

AN INTERESTING DEBATE BETWEEN AN ATHEIST AND A STUDENT

The atheist professor of philosophy pauses before his class and then asks one of his new students to stand.

"You're a Muslim, aren't you, son?"

"Yes, sir."

"So you believe in God?"

"Absolutely."

"Is God good?"

"Sure! God's good."

"Is God all-powerful? Can God do anything?"

"Yes."

The professor grins knowingly and considers for a moment.

"Here's one for you. Let's say there's a sick person over here and you can cure him. You can do it. Would you help them?"

"Would you try?"

"Yes sir, I would."

"So you're good...!"

"I wouldn't say that."

"Why not say that? You would help a sick and maimed person if you could ...in fact most of us would if we could... God doesn't.

[No answer.]

"He doesn't, does he? My brother was a Muslim who died of cancer even though he prayed to God to heal him. How is this God good? Hmmm?"

Can you answer that one?"

[No answer]

The elderly man is sympathetic. "No, you can't, can you?"

He takes a sip of water from a glass on his desk to give the student time to relax.

In philosophy, you have to go easy with the new ones. Let's start again, young fella." "Is God good?"

"Er... Yes."



"Is Satan good?"

"No."

"Where does Satan come from?" The student falters.

"From... God..."

"That's right. God made Satan, didn't he?" The elderly man runs his bony fingers through his thinning hair and turns to the smirking student audience.

"I think we're going to have a lot of fun this semester, ladies and gentlemen."

He turns back to the Muslim. "Tell me, son. Is there evil in this world?"

"Yes, sir."

"Evil's everywhere, isn't it? Did God make everything?"

"Yes."

"Who created evil?"

[No answer]

"Is there sickness in this world? Immorality? Hatred? Ugliness? All the terrible things - do they exist in this world?"

The student squirms on his feet. "Yes."

"Who created them? "

[No answer]

The professor suddenly shouts at his student.

"WHO CREATED THEM? TELL ME, PLEASE!"

"The professor closes in for the kill and climbs into the Muslim's face. In a still small voice: "God created all evil, didn't He son?"

[No answer]

The student tries to hold the steady, experienced gaze and fails.

Suddenly the lecturer breaks away to pace the front of the classroom like an aging panther.

The class is mesmerized.

"Tell me," he continues,

"How is it that this God is good if He created all evil throughout all time?"

The professor swishes his arms around to encompass the wickedness of the world.



"All the hatred, the brutality, all the pain, all the torture, all the death and ugliness and all the suffering created by this good God is all over the world, isn't it, young man?"

[No answer]

"Don't you see it all over the place? Huh?"

Pause.

"Don't you?" The professor leans into the student's face again and whispers, "Is God good?"

[No answer]

"Do you believe in God, son?"

The student's voice betrays him and cracks.

"Yes, professor. I do."

The old man shakes his head sadly. "Science says you have five senses you use to identify and observe the world around you.

"You have never seen God, Have you? "

"No, sir. I've never seen Him."

"Then tell us if you've ever heard your God?"

"No, sir. I have not."

"Have you ever felt your God, tasted your God or smelt your God...in fact, do you have any sensory perception of your God whatsoever?"

[No answer]

"Answer me, please."

"No, sir, I'm afraid I haven't."

"You're AFRAID... you haven't?"

"No, sir."

"Yet you still believe in him?"

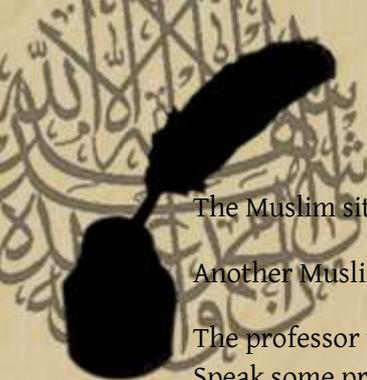
"...yes..."

"That takes FAITH!" The professor smiles sagely at the underling.

"According to the rules of empirical, testable, demonstrable protocol, science says your God doesn't exist. What do you say to that, son? Where is your God now?"

[The student doesn't answer]

"Sit down, please."



The Muslim sits...Defeated.

Another Muslim raises his hand. "Professor, may I address the class?"

The professor turns and smiles. "Ah, another Muslim in the vanguard! Come, come, young man. Speak some proper wisdom to the gathering."

The Muslim looks around the room. "Some interesting points you are making, sir. Now I've got a question for you. Is there such thing as heat?"

"Yes," the professor replies. "There's heat."

"Is there such a thing as cold?"

"Yes, son, there's cold too."

"No, sir, there isn't."

The professor's grin freezes. The room suddenly goes very cold. The second Muslim continues. "You can have lots of heat, even more heat, super-heat, mega-heat, white heat, a little heat or no heat but we don't have anything called 'cold'. We can hit 458 degrees below zero, which is no heat, but we can't go any further after that. There is no such thing as cold, otherwise we would be able to go colder than 458 - - You see, sir, cold is only a word we use to describe the absence of heat. We cannot measure cold. Heat we can measure in thermal units because heat is energy. Cold is not the opposite of heat, sir, just the absence of it."

Pin drop silence in the classroom.

"Is there such a thing as darkness, professor?"

"That's a dumb question, son. What is night if it isn't darkness? What are you getting at...?"

"So you say there is such a thing as darkness?"

"Yes..."

"You're wrong again, sir. Darkness is not something, it is the absence of something. You can have low light, normal light, bright light, flashing light but if you have no light constantly you have nothing and it's called darkness, isn't it? That's the meaning we use to define the word. In reality, Darkness isn't. If it were, you would be able to make darkness darker and give me a jar of it. Can you...give me a jar of darker darkness, professor?"

Despite himself, the professor smiles at the young effrontery before him. This will indeed be a good semester. "Would you mind telling us what your point is, young man?"

"Yes, professor. My point is, your philosophical premise is flawed to start with and so your conclusion must be in error...."

The professor goes toxic. "Flawed...? How dare you...!"

"Sir, may I explain what I mean?"

The class is all ears.



"Explain... oh, explain..." The professor makes an admirable effort to regain control. Suddenly he is affability itself. He waves his hand to silence the class, for the student to continue.

"You are working on the premise of duality," the Muslim explains.

"That for example there is life and then there's death; a good God and a bad God. You are viewing the concept of God as something finite, something we can measure. Sir, science cannot even explain a thought. It uses electricity and magnetism but has never seen, much less fully understood them. To view death as the opposite of life is to be ignorant of the fact that death cannot exist as a substantive thing. Death is not the opposite of life, merely the absence of it."

The young man holds up a newspaper he takes from the desk of a neighbour who has been reading it.

"Here is one of the most disgusting tabloids this country hosts, professor. Is there such a thing as immorality?"

"Of course there is, now look..."

"Wrong again, sir. You see, immorality is merely the absence of morality. Is there such thing as injustice? No. Injustice is the absence of justice. Is there such a thing as evil?"

The Muslim pauses. "Isn't evil the absence of good?"

The professor's face has turned an alarming color. He is so angry he is temporarily speechless.

The Muslim continues. "If there is evil in the world, professor, and we all agree there is, then God, if he exists, must be accomplishing a work through the agency of evil. What is that work, God is accomplishing? Islam tells us it is to see if each one of us will, choose good over evil."

The professor bristles. "As a philosophical scientist, I don't vie this matter as having anything to do with any choice; as a realist, I absolutely do not recognise the concept of God or any other theological factor as being part of the world equation because God is not observable."

"I would have thought that the absence of God's moral code in this world is probably one of the most observable phenomena going," the Muslim replies.

"Newspapers make billions of pounds reporting it every week! Tell me, professor. Do you teach your students that they evolved from a monkey?"

"If you are referring to the natural evolutionary process, young man, yes, of course I do."

"Have you ever observed evolution with your own eyes, sir?"

The professor makes a sucking sound with his teeth and gives his student a silent, stony stare.

"Professor. Since no-one has ever observed the process of evolution at work and cannot even prove that this process is an on-going endeavour, are you not teaching your opinion, sir? Are you now not a scientist, but a priest?"

"I will overlook your impudence in the light of our philosophical discussion. Now, have you quite finished?" the professor hisses.



"So you don't accept God's moral code to do what is righteous?"

"I believe in what is - that's science!"

"Ahh! SCIENCE!" the student's face splits into a grin. "Sir, you rightly state that science is the study of observed phenomena. Science too is a premise which is flawed..."

"SCIENCE IS FLAWED..?" the professor splutters.

The class is in uproar. The Muslim remains standing until the commotion has subsided.

To continue the point you were making earlier to the other student, may I give you an example of what I mean?"

The professor wisely keeps silent. The Muslim looks around the room.

"Is there anyone in the class who has ever seen air, Oxygen, molecules, atoms, the professor's brain?"

The class breaks out in laughter. The Muslim points towards his elderly, crumbling tutor.

Is there anyone here who has ever heard the professor's brain...felt the professor's brain, touched or smelt the professor's brain?"

No one appears to have done so. The Muslim shakes his head sadly.

"It appears no-one here has had any sensory perception of the professor's brain whatsoever. Well, according to the rules of empirical, stable, demonstrable protocol science, I DECLARE that the professor has no brain."

(source - anonymous)

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