

THE SPIRITUAL SCIENTIST

An Ezine for Those Who Think

Published by VOICE, ISKCON, Pune

FOOLOSOPHY!



Pascal's Wager



The famous mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal offers an interesting "thought experiment" concerning religious belief. The scriptures state that if we follow God, we will dwell with Him in the realm of eternal happiness. And if we refuse to follow Him, we are making future appointments with suffering. Taking an agnostic position, Pascal states that revelation (the words of God as given in the religious scriptures) are intrinsically beyond experimental scientific verification; we can't know in advance what actually happens to us after death.

With this premise, he proposes that our life is a wager. (This is one wager which no one can avoid) If God exists and we bet for God, then we rejoice eternally. If God exists and we bet against Him, suffering awaits us. If God doesn't exist and we bet for God, we still are not the losers because everything is anyway going to be finished at death!

"That's too much...."

The controversial issue here is the sacrifice of carnal pleasures by those who follow God. If God doesn't exist, then have His followers not been cheated of bodily delights in the pursuit of an illusion? Pascal agrees that the religious have to, in his own words, "curtail" their "passions", but he points out that the purely rational benefits of a life in accordance with standard moral principles outweigh the restrictions that may be imposed by scriptures: "Now what harm will you come by in making this choice? You will be faithful, honest, humble, grateful, generous, a sincere friend, truthful. Certainly, you will not enjoy those pernicious delights - glory and luxury, but will you not enjoy others?"

The atheistic counter-attack to Pascal has been that he has unduly minimized the sacrifice end of the bargain; the carnal delights of a "free life" are too much to give up. Indeed that is the reason why many people shy away from spirituality, "It will obstruct my enjoyment of life now." This has become the essence of most modern philosophical thought: the pleasures that the world offers are the ultimate goal of life. The atheistic leaning of modern science can also be traced to this fundamental belief. The principal thrust of contemporary technology in all its diverse fields has been to enhance the quality and the quantity of material pleasure that man can enjoy in this life.

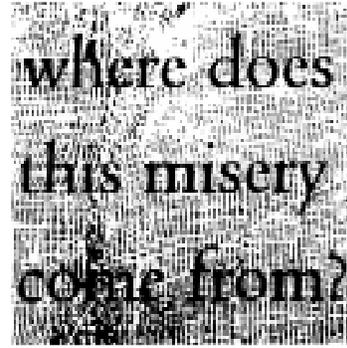
The Confrontation: The Myths and the Facts

The upsurge in atheism in the West from the 1960s onwards fuelled the free sex revolution or what was in euphemistic terms called, "value-free living". Self-restraint was dubbed as pleasure-denying, stifling, dogmatic, unreasonable and unnecessary and was thrown to the winds. All kinds of sexual perversions became the vogue; everything that one could imagine (and even that which one couldn't imagine) was attempted in order to maximize bodily pleasure.

This free sex culture has now spread its wings even to India, especially through the media - newspapers, magazines, star TV, movies etc. Before we embrace it, being enamored by its promise of extraordinary erotic enjoyments, let us see what has been its consequence on the West.

In The New Harvard Guide to Psychiatry, the editor Armand M Nicholi, Jr, a Harvard Medical School psychiatry professor, makes these remarkable observations:

Many who have worked closely with adolescents over the past decade have realized that the new sexual freedom has by no means led to greater pleasures, freedom and openness; more meaningful relationships between the sexes; or exhilarating relief from stifling inhibitions. Clinical experience has shown that the new pmissiveness has often led to empty relationships, feelings of self-contempt and worthlessness, an epidemic of venereal disease, and a rapid increase in unwanted pregnancies. Clinicians working with college students began commenting on these effects as early as 20 years ago. They noted that students caught up in this new sexual freedom found it "unsatisfying and meaningless".....A more recent study of normal college students (those not under the care of a psychiatrist) found that, although their sexual behavior by and large appeared to be a desperate attempt to overcome a profound sense of loneliness, they described their sexual relationships as less than satisfactory and as providing little of the emotional closeness they desired....They described pervasive feelings of guilt and haunting concerns that they were using other and being used as "sexual objects"



That's an insider's version of the unpalatable reality behind the smiles, the hugs.... the freedom portrayed in Santa Barbara and other Western soap operas.

This report is not an exception, but rather the trend in psychology these days. There is a growing body of evidence that licentious behavior and unhappiness have a strong correlation.

Free Sex - Free Shocks



Little needs to be said about the menace that STDs especially AIDS pose to humanity. The dreaded AIDS epidemic if unchecked is feared to be likely to devour a large portion of the entire human population by the middle of the next century. Unbelievable, but true. Medicine doesn't seem to offer much hope; a cure seems as far away as ever. And even if AIDS is cured, medical history shows that a new even more deadly disease is waiting to take over as soon its predecessor subsides.

And the social consequences of divorce (a common result of sexual promiscuity) are ominous, to put it mildly. The Costly Consequences of Divorce: Assessing the Clinical, Economic and Public Health Impact of Marital Disruption in the United States, a National Institute for Healthcare Research publication, shows that divorced and separated people are more likely to suffer serious physical and mental health problems and are at significantly higher risk for alcohol abuse, premature death and suicide. The effects on the children from broken homes are even more disastrous, extending from poorer school performance to higher rates of juvenile delinquency and teen suicide.

The Crowning Irony

Who could ever have thought that science, and that too psychology and psychiatry (with their libido concepts), would one day end up confirming the fundamental injunction of all religions: sin breeds misery?



What then is the verdict of science vis-a-vis Pascal's wager? Is the pleasure of an unrestricted life too much to give up? Patrick Glynn, Associate Director at the George Washington University, in his book *God: The Evidence* answers unambiguously, "Modern research in psychology makes clear that the morally unrestrained life is not worth living. The crowning irony is this: Even if their beliefs were to be proved illusions, religiously committed people lead happier and healthier lives, as numerous studies show." For example, a recent study reported in the *Readers Digest* Sep-Oct 2001 issue showed that people who prayed regularly lived on an average seven years longer than those who didn't pray.

Patricide and Suicide



From an emotional point of view, atheism is patricide; the atheist is by his intellect and reason, murdering his own father God. Of course God is not going to die just because of the atheist's disbelief. (Remember "the fox and the sour grapes" story?) But his belief has disastrous consequences on the atheist himself. Rather than being a loved, cared and protected son of the omnipotent Supreme Father, he makes himself a lonely, destitute, fearful orphan. Such a life full of uncertainty and anxiety with the crushing intellectual burden of dogmatic atheism is hardly worth living. Though breathing like the bellows of a blacksmith externally his heart is dead like a stone internally. Thus his atheism leads to his committing virtual suicide.

There is one difference between such a person who is dead within and a person who is physically dead. A physically dead person can do no harm to anyone, but the frustrated atheist only tries to fool the gullible masses with the venomous idea that atheism is a scientific belief, whereas in actuality there is no scientific basis for atheism. (Refer to the earlier issues, *How Everything Began* and *Made Just For You*). As misery loves company, the miserable atheist makes it his life's mission to make others similarly athiestic and thus miserable. When the blind lead the blind, all of them fall into a ditch.

Why?

Atheism is not beneficial at any level - whether emotional, mental, physical or sociological. There is no reason, no logic, no justification, no intelligence to an atheistic world view.

So the weight of the available evidence makes atheism a doctrine devoid of any sense of rationality at all; if atheist were denounced as mad, it would be difficult to give any scientific evidence to refute the denunciation. Atheism is not a philosophy; it is a foolosophy (the sophistry of fools) The facts show that the atheists and their followers are on the way to MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction). There's no point in even wishing "Good Luck." Without God, there can be no good for them.

