old man is trying to do. Not wanting to go with the old man, she spits at him, kicks him, swears at him, bites him, anything she can do to hurt him.

The long path to the office is painful and taxing for the old man – he suffers cuts, bites, and bruises to his body, but he endures the pain for the sake of her freedom.

He successfully carries her to the top of a hill and enter the office. He gently lowers the slave.

The girl continues to kick, spit at, and curse the old man.

The old man explains to the man at the office what he is trying to do. The officer, understanding both the languages of the old man and the slave girl, is stunned. “Why are you treating this old man like that?”

The girl asks the man at the office, “What are we doing here?”

The officer replies, “This old man is trying to purchase your freedom.”

The woman is touched. She begins to cry tears of sorrow for the pain she had caused the old man; but at the same time she cries tears of joy and gratitude for the freedom that was bought for her. She then says I have one question for this man who has bought my freedom, “Can I be your slave?”

You see? That's the beautiful thing!

Through the Gospel we become slaves to Christ, but being a slave to Christ is actually freeing because He has paid for our sins and we are no longer slave to sins and death but slaves to righteousness and eternal life – slaves to true freedom.

Brothers and Sisters, I praise God that you are not unbelieving like the atheists, like the Jews who have rejected their Messiah, but you Brothers and Sisters have realized your sin and have repented and now you believe in God, in the Gospel for your salvation. Jesus said,

“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Matt. 11:25

Brothers and Sisters in faith, we are his little children.

On judgment day, we have nothing to fear for we have a

Righteousness Through Faith

But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. Romans 3:21,22

Praise God that he has given us faith in Jesus Christ.

Let us pray.