

Some Great Places to Go For Answers: Plus Different Viewpoints, New Ideas, & More Good Questions

Kissing Hank's [Bottom]

Who Are Those, Like, FREAKY People At the Door?

www.jhuger.com/kisshank

The Skeptics Annotated Bible

The Stuff they Never Told You in Sunday School

www.skepticsannotatedbible.com

The Talk.Origins Archive

Exploring the Creation/Evolution Controversy

www.talkorigins.org

Famous Fellow Doubters

Bjork – recording artist

Angelina Jolie, Jodie Foster – actresses

Seth Green, Jack Nicholson – actors

Terry Pratchett, Clive Barker – authors

Jesse Ventura – former Minn. Governor, bodybuilder

Warren Buffett, Bill Gates – billionaires

Dave Barry, Paula Poundstone – humorists

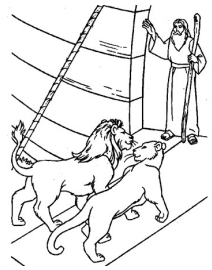
James Randi – magician

*Plus: Thomas Edison, Isaac Asimov, Carl Sagan, Mark Twain,
Ernest Hemingway, Sigmund Freud, Benjamin Franklin,
Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, Kathryn Hepburn,
Frank Zappa ... and plenty more.*

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The unaltered copying of this material in any form, printed or electronic, is encouraged. Send it to someone you think might actually read and think about it. Copy the hell out of it and mail it off to high school and college-age friends. Let's all learn to be less gullible, and work to build a safe, bright, rational future with fellow citizens who put their trust in real things like science, medicine, reason, compassion, and environmental awareness, instead of Stone Age superstition, fear, prejudice and hate.

Ever Ask Yourself Private Questions About The Bible?



Like how, considering there are
over two million species of animals
on earth, Noah supposedly man-
aged to build a boat big enough to
hold two or more of every type?
(Genesis 6-9)

Or how God created day and night
on the first day, but didn't cre-
ate the sun until the fourth day?
(Genesis 1:1-14)

Or how anyone, Supreme Being
or ordinary person, could justify
causing 42 children to be mauled to
death by bears, just for making fun
of an old man's bald head?
(2 Kings 2:23,24)

Asking Questions is Good.

Living as we do in the Age of Advertising, you probably knew it by the time you were 5 years old: For every person who wants to help you grow and learn for your own benefit, there are a thousand who want you to believe only the things that will benefit THEM.

They want your time.

They want your vote.

They want your money.

Your sole defense is your own mind ... and your own healthy skepticism about the things you hear.

Does that used car really get 34 miles per gallon like it says in the classified ad? Or is it only 26?

That beautiful new mountain bike you see advertised, is it really as good as the ones the pros use? Or is it a cheap knockoff that will start to fall apart in two months?



For that matter, that beautiful new mountain bike, the one the pros use, is it really what YOU need? Or will you end up paying five times as much for something you only use to get to class and back?

Every time, it will cost you something to simply believe what you're told, and never ask questions.

Sometimes it will cost you more than you can afford.

Maybe the guy selling the car is telling the 100% unvarnished truth. Maybe he's telling a 100% lie. Or maybe it's somewhere in between.

But it's up to you to figure out which it is, isn't it? Because YOU are the one who will end up with the cruiser ... or the clunker.

You have the right to doubt. You have the right to evaluate. You have the right to ask questions. And you have the right to answers.

Anytime somebody tells you that you need to stop thinking, stop evaluating, stop entertaining your own healthy doubts, and just BELIEVE, that person is not your friend.

Think about it: The guy who doesn't want you to kick the tires and test drive the used car, or take it to your mechanic to have it checked out, does he have your best interests at heart? Or does he only want to offload a clunker on you, or someone like you, as fast as possible?

In the end, your best tool for living successfully in the real world is your own ability to think. To evaluate. To test and verify for yourself the claims and assertions made by others.

It holds true for used cars. It holds true for new mountain bikes. And yes, it holds true for holy books.

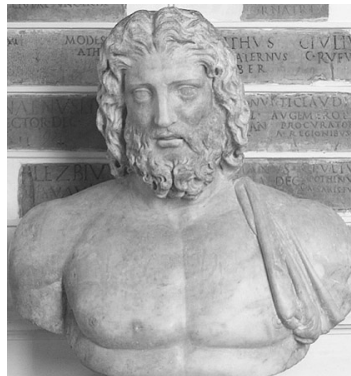
Yep, holy bookS. Plural.

Because we're not just talking about the stories in the Bible, are we?

We're talking about the Koran as well. And the Bhagavad Gita. The Egyptian Book of the Dead. And literally hundreds of others.

Including those we now call "myths." Because face it, back in the days of Ancient Greece and Rome, those people didn't consider all those stories about Zeus and Apollo and Diana to be myths. That was their *religion*. The Mayans didn't think of Xibalba as an idle fantasy. That was their *religion*.

The Norsemen



didn't think of their tales of Odin and Thor and Loki as myths, or comic book characters. That was their *religion*. And most people believed it.

All those unsophisticated people, in the time before we had true science, or even much in the way of literacy or objective rational thought, they believed in that stuff not because it was true, but because they were told to believe in it. And because they had no real chance to ask questions.

Hey, if you voiced doubts about Quetzlcoatl, you got your living heart torn out. If you said there was no such divine being as Jupiter, you got to see lions at extreme close range. Truth be told, if you said you didn't believe in the God favored by the Vatican, *they burned you alive*.

Today we have the right to express – and explore, and even satisfy – our doubts. Because it is possible to really know things. After thousands of years of ignorance, we humans created the fields of Science and Reason for just this purpose.

It would be a shame, don't you think, to know that all those people before us died without the right to question, and now we have it, but don't use it? Sure it would.

Ask questions. Be skeptical. Demand answers – even if it's only in the privacy of your own mind.

Because if something doesn't make sense to YOU – even if it seems like everybody you know believes it – maybe the answer is that it's flat-out wrong. False. A mass fantasy.

And maybe you'd be doing the whole world a disservice to uncritically accept something just because your local version of a holy man – or even your best friend or close family member – told you to just take his word for it, and not try to understand it on your own ... because it was too complex and mystical for your tiny mind to take in.

Always ask those questions. It's the only way you're going to become a thinking individual.



Some Good Places to Google For A Few New Ideas:

Secular Student Alliance
Atheist Alliance
RichardDawkins.net
The Center for Inquiry
Council for Secular Humanism
Freedom from Religion Foundation
Institute for Humanist Studies
Skeptic

Quotes from Famous Unbelievers:

Ayn Rand: "If devotion to truth is the hallmark of morality, then there is no greater, nobler, more heroic form of devotion than the act of a man who assumes the responsibility of thinking.... The alleged short-cut to knowledge, which is faith, is only a short-circuit destroying the mind." — *Atlas Shrugged*

Albert Einstein: "It was, of course, a lie what you read about my religious convictions, a lie which is being systematically repeated. I do not believe in a personal God and I have never denied this but have expressed it clearly." — *Albert Einstein: The Human Side*
Princeton University Press

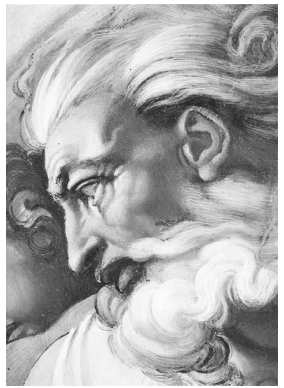
Thomas Alva Edison: I have never seen the slightest scientific proof of the religious theories of heaven and hell, of future life for individuals, or of a personal God."
— *Columbian Magazine*

Thomas Jefferson: "The day will come when the mystical generation of Jesus, by the Supreme Being as his father, in the womb of a virgin, will be classed with the fable of the generation of Minerva in the brain of Jupiter."
— Letter to John Adams, April 11, 1823

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If God created everything, what created God?



Good question!

Have you ever thought about stuff like this?

“If God created everything, what created God?”

“When I was a little kid, I used to believe in Santa Claus, and now I know there’s no such thing. Is it possible belief in a god is the same kind of thing?”

“How can people in various parts of the world believe in so many different gods, and yet all think they’re right, and that everybody else is wrong? What if they’re right, and my religion is wrong? What if nobody’s right, and maybe ALL religions are wrong?”

“How is it that parts of the Bible are just kind of weird and even ugly, and nobody ever talks about it?”

“Why is it that when I try to ask tough questions about this stuff, nobody ever seems to have any good answers, and they sometimes even get mad that I asked?”

If you’ve ever asked yourself any of these questions, or if some other part of your religion doesn’t seem to make sense to you, it’s a sign that you’re an independent thinker.

A freethinker.

Without even knowing it, you’re trying to make sense of things that probably don’t make much sense.

That means you have your very own inner faculty of Reason. And that’s a GOOD thing. Because it means you’re probably going to be an independent, rational adult.

The truth is, a lot of religion doesn’t make sense.

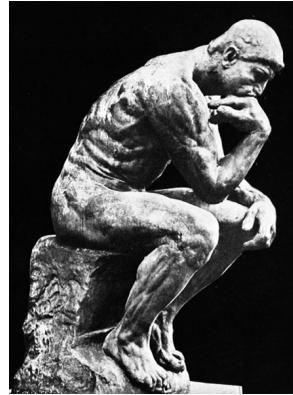
What DOES make sense is this: You can be a good person with or without religion. You can love your family, you can be kind to animals, you can be a leader, you can be honest and trustworthy, you can open doors for senior citizens, you can be a hero and save people’s lives, you can donate to charity, you can live a successful, happy life, you can accomplish fantastic feats, you can be a good husband, wife, mom or dad, you can be a good citizen, you can do anything and everything good, normal people do.

All without religion. Without belief in gods, heavens and hells, divine sacrifice, or any other mystical stuff.

And THAT’S a good thing too. Because another truth is that there are no such things as gods. Adam and Eve never existed. Instead of being created in less than a week 6,000 years ago, human beings are some of the most recent products of billions of years of evolution, and we’re related to every other living thing on the planet.

(And isn’t that a neat thing to know?)

There is also no heaven and hell. Hell is just a dark fairytale to scare children into being good, and heaven is, unfortunately, only wishful thinking.



There are good, REAL reasons to love your family. There are good, REAL reasons for being kind to animals, and opening doors for seniors, and becoming a hero, and being honest and trustworthy, and donating to charity, and good REAL reasons for every other compassionate, kind, moral act.

The problem is, if you believe in the fairytale heaven and hell and devils and gods ...

It takes you longer to understand the real reasons.

And that definitely makes you less able to do good.

(Did you know there are people who, if you tell them there’s no such things as God or Heaven, they can’t even IMAGINE why you’d want to do anything nice for anybody else? They think belief in gods is the ONLY thing that keeps people from robbing and killing everybody around them. Talk about dumb!)

Wouldn’t you rather know the REAL stuff, and not the fairytales they tell little kids? Because how are you ever going to grow up to be a responsible, well-informed adult, and learn to run your own life, and become a good person, if you don’t know what’s true and what’s not, or what’s real and what isn’t?

Fortunately, you can find out what you need to know on the Web, all by yourself. All by yourself, YOU can learn what’s real. What’s true. What’s fact. What’s not. What intelligent, thoughtful, good people all over the world know.

You can learn about reason, about science, and about critical, adult thinking.

Here are some good places to start ...



Want to Know More?

Of course you do. Because we all want to Grow Up someday.

Atheist Resource UK

Stuff They'd Never Tell You in Sunday School
atheistresource.co.uk

Celebrity Atheists

Famous People Who Don't Believe in Gods
www.celebatheists.com

Positive Atheism

The History, Ethics and Philosophy of Atheism
Plus: Deconversion Stories, How to Be an Atheist
and Still Celebrate Religious Holidays, and More
www.positiveatheism.org

Quotes from Famous Grownups:

Thomas Jefferson: "Millions of innocent men, women, and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, and imprisoned ... What has been the effect of coercion? To make one-half the world fools and the other half hypocrites. To support roguery and error all over the earth."
— Notes on the State of Virginia, 1781-82

James Randi: "Religion is based upon blind faith supported by no evidence. Science is based upon confidence that results from evidence — and that confidence can be modified and/or reversed by further observations and experimentation. Science approaches truth, closer and closer, by hard dedicated work. Religion already has it all decided, and it's 'in the book.' It's dogma, unchangeable, and unaffected by reality and whatever facts we come upon in the real world." — Attributed

Jesse Ventura: "Organized religion is a sham and a crutch for weak-minded people who need strength in numbers." — Playboy Magazine, November 1999

Howard Stern: "Please, enough with the god talk. Hate to break it to you, but there is no god." — Radio show, April 23, 1999

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FAMOUS FICTIONAL CHARACTERS:



Sherlock Holmes
Cinderella
Harry Potter
Master Yoda
Wonder Woman
James Bond
Stuart Little
Superman
Zorro
Miss Piggy
God
Winnie the Pooh
Merlin

Okay, time out!

GOD

is a fictional character?!?

Who says?

Well, actually ... millions and millions of people. All over the world. And right where you live.

There are a lot of people who don't believe in the same god your parents and neighbors believe in.

There are people right in your hometown who don't believe in ANY gods. You probably even know some of them.

C'mon, not even YOU really believe in all this mystical mumbo-jumbo. Admit it, down deep, you've asked yourself ... How can this God stuff be true?

The very process of growing up, becoming your own individual self, is one of finding out the facts of the world. Questioning the stuff they tell you on the commercials. Critically examining the things your parents and peers and teachers tell you. You keep the stuff that makes sense to you. You throw away the rest.

There was a time in your life when you were absolutely certain there was a Santa Claus, right? But today you know there's no such thing, no such person. You don't sit around and theorize about it in some vague way, entertaining ongoing doubts that there MAY be, somewhere out there, a real St. Nick. You KNOW.

And you know it thanks to a mental process so simple and natural that you probably find it difficult to describe.



Call it "The Ten Thousand Clues."

The gifts "From Santa" were the same ones you'd found hidden in the closet days before. The older kids gleefully told you the Jolly Old Elf didn't exist. Nobody could answer the question of how this mysterious fellow could get into your house, which lacked a chimney. Your parents had that "sound" in their voices when they talked about Santa. And eventually, it all just fell into place and made sense. There was no Santa.

By use of the same tool, The Ten Thousand Clues, you know there is no Superman, no Cinderella, no Harry Potter, none of the rest of those fictional characters.

And there is no God. Not even the little-g kind.

You might wish there were. Like some people really, really, really want there to be Jedi Knights, some people really, really, really want there to be a God. Or a Jehovah. An Allah, Shiva, Coyote, Quetzlcoatl, or Oversoul 7.

If you're like most people, giving up Santa was ... disturbing. Confusing. It even hurt. No Santa?! Aww.

But because no normal adult believes in Santa, we eventually come to see a non-belief in Santa as a common adult thing. We pass through the painful threshold of disbelief and go on with our lives.

Giving up the god that our parents and neighbors and pastors taught us about is MUCH harder. Because lots of apparently adult people say they believe in their culture's God, or Allah or Yahweh or whatever, it can be very, very hard to feel that non-belief in gods is common, or normal, or even adult.

But if the Ten Thousand Clues lead you there, you have to go, right? No matter what other people say.

Because, really, the fact that everybody says something different is one of the first clues, isn't it?

Think, really think, about all the things people say about God. Depending on who's talking, a god could demand practically anything ... from 'Love your neighbor' to 'Witches must die!' to 'Black people were meant to be slaves!' to 'Women should cover themselves from head to toe, and if any man not their



husbands should ever see their bare skin, they must be stoned to death!' to 'Vote for the candidate who opposes abortion!' (Yeah, these are all things gods "said" at one time or another.)

Search your feelings, Luke.

You know all that stuff is just so much B.S. That guy on TV says GOD wants you to send money because he knows you're not stupid enough to do it only on the word of a smooth-talking greedy ass like him. The god game is just to frighten the suckers out of their money.

Isn't it about time you grew up, and stopped being a sucker? Would it really be so bad if you started thinking for yourself?

Of course it wouldn't. Because if there's no mystical superbeings or sky daddies to take care of things ... it's all up to us everyday average humans to do the job, isn't it?

It's a scary idea that screw-ups like us — you and me and all the other people — have to make things work out right, isn't it?

But that's all the more reason to do our best.

Isn't it? We HAVE TO start thinking ... because it's up to us to safeguard each other, to watch over our planet, and to make good things happen.

And we can't do the job if we let ourselves stay children — if we continue to believe the silly stories that children believe, if we continue to be suckers to the selfish liars who only want our money, or our allegiance, or our willing, gullible belief in whatever lie they choose to tell us today.

We can't be adults if we embrace easy lies and pleasant fantasies, rather than the much more demanding Reason, Science and fair-minded Compassion.

Today's the day to start growing up. To start seeing how much good YOU, a human, can do on your own.

Grownups know there are no such things as gods. Because the moment they realize it, and decide to go on living as best they can anyway ...

That's the moment they grow up.

