

“I’m not an atheist and I don’t think I can call myself a pantheist. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library filled with books in many languages. The child knows someone must have written those books. It does not know how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child dimly suspects a mysterious order in the arrangement of the books but doesn’t know what it is. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of even the most intelligent human being toward God. We see the universe marvellously arranged and obeying certain laws but only dimly understand these laws. Our limited minds grasp the mysterious force that moves the constellations.”

“My religiosity consists of a humble admiration of infinitely superior spirit who reveals himself in the slight details we are able to perceive with our frail and feeble minds. That deeply emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.”

“I have never found a better expression than “religious” for this trust in the rational nature of reality and of its peculiar accessibility to the human mind. Where this trust is lacking science degenerates into an uninspired procedure. Let the devil care if the priests make capital out of this.”

A discussion on Existence of God based on Einstein

Some Interactive Resources:

Poem: Yehudah Amichai: God's fate, Is now like the fate

Of trees and stone, sun and moon, In whom people stopped believing
When they began to believe in Him.

But He must stay with us, At least like the trees, at least like the stones,
And the sun and the moon and the stars.

Youtube: Intelligent Design: Crash Course Philosophy #11

Do you think that evolution is an effective counter argument to the intelligent design argument? Can God's existence as a creative and intelligent force in the world not be made to be compatible with modern science?

Does the quote "a flawed world implies a flawed creator" make sense? Is our perspective of "flaws" objective?

Some Textual Questions:

- What are the definitions of "atheist" and "pantheist"?
- How do you think in view of these texts, Dawkins is able to have a proof in his book about Einstein being atheist?
- What does Einstein mean by the "rational nature of reality"?
- What exactly is he describing as deeply emotional?

General Questions:

- Can we ever prove God's existence?
- Does the world's complexity mean that there must be an intelligent creator? If you agree that there must be an intelligent creator that created the world, does that prove the existence of the Judeo-Christian God or merely an intelligent being?
- Should rational arguments be used in order to "prove" God's existence?
- If we could "prove" God's existence, would we still have free will to the same extent?
- Should we only believe in God based on empirical evidence?

Personal Questions:

- Do you believe in the God of the Torah?
- Do you think that you can rationalise your belief in God? Should faith be based on rational thinking?
- Do you think God plays a part in your day to day life? If so, how does that impact on your free will?
- Does God's intangibility invalidate his existence? What would your life look like if God was tangibly present?

Other sources and quotes to bring into discussion:

Rambam:

"Teach thy tongue to say 'I do not know,' and thou shalt progress"

"our faith begins with the traditions that have been transmitted to us by our ancestors and in our sacred literature. This is alluded to in the verse, 'Hear O Israel, God is our Lord, God is one.' However, the highest level of faith comes from philosophical proof, and those who have the ability are required to prove the foundations of our faith."

Thomas Aquinas:

"to one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible"

Francis Bacon:

"small amounts of Philosophy lead us to atheism, but larger amounts bring us back to God"

Antony Flew:

"Science spotlights three dimensions of nature that point to God. The first is the fact that nature obeys laws. The second is the dimension of life, of intelligently organized and purpose-driven beings, which arose from matter. The third is the very existence of nature. But it is not science alone that has guided me. I have also been helped by a renewed study of the classical philosophical arguments."

A Related Story – Bari Weiss

My name is Bari Weiss.

I am a proud American. I am a proud New Yorker. And I am a proud Jew.

I am not a Jew because people hate my religion, my people, and my civilization.

Not for a single moment does Jew-hatred, like the kind we are seeing in this city, make me a Jew.

I am a Jew because of the audacity and the iconoclasm of Abraham, the first Jew of all. The whole world was awash in idols and he stood alone to proclaim the truth: There is one God.

I am a Jew because my ancestors were slaves. And I am a Jew because the story of their Exodus from Egypt, their liberation from slavery, is a story that changed human consciousness forever.

I am a Jew because our God commands us to never oppress the stranger.

I am Jew because Ruth, the first convert to Judaism, told her mother-in-law Naomi, "your people will be my people and your God will be my God," reminding us of the centrality of the Jewish people to Judaism.

I am a Jew because of Queen Esther, who understood that she had attained her royal position in order to save her people from destruction.

I am a Jew because the Maccabees were the original resistance. Because they modeled for us – and for all peoples – how to resist the temptation of self-erasure.

I am a Jew because when Rabbi Akiva was being tortured to death by the Romans he laughed. He laughed and he told his students that he could finally fulfill the commandment to love God with all of his being.

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I am a Jew because I refuse to lie.

I am a Jew because Jews are of every color and class and politics and language. And I am a Jew because hatred of us has no color or class or politics or language.

I am a Jew because Jews do not cause Jew hatred. Ever.

Today, as in so many times in history, there are many forces in the world insisting that Jews must disappear or die. Some say it bluntly. Some cloak it in the language of progress.

But I am a Jew because of I know that there is force far greater than that. And that is the force of who we are and the force of our world-changing ideas.

The Jewish people were not put on Earth to be anti-anti-Semites. We were put on Earth to be Jews.

We are the people whose God never slumbers or sleeps, and so neither can we.

We are the lamp-lighters.

We are the ever-dying people that refuses to die.

The people of Israel lives now and forever.

Am Yisrael Chai.