



An Atheist Manifesto

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Atheists reject all teachings of all religions. The Atheist knows that god did not make man. The opposite is true - man made god in the image and likeness of a man, in the form of a virile Greco-Roman male in his early prime. Man completed this effort over 2,300 years ago. With this creation came religion. We know that religion requires unconditional belief and complete submission, without thought. Any discipline based on belief in man's written words - requires complete submission - without concern for facts; and a set of rules that knowingly and completely overlook self-determination - appears cult like, trivial, and not worthy of respect. Upon examining, the benefits of believing Atheists realize that any benefit or benefits derived from affiliation with religion are at their very best meaningless or insignificant. Atheists are aware of atrocities committed in the name of spiritual superiority. Atheists view these events as wasteful, shameful, and as always elusive of any perceived victory and devoid of any social redeeming qualities or values. Accepting this truth is imperative, as it is so easy to verify, too many lose contact with reality based on trivial religious beliefs and bizarre religious doctrine. Most of religion's beliefs are products of the ninth thru fifteenth century - the Dark-Ages period of Western Europe. These products include very basic child-like stories intended for the most uneducated members of society including pseudo horror stories. The stories are about demons, evil spirits, devils, and the like. However, the target audience changed now religion is an exceedingly mainstream belief system and extremely profitable for its promoters. Religion's impact on our society is shocking, almost mind boggling. The wild stories work even today. If you are a clever preacher, you can tell your followers you saw a man walk on water. Many will believe you. The answers to the so-called mysteries of faith never elude us as they are in any public library. Most are just too lazy, complacent, stupid, or fearful to conduct the required research to explore such topics. "He who knows nothing is closer to the truth than he whose mind is filled with falsehoods and errors" Thomas Jefferson April 13, 1743 – July 4, 1826 Truth is not in demand in this society. We stand in abject fear of learning the truth. In being honest with ourselves, we must admit and accept that of our own volition we constructed a high tech do-it-yourself version of the European Dark-Ages in this so-called 21st century. We refer to this, as fundamentalism. After a thousand years of mental conditioning, we must admit the churches trained us too well. Now these habits are difficult to break, but changing a habit is not impossible. Always remember... "After your death, you will be what you were before your birth" Arthur Schopenhauer February 22 1788 – September 21 1860

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From Reader Review An Atheist Manifesto for online ebook

Gharam El-Hendy says

The reason I gave this book such a (relatively) high rating is because it invites so much thought and philosophy to the mind. It was actually a nice read; I wouldn't recommend it to my theist friends though because it would probably revolt them, and they would probably assume I've taken on atheism and deem me an infidel. :D

One thing that is so common among atheists, that which I undoubtedly and unconditionally despise and hate; is that they all talk of religion to make it absurd. I mean, if you take anything in life, and describe it using absurd ways, it will inevitably sound absurd.

Even life itself.

The fact that you can make anything absurd is in and of itself absurd.

"I read books, several pages glued to a carton with a combination of 26 letters on them, and inevitably forget 90% of what they were talking about, yet I keep on doing it."

Doesn't that make reading sound absurd? You can render anything absurd by the way you talk about it.

That's just what all these condescending atheists need to understand.

Sometimes I think (most) atheists are merely people who bash on religion. That's what they live and breathe for.

It kind of doesn't make sense to me how they're always talking about God (or more accurately: no God).

Ironically, some atheists speak of God more than a lot of theists do.

Is that too, not absurd?

Discussing some things that were mentioned in the book:

"His time and energy are wasted to cleanse his "soul," which he does not possess, and to save himself from a future punishment in hell which exists only in his imagination."

What exactly is Joseph trying to say here? Denying the soul is absurd. Claiming that human beings are no more than a body is as insane and delusional as the people Lewis claims were led to insanity and delusion by religion. Which brings us to another point: Religion has absolutely nothing to do with what deterioration happens to a person's mentality; how can he say that religion has no power over disease yet claim it is the reason people go insane?

"There is hardly a form of insanity or delusion that has not been induced by some sort of religious belief."

I'll try being as objective as I possibly can (I can't guarantee the extents because as a human being, I am biased; just like everyone) but admittedly, to someone who doesn't believe in God, we believers may seem insane in the rituals we perform. But I think this is just a matter of perspective. A matter of where you stand from theism or atheism.

"If priests--of all clans--were free of disease and immune to death, then there might be some basis for the claim

of the religionists. But these "men of God" are victims of the natural course of life, "even as you and I." They enjoy no exemptions. They suffer the same ills; they feel the same sensations; they are subject to the same passions of the body, the same frailties of the mind, are victims of circumstances and misfortune, and they

meet inevitable death just as every other person. They commit the same kind of crimes as other mortals, and especially, because of their "calling," many are notoriously involved in the embezzlement of church funds. Nor does their calling protect them from the "passions of the flesh." The scandalous conduct of many "men of the cloth," in the realm of moral turpitude, often ends in murder. That is why there are so many "men of God" in our jails, and why so many have paid the supreme penalty in the death chair."

The funny thing is, this exact argument was mentioned in the Holy Qura'an. God had already spoken of the people who will bash priests, sheikhs, supposed men of God (I say supposed because only God can judge whether they are His men or not) because they're humans and have feelings and emotions of the normal everyday human.

I've already shared a conviction that not all of the men whom society deems religious are in fact religious. And being religious does not repel them from doing wrong, or having desires, passions, even evil in their hearts. They're just conceived as better human beings because they learn to control these bad emotions, and to let go of them for the sake of God.

As a theist, I hate how people give these men a sort of power and sanctity since they are bound to use it. It's psychological; when people are put in a position of authority they inevitably act upon this authority. Now if they were actually religious and good, they wouldn't use their authority, right? Exactly; but this point is sadly overlooked one too many times.

Concluding religion is a bad thing because of something like the previous situation -excuse me if you will- is plain stupid.

And this is the argument Nietzsche used to bash religion; I hope Joseph can learn something from it because it's sort of more convincing than the load of nonsense about religious people acting like PEOPLE.

This is laughable!

"The hands that help are better far than lips that pray."

Amen. This is a line I very much appreciate and concur with.

"Freaks of all kinds exist in nature--from the utterly ridiculous to the terrifying monstrosities. This is proof of the lack of design in Nature as far as man is concerned."

I don't get it, isn't this proof that nature isn't working on its own? If it were, then there would be no disturbances in its system whatsoever, no?

There would be no freaks of the night or freaks of the day, there would be no freaks at all! Everyone and everything would be the same; because everyone and everything was born of mother nature.

"That is why there is a continual struggle on the part of the clergy to adulterate education with superstition. To maintain their untenable position they must keep the people shackled to a form of mental slavery."

Truth here is: Yes.

Supposed men of God these days want to keep people uneducated and their minds undeveloped, but that is for exactly the same purpose as politicians or governors or rulers want: to maintain their power over people. To keep them blinded, so they remain obedient to their authority. Again, actions of false men-of-religion should not be held against religion. It does not make sense.

"Man's ignorance and fears made him an easy prey of priests. His gullibility was such that he believed everything he was told."

He soon became a slave to these liars and hypocrites."
Amen.

"It has as many meanings as there are minds. And as each person has an opinion of what the word God ought to mean, it is a word without premise, without foundation, and without substance."

Strangely enough, I do agree with this, everyone interprets God and religion the way they want. Which I'm not really against. I mean; as long as you don't force your interpretations on me; you can think of religion in whatever way suits you.

Even though I'm more impressed by Nietzsche's arguments against religion, but Nietzsche used to blindly bash religion and demoralize it; Joseph at least draws a comparison between religion and science and tries to praise his thoughts while attacking opposing thoughts.

All-in-all, the book was a mind-opener and a good read.

Jennifer MacDonald says

A short quick read- great for when you don't have time to read a full length book. As many reviewers have noted, nothing new here; t's from the 50's and it shows its age. But it's a great little manifesto- aiming more to explain atheism as compared to theism (christianity), in a way that a theist might be able to understand. Gave it four stars for all the awesome quotes. Was reading aloud so didn't have time to annotate them so I won't include any zingers in my review. I will however mention the "bible god", thus differentiating it from the various other gods! Overall a nice addition to any atheist's bookshelf, some thought provoking insights for the agnostic and just a tad bit offensive for a theist.

Jarin Jove says

Let me dispense with the quick ad hominem that I'm sure will follow this review. I didn't give such a negative review because of the argument that this book favors; I'm giving it a bad rating because I sincerely find no compelling reason to view the contents of this book as anything more than an ignorant rant about how Christianity is the supreme evil. It's not a book about why Atheism is better but rather a book about why Christianity is stupid. That's an important difference; so I don't feel that this book really lived up to its expectations.

The first problem is that this book isn't going to resonate with anyone outside of an audience of the most stringent atheists. It conflates modern Christianity as people understand it today with Christian Fundamentalism. This is already off-putting because the majority of Christians don't hold such views about Genesis, Adam and Eve, or other fanciful tales. This book isn't going to change the views of modern religious people about the bigotry of atheists and I find it less compelling that scholarly atheists will see this as anything more than a book riddled with strawman, ad hominem, and other logically fallacious reasoning in an attempt to depict Christianity as the supreme threat to civilization. It's essentially a less sophisticated attempt at confirmation bias; similar to what Sam Harris attempts to do when he ridicules Islam as the most dangerous religion.

The rest of the book seems to be an attempt at going into the history of religion and how it came to be. Yet, this part is empirically false. It's simply a less sophisticated attempt at the Genealogy of Morals; unlike

Nietzsche, the author simply doesn't have his facts in order. He goes from ranting about how stupid Bible is to ranting about how religion was formed without any clear transition on whether he's talking about all religions or just Christianity. If it's just Christianity, then it's false. The author seems to believe that the concept of good and evil was a natural predisposition of religious faith but this is empirically untrue. Good and evil, as a concept, didn't come into fruition until Zoroastrianism in Ancient Persia before it was adapted by Judaism and Christianity. Good and evil concepts were also subsumed by some forms of Hinduism during the period where this belief system began to spread to the East. In fact, the dualistic concept of God and Satan has strong similarities and probably did originate from God of Order and the God of Disorder: Ormazd and Angra Mainyu of Zoroastrianism.

The author doesn't have his history in order, even in regards to Christianity. It was formed during the Roman period and not as a consequence of nomads having delusions to answer the question of suffering or to explain the world around them. Some of the most ancient religions, such as those pertaining to Chinese mythology in Ancient China, were formed by the State to control the peasants so that they didn't return to the nomadic lifestyle and the productivity for the new established monarchy didn't weaken.

Overall, this book just seems like some rant from a high schooler. If you want a more compelling and intelligent argument regarding Atheist objections to religion then please look elsewhere. I'd recommend Nietzsche because of his unique viewpoints about religion and his objections to a religious society that apply even in today's times. I admit to having a favorable bias towards his works though.

Brandi Babcock says

This book has several strong characteristics working in its favor. I think the general idea the author attempts to get across is accurate and concise. I agree with the principle behind his ideals. I found his attempt to free human kind from intellectual slavery is admirable and necessary. One way this book could have been written more effectively would have been to exclude personal opinion, derogatory adjectives describing God and to take a less insulting approach to condemning the church. It seems to have a great potential for alienating readers who do not feel as strongly as Lewis does. However, I suppose when you write your own manifesto, you can write whatever the heck you want. It is not that I do not agree with Lewis's criticism of religion, but at times his words sound a bit preachy; something I find a bit hypocritical. Despite these drawbacks, I still feel this book portrays a positive message and is an important read for all humanity.

Moeed says

"An Atheist Manifesto" written by Joseph L. Lewis is a detailed answer to the question what difference it makes whether a man believes in a God or not?

The writer beautifully debunks the religious claim that Human beings are inherently depraved and a disease is a punishment for our sins. Writer explains why a disease is a natural consequence of the process of life and we were not created but rather we are a product of million of years of an un-purposed evolution. The giraffe is a proof of lack of design in nature and the blindness of the forces of the evolutionary life. It has no larynx and therefore no vocal cords and as a consequence it can't talk.

According to writer universe is a great mystery, man is born without knowledge and intelligence comes from

experience. The ignorance of man produced fears of the elements of the nature. What he couldn't understand he attributed to malevolent spirits whose primary purpose was to punish man and organised religion being a diabolical scheme of fraud exploited man for centuries. For example lightning was feared as the wrathful manifestation of an angry God.

Science has contributed more to humanity than all the Gods, clergymen and priests combined together. Miracles fades to nothingness when compared to achievements of science. For centuries the fear of wrath of God has been a stumbling block to progress. The writer concludes the book by urging its readers to "break the chains of the mental slavery to religious superstition. Arise and becomes a free and independent human being. Dignify yourself as a man and justify your living by being a brother to all mankind and a citizen of the universe."

Quotes for personal use :

"The hands that help are far better than the lips that pray"

"Where there are three scientists, there are two atheists"

"Religion is a joker that trumps the ace of humanity"

"There's no such thing as sin. There are wrongs and injustices, but no sins"

"Get off your knees, stand erect, and look the whole world in the face"

Joseph Inzirillo says

It figures that someone like me who likes to understand all viewpoints would eventually read this. The author makes many good points about intellectual freedom and the advances of science but the vehement bashing of religion is a bit much. A true seeker of knowledge wouldn't just blame. They would try to understand the motives behind it.

An interesting read.

Santiago Martinez says

GoodReads

Joseph Lewis is mostly ranting about how ignorant is Christianity. But he also gives a really good solid points to back up his claim. In the end of the book he gives a good advice to all readers. It's ok I guess not something I would buy since it was free for kindle.

Rachel says

Really enjoyed reading this! Didn't learn anything new from it but several passages and quotes struck some profound chords. . .

"As long as man loves a phantom in the sky more than he loves his fellow man, there will never be peace upon this earth; so long as man worships a Tyrant as the "Fatherhood of God," there will never be a "Brotherhood of Man."

Heather says

I stumbled across this free on Kindle and gave it a quick read - it is a fast, easy read. However, there is not a lot of substance. To an atheist most of what is said here is painfully obvious. To a believer, much of what is said will be taken as attacking (and in fact style-wise sometimes more antagonism is taken than necessary). It is highly unlikely that anyone who reads this book will decide "Wow! I will become an atheist!" or that anyone who is already an atheist will find some additional meaning or direction in life as a result of this read. All the same, it had some good points and quotes and I did not take it as intended to be an exhaustive proof of the downside of religion so much as a common sense argument that it is a waste of time and causes no end of problems in society. Overall, not a waste of my time, an enjoyable enough read, but nothing special here.

Kevin Ng says

not very structured and too much focus on medical advancements

Skyler Myers says

"As long as there is one person suffering an injustice; as long as one person is forced to bear an unnecessary sorrow; as long as one person is subject to an undeserved pain, the worship of a God is a demoralizing humiliation. As long as there is one mistake in the universe; as long as one wrong is permitted to exist; as long as there is hatred and antagonism among mankind, the existence of a God is a moral impossibility. Ingersoll said: "Injustice upon earth renders the justice of heaven impossible."

PROs:

- * Extremely powerful writing
- * Very inspirational and empowering
- * Great comparison between atheism and theism
- * Moral message

CONs:

* The theistic worldview portrayed is now a little outdated (they used to be even more barbaric)

"To build a church when a school house is needed is to perpetrate a theft upon education. To build a church when a hospital is needed is to take from the parched lips of the sick the cup of relief and from the suffering the merciful hand of help. When the object of man's conduct will be to improve the conditions of his fellow man and not the appeasement of a mythical God, he will become more understanding and more indulgent of the frailties, mistakes, and action of others, and by the same token he will become more appreciative of their efforts. He will develop a greater consciousness to avoid mistakes and to prevent injury. Life and its living will take on a greater significance, and our efforts and energies will be devoted to creating as much joy and happiness as possible for all living creatures."

Joseph Lewis, now nearly forgotten, was one of the most famous 'freethinkers' of the 20th century. He was born to Jewish immigrant parents, and was completely self educated; he had to drop out of school to support his family when he was 9. He was greatly inspired by the likes of Thomas Paine and Robert Ingersoll, and this influence shows through in his confident, aggressive writing style.

'An Atheist Manifesto' was written in the 50s in response to the bad reputation atheism was receiving due to 'godless' communism in the Soviet Union. This book is not meant to convince anyone of the falsity of religion or theism, only to show that atheism is positive. With this, it is not likely that this will convince a religionist that his religion is wrong, but it may open his eyes to why other people view his religion as wrong and harmful. Lewis illustrates the folly of faith throughout history, and shows how it has been a stain to human progress. He then goes on to show how much critical thinking and science has improved the human condition.

Throughout the book, there is a constant comparison between the worldviews of theism and atheism, particularly of Christianity and of the Bible god (Yahweh). Lewis emphatically states that without this 'phantom' of a god, we are better prepared to help each other, "Love of God is wasted love." The end of the book is absolutely fantastic, and actually brought tears to my eyes. He basically tells us where our loyalties should lie, and gives meaning to all life. This book is a must read.

"What perversity justified inflicting pain, suffering and death upon others who have done no wrong? If death ends all, why fight while we are living? Why shorten life with unnecessary pain and suffering? How futile are the petty problems of individuals, with their hates and jealousies, when all vanish with death? All the prayers in the world cannot wipe out one injustice. Every wrong is irreparable. The dead cannot forgive. All the tears and sighs are of no avail. Forgiveness cannot be granted when lips cannot move. Praise cannot be heard when ears cannot hear; joy cannot be experienced when the heart no longer beats; and the happiness of an affectionate embrace can no longer be felt when arms are limp and the eyes are forever closed."

David Batterson says

A well written and well rounded witty expose on the falsehoods of religion and the agony that the so-called voices of religion had perpetuated for thousands of years. With the information age, more and more people are finally able to break the spell of the so-called holy word and finally cast it into the past where it belongs. I was born to a Christian family and baptized when I was ten years old. I thought that people who spoke against god were going to burn in hell for eternity, fire and brimstone bla bla bla. Then, when I got older I started to realize that science has proven that a father in heaven could ever exist in the first place. And since we've been to the moon and didn't pass through the pearly gates on our way, people who are still drinking the

kool-aid should have realized that our very presence in space proved that there was no promise land. As a matter of fact, it is the very proof I needed of a broken promise land.

David Layton says

This little book from 1954 is a strange read. He calls it a "manifesto," and seems to have in mind The Communist Manifesto at least as starting point for what he is trying to do. The key to the book is in the title. It is "An Atheist Manifesto," with "An" indicating that it is one person's manifesto, distinct from "The" manifesto. The "Atheist" he takes more to mean "against theism" than "not believing in gods," though the second definition forms part of it, too. Thus, Lewis takes as his method an attack on a set of ideals, theism in general and christian theism in particular, and the American brand of christian theism in more particular. Finally, it is a "Manifesto," a statement of principles, not meant to be a debate, not meant to make concessions or engage in deep reasoning. A reader can just as easily think of this book as "An Atheist's Manifesto," or "Why I am an Atheist (and Why You Should Be, Too)." An atheist reading this book will not find much surprising in the principal reasons given: religious belief is a form of ignorance, religion holds back science, religion is fundamentally counter-democratic, deeply held religious convictions lead to the belief that everyone should be miserable and that anyone not miserable needs to be made to be miserable. The knock against the book is that Lewis writes about these matters in a provocative, exaggerated, and tremendously broad way that actually interferes with the soundness of the principal reasons stated above. Thus, a theist reading this book is likely to ignore the strong principles that form its core, and instead see the book as confirmation of their belief in "militant atheists" and their idea that all atheists are really "angry at god." The book does have several memorable and quotable lines, and the core challenges to religion stated in the book remain inadequately answered by religionists.

Alexis Medina says

Well, first, I'm an atheist, therefore it's supposed that I should agree with most of the ideas of this book, right?. Well, not exactly. There are a lot of points where I agree with the author, but I disagree with the way he expressed most of his thoughts (and also disagree with his thoughts)

The book is written as many short sentences, many of those sentences are nice ideas, very well expressed. I like the idea of the author focusing on science, and how science did a lot more for the humanity than religion.

At many times, the author is a bit pugnacious, calling believers as lunatics, or with quotes like this:

"There is no other word in the human language that is as meaningless and incapable of explanation as is the word 'God'. It is the beginning and the end of nothing. It is the Alpha and Omega of Ignorance"

Sounds like a war declaration to a believer. Isn't?

I loved the way he wrote about the goals of the science, like the anesthesia:

"Do you know what it means to relieve man of his pain and suffering? Anesthesia is the most human of all of man's accomplishments, and what a merciful accomplishment it was" (I totally agree with this)

Now the cons of the book. I cannot agree 100% with his ideas. For example: Along human history, religion made many wrong choices for the humanity: burning witches, stoned Hypatia, condemned Galileo, etc. I think it's a bit unfair to criticize past mistakes to judge them in the present.

Sometimes, the author uses some arrogant point of view without arguments, like "the bible is wrong" without any argument to sustain this. (And yes, I don't like the Bible neither, but at least must be an argument on the book to support his idea)

The book threatens in a superficial way the mindset of an atheist. While I agree with many of his ideas, I cannot share all of them. At least, I cannot share the way his manifesto is a look-all-those-things-religion-did-wrong.

David Arnold says

Another one sided argument. More of a rant, than anything. I am sure it was warranted when he wrote it. He lost me around page 41 when he stated [paraphrasing] "Religious people would never do anything scientific because of the fear of what their god may do to them!" Many religious people, including Christians, have made scientific discoveries. To deny that is disingenuous. Plato was not an atheist (if he existed and not just a persona of Socrates.) Socrates was not an atheist. Copernicus was not an atheist. Sir Francis Bacon, the father of empiricism was not an atheist and was deeply religious. Isaac Newton, whom many atheists revere: was not an atheist. Michael Faraday was not an atheist. Etc., Etc., Etc., to deny the accomplishments of these and many others is to present oneself as a liar. This author places Darwin as a great mind: Darwin was not an atheist. The primary people who call Darwin or who put forth that Darwin was an atheist: Christians. Primarily the Catholic Church then when they accepted his theory, primarily protestants (who today still are ignorant of Darwinism.)

This is not to say that religion, in whichever part of the world it dominated, didn't hold back scientific discoveries; that's true but to imply or outright state that no religious person ever made scientific discoveries is a flat out lie. Religious people (based on their perception based on being religious) takes what one says as all saying it. So, anyone who's religious may read this 'manifesto' and believe all atheists believe this. He also convolutes ignorance of science with ignorance of religion. Religion wasn't dominate everywhere in the world all the time yet in those places the rate of disease is about equal to the rate of disease elsewhere and that's because the religious and non-religious were both ignorant of science. Also, I am tired of reading or hearing from my fellow atheists that atheism and science are basically just synonyms of each other. Atheism is the non-belief in god or gods. That's it. That's all. It means absolutely nothing else. There are many people in the world who are both atheist and religious. Jains are atheists. The majority of Buddhists are atheists. Hinduism has atheistic philosophies and many Hindus latch onto those parts of Hinduism and disregard the rest. Many atheists, such as myself, believe in the soul (but not that it's eternal or any of that nonsense etc.), some believe in an afterlife (not me) -- atheism doesn't conflict with religion, it conflicts with theism. Sadly people synonymize theism and religion as one; mainly the religious and those who used to be religious.

People do for society either for the whole or themselves. There have been bad religious people and good. There have also been good non-religious people and bad. To discount both makes you the idiot.
