

The End of Religion - updated

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Diary entry Sunday 7 May 2006: It's been over a year since I wrote in this diary. Nothing dramatic has happened. My thinking has continued to evolve, because I keep learning. The more I learn the more I see that there is so much more to learn in the subjects that I find most interesting: philosophy, human history, cosmology and geography.

Since the tragedy of 9/11 – 11 September 2001 and the American reaction to it I have found it hard to concentrate on subjects other than the current political, economic and military situation in the world. But I have read some books and many commentaries that have given me new insights on how the world – and the USA in particular came to that point. I have also read a few interesting texts on philosophy and religion/atheism that have given me food for thought. I don't know anybody who would be open to discuss with me my ideas about religion – or even interested in the thoughts I have expressed in my Internet "blogs" (taken mostly from my diaries): diamir.blogspot.com , erwinfranzen.spaces.live.com and www.geocities.com/erwin51lux .

As my thinking has evolved I have come to feel that I have simply gone way beyond anything that could be called religion, and I am no longer challenged by religion at all. Religion – even in its broadest sense – is no longer of any interest to me because I now believe it is primarily a device that has been used to control people through fear and to impede the evolution of our minds. It is true that religious people have helped greatly at times to advance human morality – but even though it was undoubtedly important to put forward those ideals, most efforts to put them into practice led to the worst disasters and human atrocities that the world has known. The ideals were always turned into ideologies based on disastrously false premises. Why did this happen? But also, why can the vast majority of humankind apparently not live without some kind of religion?

I continue to be challenged by atheism. I do believe there is something we can call god – though a very strange one – but other than as an answer to the above questions I have almost no arguments to support the notion that a god exists. I simply don't feel comfortable with the positions of the different forms of atheism. But I have no answers for atheists and no "defense" against their arguments.

Continued on Wednesday 10 May 2006 at 03:00 a.m.: Somehow I still do believe in the existence of a "god" even though I have no strong argument – much less proof – for this. As my earlier diary entries indicate (see my posts about god and the universe below), my idea of "god" has evolved very much over the past 10-12 years as I have gradually weaned myself away from the ideology of (the Korean "Rev.") Moon Sun Myung's Unification Church – the Divine Principle – and beyond that the whole idea of religion itself. I still think that there is something like universal consciousness and that that is "god." But I believe, as I have explained in my diary entry of 6 April 2004 – which is my post "Thoughts About God" below – that this god has a personality of his/its own, like a human being. And to me the most important idea about this god is that he/it evolves. He/it evolves and changes together with us – and whatever other "intelligent" beings may exist in other worlds – and in fact through us. Universal consciousness to me means that everything – including inanimate objects – is conscious on some level, and of course human and other "intelligent" beings are conscious at the highest levels. The sum of all consciousness is god, but he/it is more than the sum of the parts and therefore he/it (I don't want to imply -with "he" -that god is male) has a personality of his/its own. We have another name for god that I think is quite appropriate: "Mother Nature." -- Whimsical Mother Nature – that is god. But we cannot separate from this god – unlike what the common idea of Mother Nature implies – because we are a vital part of him/it. But the idea that this god is to be worshiped is a holdover from the days when humankind was even more primitive than it still is today. Religion – and especially the idea of worshiping anything – really should belong to earlier ages and should be banished from our evolving society. As long as we continue to be bound to such ideas we remain extremely primitive. It is utterly idiotic to worship god, or anything else, though I think god – just like our kings and queens of the past – enjoys being worshiped.

Yet these are the things and ideas that have held up the evolution of our society towards the higher planes where we will become so sensitive and attuned to each other and the spirit of the whole – including god – that the very idea of hurting another being or of fighting or war will seem completely outlandish and impossible. We will no longer need to kill or destroy living beings in order to feed our bodies because we will be able to get our nourishment from inanimate matter. A stone is conscious because of the reality of universal consciousness, but a stone is not a living being that feels pain when its shape is changed. We will be able to "eat" stones – to derive our nourishment from stones or create it from hydrogen, etc. In today's reality all this seems crazy – but I think this is where we are going. -- I have too little time to analyze and correct my thoughts before committing them to paper – so they are not always logically consistent...

More about god from an email I sent to a friend on 16 May 2006:

... I think I never went as far as you did in having deep spiritual experiences, though at times I certainly felt something like what Einstein called the "cosmic religious feeling." I know other people who have

gone much further.

In my view now – as it has evolved over the years – the evil we perceive is as deep within ourselves as is the good. Both come from a god who should not be regarded the way we have learned to regard him (it). This god itself has only gradually – and together with our forebears and us – developed an understanding of certain things as good and others as evil – a process that will likely continue for eons to come. This is why I deliberately put the very word god in small characters (though not consistently so). I don't want to capitalize that word so as to avoid giving the impression that it is something to be worshiped – because all of us who have grown up with religion have a one-sided, false view of god as an all-good father (and mother) of the world but what I consider the real god is also the same as "satan." The most important point about this god is that it evolves through us – it can only change towards good through us and together with us (and all other intelligent beings in the cosmos – if any). We and this universe are like the body of this god and it cannot have a separate existence without this body, yet neither can we and the universe exist without the mind of god, whose consciousness makes all of this possible. Consciousness=existence and v.v. When I use the word "creation" (a word I really don't like because it implies something impossible such as making something concrete out of nothing) I mean a process of changing elements of the body of god, bundling parts of its energy into different forms of matter and making new things out of existing material. If we worship this god we behave like stupid children. It is high time we started growing up in that sense.

Of course, just like you I don't believe in "evangelizing," proselytizing. I don't believe in religion at all anymore – any kind of religion, other than Einstein's "cosmic religious feeling," which is within ourselves because we are god and god is us. God is no better and no greater than us, because he (it) exists through us as we exist through our bodies. I am telling you these things simply because in telling them I have to formulate and clarify them in my own mind and thus I can come to understand them better myself.

Anyway – I feel we have to grow up and to grow out of religion...

Correction/Clarification added on 2 December 2006: After reading more from others on the subject of the above text and thinking about it I now feel that I used some inappropriate and misleading terms. In talking about "religion" above, what I really mean is a dominant religious or pseudo-religious ideology (e.g. including communism), not what is commonly described as faith. I am not against religious faith of any kind that inspires a culture, only against ideologies of any kind that come to dominate cultures. To the extent that organized religions have indeed dominated cultures or civilizations I would want to see an end to those religions. I now feel, however, that my use of the term "banish" in the diary entry in saying religion "should be banished from our evolving society" was inappropriate because it implies, wrongly, that I would advocate some kind of forceful action to rid society of religion as such. I believe in Einstein's "cosmic religious feeling," together with Bertrand Russell's vision on his 80th birthday: to "care for what is noble," beautiful, gentle, and "to allow moments of insight to give wisdom at more mundane times," and to work towards creating a society "where individuals grow freely, and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them." To those things that have to "die" I would also add arrogance -- the feeling of superiority over others as individuals or groups of any kind that appears to give one or one's group the right to dominate them. This probably comes from one of the base aspects of god that I described in my 2004 entry "Thoughts about god," and that we will have to change as we evolve with god to higher levels.

More, adapted from a message to a friend on 27 December 2006:

... Even though I do respect the position of atheism because it is most logical I continue to feel that there is something else. But this something else is INSIDE, NOT BEYOND this world. This god, in my view, is inside us and inside everything – and it is not outside or beyond our world and our universe. If our cosmos could be said to have had any beginning at all, then this god began with it and could not have existed "before" the cosmos. And it grew and changed and evolved with the cosmos, because it IS the cosmos.

More, from a message to another friend on 3 January 2007:

I tend to think that people who have died continue to exist in some way, but not in a heaven or a hell. I feel everything and everybody that ever existed did not just come and then disappear completely -- they are like imprints on this universal consciousness or god or whatever you want to call it, and as such they are eternal. And I don't believe time is really as it seems to be, leaving everything behind at some point. Nothing is really completely left behind. We and the cosmos carry everything and everybody with us into the future forever. So nothing and nobody is "just gone."