

An Intellectual's Argument About God

Or What's Wrong With Everything?

**Marcus O. Durham, PhD
Rosemary Durham**

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Contact:
THEWAY Corp.
P.O. Box 33124
Tulsa, OK 74153

www.ThewayCorp.com
mod@superb.org

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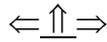
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TO

Howard E. Hagglund, MD, a great friend, true intellectual, and one of the most inquisitive minds I have met. Our conversations promoted the writing of this treatise.



Foreword

Have you ever questioned whether there is a God? Are you skeptical about traditional religion and its dogma? Are you inquisitive enough to challenge conventional thought? Do you ever wonder what is wrong with me or what is wrong with everything? Have you ever wondered is this all there is?

Congratulations. You are normal.

This short treatise is from the perspective of an intellectual and scientist with the same questions. First, it is not a religion discussion. Second, it challenges dogma. Third, it is pragmatic.

In 10 minutes, those queries are answered directly, with integrity, and without anything to promote other than intellectual honesty.

AN INTELLECTUAL'S ARGUMENT ABOUT GOD

Or What's Wrong With Everything

*People are where they are
Because of choices they make*
Dr. Marcus O. Durham

Foundations _____

An interesting phenomenon occurs as one travels the path of inquisitiveness and intellectual pursuit. That is the questioning of tradition and conventional knowledge in the search of reason, understanding, and truth. This is totally rational since intellectual quest obviously involves learning new things and challenging old ways of thinking.

Often one of the areas of questioning is to challenge religious dogma. Dogma is a prescribed way of thinking. It is often tradition that was developed at one time to address a specific situation. Frequently the circumstances no longer exist, but the dogma continues.

It is not unlike the old story of the young wife who cut off the end of the roast before cooking. When asked why, she responded that is the way my mother did it. She asked her mother why. She responded that is the way my mother did it. They asked the grandmother why. She responded that she had to, since her pan was too small.

In the process of challenging dogma, other positive concepts may be thrown out with the bath water. Such may be the case of the argument, “is there a God?” The word itself carries so much emotion and traditional baggage that an alternate term would be preferred for a reasoning discussion. Virtually every person reacts to the word. Although our discussion is not about a religion, we do take a hit.

How do you develop a rational argument one way or the other. It cannot be based on physical experience. No one has experienced everything. It cannot be based on feelings or emotion. These can be manipulated quite easily with music, sounds, sight, smells, and persuasive speech. Since it cannot be physical or emotional, the only remaining path is by reason and analysis of the evidence.

Structure _____

The first hint is the order and structure of all physical matter. Whether microscopic or astronomical, there is a definite pattern to nature. All physical systems follow the triad principle. Any item that can be uniquely identified, can be further explained by three members or components.

As a scientist and researcher, I can affirm that few scientists accept that anything about nature is truly random. There is structure. It may not be obvious, but it is there when adequately researched and understood.

If scientists did not believe there was a structure, then the foundational argument that there is a cause and effect would be invalid. If there is structure, then that implies there is a cause for the structure.

That brings us to the crux of the problem. There must be an initial stimulus or cause. How does one define the first cause? This is where science breaks down. Science, by definition, is knowledge about results that can be observed from repeated experiments. There can be no repetition of the first cause and obviously there can be no observer of the first event.

What is the next choice? Research history to determine what has been written nearer to the time of the event. History, by definition, is recorded after the fact. It is written by someone who may or may not have been there. Regardless, a writer closer to the event usually has more information than someone of later generations.

History _____

So where does this bring us? What is the oldest recorded history that has survived across the millennia and is still accepted in common use? It would necessarily be from the Middle East, the cradle of civilization. The longest-lived such record is the Semitic writings that are translated into English as the Old Testament. Testament simply means a report, record, covenant, evidence, account, or tribute.

Since our discussion is developed from the perspective of a scientist in the pursuit of reason, religious dogma does not have a place. Therefore, the writings must be logically analyzed.

As with many older writings, the particular scribe may be in question. Many literary scholars question the authorship of some of Shakespeare's works. That does not keep them from being literary masterpieces. Likewise, similar questions about the Old Record are only incidental discussions.

What is the pattern of this ancient account, parts of which have been in common, accepted use for over 3500 years? It is about relationships. First, it is a history of society, which is horizontal relationship. Second, it gives natural law and structure, which is vertical relationship. Third, it is about personal development, which is internal. Those three topics provide the framework for the complete document.

The entire Western and Middle Eastern civilization is built on this manuscript. Hence, it must be taken to have validity within the context of society, laws, and relationships. The account is not about

religion. That is an application that has been adopted by various groups.

Central player_____

Not unsurprising, the ancient history begins with the same question that brought us to look at history. That is the cause and structure of the physical world. Because of the patterns observed and described in every area of physical science, it has become totally irrational to argue that matter, space, and time are without order.

Then if there is order, there must be a design and designer. What term do you propose for designer? Most cultures use the term Deity or a translated equivalent. There may be a variety of explanations across societies. Nevertheless, the basic premise remains.

There is a challenge to the concept only in a restricted environment. It is only in the community of some intellectuals on one end of the spectrum and the community of the intellectually ignorant on the other end. The masses in between generally accept the concept. But then, that brings us back to our starting point of intellectual pursuit.

Assume for the sake of argument that there is a Designer. What necessarily would be the characteristics? The architect must be greater than any product of his efforts.

Eastern cultures address this with the concept that deity consists of the sum of everything in the universe. Each person then is part of the divine. The idea is summed in a phrase, “god is one”.

The predominant Middle Eastern and Western philosophy argues there is one supreme divine. The idea is summed in a phrase, “there is one God.”

It is easy to see how the same words, arranged in a different order, present a contrary model.

So which is it _____

Consider the premise that the designer, creator, or deity is everything. The results are something. Something, whether a star, rock, or person cannot make itself. Putting all things together only compounds the dilemma. All things cannot make themselves either. Hence, there must still be a greater point. That logically leads to the traditional perception of one Creator.

Consequently, the entity is the definition of infinite. The meaning of infinite is not finite or definable. It is past the limit of comprehension.

Moreover, the entity is the definition of perfect. Perfect simply means always following the defined course. If the designer is laying out the path, he must be adhering to it precisely.

History repeats itself _____

The source document being researched is about relationships. There were numerous writers, but the theme and precepts are consistent. That implies there was a guiding principle or force for the authors. What is the message that can be learned from the ideals?

First, it is a history of society. The lesson is “do not do that again.” The account has ample examples to coach a scholar, a student, or the curious.

Second, it gives natural law and structure. The lesson is “there are acts and there are consequences.” The manuscript is a tutorial about what works and what does not. It is not about forcing anyone to do anything. The law of gravity does not condemn you to fall. However, if you disregard the principle, there is a consequence. The same holds for all natural law including vertical, horizontal, and personal relationships.

Third, it is about personal development. The lesson is “it is your choice.” The greatest gift, favor, or grace to the human race is choice. Like the natural law, you are not forced to any act. However,

with learning comes the opportunity to develop in a way that is more rewarding.

This principle of choice challenges the dogma of religion, which compels behavior by rules, legalism, and you “got to’s”.

Then why do bad things happen to good people? That is an excellent question. You cannot control circumstances or stimuli that come your way. Nevertheless, you have a choice in how to respond. That makes a difference in the outcome.

Positive and negative _____

Positive and negative are opposing polarities. They apply to every circumstance and situation. Their existence is not subject to question. This idea in itself illustrates structure. That argues for a designer.

Assume an infinite, perfect Creator. How could he create imperfection? He cannot. But he did instill the privilege of choice. That choice is to understand and implement the natural laws or to ignore and reject the precepts. The consequence of not heeding the natural laws is negative.

Not only are there positive and negative results, there are positive and negative influences. These influences are variously called spirits, messengers, guides, or in the religious context angels.

The realization of these other influences implies there is an alternative realm, besides the physical. In reality, there are three realms: the natural or physical, the supernatural or spirit, and the ultranatural or deity.

Would a benevolent Creator design a negative spirit world? Au contraire. Spirit beings also had a choice. Some chose to challenge the natural law.

Numerous synonyms are used for the polar opposites of positive and negative.

Positive	Negative
Right	Wrong
Good	Bad
Excellence	Mediocrity
Light	Dark

In the system design, there was no provision to force robotic action. By making a choice to accept natural law of the Creator, then the positive feedback is to grow to more reward. Alternatively, should one choose to ignore or reject natural law, there is negative feedback that leads to decay.

Here today, gone tomorrow _____

Our discussion began with discarding dogma. A once popular idea was a place of eternal bliss called nirvana, paradise, or heaven. If there is a positive place, there must be the negative equivalent. Since some did not want to accept the negative, it was necessary to discredit the positive.

However, there must be a logical conclusion to accepting the natural laws or rejecting the premise. The designer and Creator in allowing a choice, also of necessity created the ultimate end. Being the complete gentleman, he provided an ultimate destination of choice.

If you want to accept the positive, there is a positive destination. If you prefer the take the negative, there is a negative destination. It is that simple. It is your choice.

People are where they are because of choices they make.

Active participation _____

The discourse so far has looked at the ancient writings. Approximately two millennia ago, another compilation was written in Greek. It has been translated into English as the New Testament.

Why is it necessary to look at a second ancient document that is still in common use? It has to do with the vertical relationship between the Creator and the created.

In the first encounter, the ultimate Deity was physically involved in establishing society and natural law. The record gave consequences to not adhering to the precepts established.

As society deteriorated, the Divine again made a physical interjection. This time he took the form of a man who was called Joshua in Middle Eastern language. It was translated to Jesus in Greek and many Western languages.

In the form of man, he changed the emphasis to personal development. His teaching was not popular with the intellectual and political community, so he was executed. Being the Creator, he could have prevented the act, but he voluntarily accepted it as a consequence of all the negative on the earth for all time. He then resumed the form of man for a time to illustrate that he was in fact the Creator. No one else has been able to duplicate the feat.

One of his last commentaries was that he would not tolerate the deterioration of society. He promised he would physically intervene again, if things got out of order. This time he would clean out the planet and start over with a new society and culture. It would be built with those who accepted the natural law.

It is a choice _____

After evaluating the evidence, it is clear there is a pattern to the physical world. It should then be obvious that there is a designer or Creator who put the structure in place. Then the choice becomes simple.

Do you accept the Creator as the master and pursue the ideals of the natural law? Or do you disagree with the premise, reject the ideals, and pursue another agenda?

Either is an equally valid choice with its consequences. Are you sure?

Communications_____

Communications are critical to any relationship. Therefore, you would expect there to be a way to communicate vertically. It is quite simple and follows the pattern of any other conversation.

1. Address the One by name. That can be Jehovah, Yehovah, God, Lord, Master, Father, or other terms of endearment.
2. Thank him for whatever is your present focus.
3. Ask for wisdom to accomplish your goal.
4. Ask for favor with vertical understanding.
5. Ask for favor with horizontal relationships.
6. Tell him you appreciate his involvement.
7. Give a goodbye.

Communicating is not magic. It is verbally speaking in a way you can be comfortable.

What about getting answers or input. That too is not magic.

Thoughts come to our mind. There are three possible sources. One is the result of conscious focus on a problem. A second is influence from the Creator realm. The third is influence from the adversary camp.

Evaluate the thoughts. If they are positive, and for your benefit, then they are from the Creator. Pursue them with vigor. If they are negative, violate a natural law, or will cause harm, then they are from the Adversary. Ignore them.

Favor _____

To research the topic further, obtain a good modern translation of the ancient manuscripts. Paraphrase editions represent opinions and further cloud accurate understanding. Older translations, although quite accurate, often lose the concepts in the language style. One of the easier to read translations is the *New International Version*. There are also others.

As a suggestion read the first book in the Old and the New manuscripts. Read it for research without comments or commentaries by others. This will give you the oldest, intact documents unbiased by later interpretations and dogma.

The ancient records have been generally accepted for all of recorded history. That in itself is strong evidence of their veracity. So we have pursued an understanding from a reasoning perspective. We have challenged religious dogma and arbitrary rules with their legalism. What are you going to do with your choice?

If you were given this treatise, share your choice with that person. If you purchased it, share your choice with the publisher. Contact information is provided in the front. They will appreciate your commitment.



About the authors

Dr. Marcus O. Durham is an author, lecturer, researcher, scientist, entrepreneur, university professor, professional engineer, international consultant, commercial pilot, forensic investigator, and homeland security authority. He is a husband and father. He has published over 100 professional papers and articles and has published four books. He is honored as a Fellow IEEE, Diplomat ACFE, IEEE Kaufmann Medal, numerous Who's Who, and a multitude of other awards.

Rosemary Durham is an author, image consultant, administrator, executive, business owner, and international traveler. She is a life mate of 37 years and Mom. She is a founder of women's outreach and teacher for ladies personal development. She is honored in *Who's Who*.

The authors have written several other books in the technical and philosophy genre.

Who Is This God? Marcus O. and Rosemary Durham, 230 pp
Micro-Controllers in Systems Design, Marcus O. Durham, 169 pp
Systems Design and the 8051, Marcus O. Durham, 404 pp

