

Yx1 – Introduction

[For reasons explained below, I wrote the chapters for this “Yx-excursion” (dealing with “Your Indoctrination in the Mountainous God Lie”) as posts at one of my blogs. They were posted (at <http://zenofzero.blogspot.com/>) during the months between July 2008 and January 2011 – and they still are posted there.]

Act II: The Mountainous God Lie

In a Postscript to my previous post (**Act I: Denouement**), I tried to explain at least one of the reasons for changing my plans for the next series of posts in this blog, namely, the pressures I was feeling to complete the final two appendices of my book at <http://zenofzero.net>. To introduce “Act II” of this blog, maybe I should try to explain more completely why I was having so much difficulty completing those two appendices (or “excursions”).

One reason, not previously mentioned, is derived from my despondency. After taking early retirement when I was 56, I’ve spent more than a decade writing the book, written explicitly for my oldest granddaughter and entitled *Love Letters from Grampa – About Life, Liberty, and the Zen of Zero*. Of course I wrote the book also for my other grandchildren, and I put it on the web with the hope of helping any teenager who had been similarly mentally abused with childhood indoctrination in the god idea and who might be willing to read it (at no cost, save for connecting to the internet and for time invested in reading it).

When she was four-years old and already indoctrinated in the god idea by her parents, my granddaughter asked me why I didn’t believe in God. At the time, I answered: “I’ll tell you when you’re older.” To her logical objection, “I’m already older!”, I responded that I’d tell her when she was 16. I started sending her my response (i.e., sending her a chapter of the book per week) almost 2 years ago. Recently, almost 14 years later after starting my “assignment”, I’ve become despondent, beginning to see that I was probably wrong. I had thought (and hoped) that, by the time she was 16, she might have gained sufficient experience to understand (as I repeatedly state and try to explain in the book): “Belief in god (any god) is bad science and even worse policy.” What I probably should have done, however (and maybe others might learn from my potential mistake), is to have answered my four-year granddaughter differently.

Thus, if any youngster asks you something similar to, “**Why don’t you believe in god?**”, then based on my experience, I’d recommend a response something similar to:

Well, adults tell kids that there’s a God, to try to get them to behave better. Adults do the same by telling kids that there’s a Santa Claus. But you don’t need childish ideas about either Santa Claus or God to behave better. Just use your head. If you do, you’ll see the wisdom in the old saying: “**What goes around, comes around.**” Be nice to others, and generally they’ll be nice to you; if you don’t, they won’t.

If I had answered my granddaughter in such a manner, then not only would I have saved myself an enormous amount of work (writing the book) but also (and more importantly) I expect I would have been more effective: thereby, maybe I could have sewn some seeds of doubt in her mind about the validity of her indoctrination. Instead, what has happened (in spite of my efforts) is that my granddaughter has become thoroughly immersed in her religious (Mormon) indoctrination, recently informing me that, this autumn, she plans to attend college at the Mormon “indoctrination center” inappropriately called Brigham Young “University”.

That news took “the wind out of my sails” – on which I was relying to complete the last two appendices of the book. In fact, for multiple months, now, I’ve been “dead in the water”. Now, to try to get going again, my plan is to try to complete those appendices here, as Act II for this blog. That will mean a change from the writing style that I’ve used in the book (I’ll abandon my focus on writing to my granddaughter), but that’s probably little loss.

In addition, another major reason for my lethargy was simply my age and my diminished energy to tackle the task of writing those two (difficult!) appendices, especially the first, entitled “Your Indoctrination in the Mountainous God Lie.” What I mean by that title, in outline form, is as follows.

The Mountainous God Lie – Lingering social evils from initial misunderstandings and then subsequent deliberate falsifications of records, plus manipulations of ignorant people by power mongering clerics and politicians:

- That gods exist,
- That people have immortal souls imbued by the gods,
- That birth of children is controlled the gods,
- That the dead are ruled by the gods,
- That people have souls, which are judged by the gods,

- That stars and their constellations are signs from the gods,
- That movements of stars tell stories of gods,
- That dreams contain messages from the gods,
- That magic displays the mystery of the gods,
- That mysteries conceal the secrets of the gods,
- That sacrifices are needed to placate the gods,
- That rituals reveal knowledge of the gods,
- That mistakes are ‘sins’ against the gods,
- That sins offend and are punished by the gods,
- That clerics can forgive sins on behalf of the gods,
- That clerics are in contact with the gods,
- That clerics exercise authority on behalf of the gods,
- That clerics are spokesmen for the gods,
- That clerics preach the wills of the gods,
- That clerical “knowledge” is direct from the gods,
- That clerical hierarchies are established by the gods,
- That rather than serving themselves, the clerics serve the gods,
- That paying the clerics placates the gods,
- That prayers have power to persuade the gods,
- That tithes are collected on behalf of the gods,
- That “oracles” and “prophets” speak for the gods,
- That “truth” is told about prophets and gods,
- That a “race” of people was chosen by the gods,
- That oaths are binding when sworn to the gods,
- That covenants can be established with the gods,
- That morality is defined by the gods,
- That customs are created by the gods
- That laws are dictated by the gods,
- That leaders are chosen by the gods,
- That rulers know right by the grace of the gods,
- That justice is the jurisdiction of the gods,
- That order is ordained by the gods,
- That punishment is performed by the gods,
- That judges are judged by gods,
- That leaders rule by the grace of the gods,
- That kingdoms are established by the gods,
- That fates of societies are controlled by the gods,
- That human rights are endowed by the gods,
- That people should put their trust in the gods,
- That believers gain grace as a gift of the gods,
- That wars are waged on behalf of the gods...

It’s all a monstrous, mountain of lies, which needs to be repudiated, for the sake of the world’s children. As Robert Ingersoll (1833–1899) said:

To succeed, the theologians invade the cradle, the nursery. In the brain of innocence they plant the seeds of superstition. They pollute the minds and imaginations of children. They frighten the happy with threats of pain – they soothe the wretched with gilded lies... All of these comforting and reasonable things are taught by the ministers in their pulpits, by teachers in Sunday schools, and by parents at home. The children are victims. They are assaulted in the cradle – in their mother's arms. Then, the schoolmaster carries on the war against their natural sense, and all the books they read are filled with the same impossible truths. The poor children are helpless. The atmosphere they breathe is filled with lies – lies that mingled with their blood.

In his book *Unweaving the Rainbow: Science, Delusion, and the Appetite for Wonder*, the evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins described similar, as well as the difficulty in purging children of their indoctrination:

For the same kind of reason as caterpillars have chumbling, Hoovering jaws for sucking up cabbage flesh, human children have wide open ears and eyes, and gaping, trusting minds for sucking up language and other knowledge. They are suckers for adult knowledge. Tidal waves of data, gigabytes of wisdom flood through the portals of the infant skull, and most of it originates in the culture built up by parents and generations of ancestors...

If your parents tell you something that isn't true, you must believe that, too. How could you not? Children aren't equipped to know the difference between a true warning about genuine dangers and a false warning about going blind, say, or going to hell, if you 'sin'. If they were so equipped, they wouldn't need warnings at all. Credulity, as a survival device, comes as a package. You believe what you are told, the false with the true. Parents and elders know so much, it is natural to assume that they know everything and natural to believe them...

A child is called upon to exercise the exact opposite of credulity in some circumstances: a tenacious persistence in believing an earlier adult statement in the face of what may be a tempting and plausible – but contradictory – later statement... The full recipe, then, is extreme early gullibility followed by equally obstinate subsequent unshakeability.

More than 150 years ago, the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer (1788–1860) clearly saw not only the problem but also the eventual solution:

We know that man is in general superior to all other animals, and this is also the case in his capacity for being trained. Mohammedans [Muslims] are trained to pray with their faces turned towards Mecca, five times a day; and they never fail to do it. Christians are trained to cross themselves on certain occasions, to bow, and so on. Indeed, it may be said that religion is the *chef d'oeuvre* ['masterpiece'] of the art of training, because it trains people in the way they shall think – and, as is well known, you cannot begin the process too early. There is no absurdity so palpable but that it

may be firmly planted in the human head if you only begin to inculcate it before the age of five, by constantly repeating it with an air of great solemnity...

Instead of that method of instruction, care should be taken to educate children on the natural lines. No idea should ever be established in a child's mind otherwise than by what the child can see for itself, or at any rate it should be verified by the same means; and the result of this would be that the child's ideas, if few, would be well-grounded and accurate. It would learn how to measure things by its own standard rather than by another's; and so it would escape a thousand strange fancies and prejudices, and not need to have them eradicated by the lessons it will subsequently be taught in the school of life. The child would, in this way, have its mind once for all habituated to clear views and thorough-going knowledge; it would use its own judgment and take an unbiased estimate of things.

No child under the age of fifteen should receive instruction in subjects which may possibly be the vehicle of serious error, such as philosophy, religion, or any other branch of knowledge where it is necessary to take large views; because wrong notions imbibed early can seldom be rooted out, and of all the intellectual faculties, judgment is the last to arrive at maturity. The child should give its attention either to subjects where no error is possible at all, such as mathematics, or to those in which there is no particular danger in making a mistake, such as languages, natural science, history, and so on. And in general, the branches of knowledge which are to be studied at any period of life should be such as the mind is equal to at that period and can perfectly understand.

Childhood and youth form the time for collecting materials, for getting a special and thorough knowledge of the individual and particular things. In those years it is too early to form views on a large scale; and ultimate explanations must be put off to a later date. The faculty of judgment, which cannot come into play without mature experience, should be left to itself; and care should be taken not to anticipate its action by inculcating prejudice, which will paralyze it forever...

And although I wholeheartedly agree with Schopenhauer, the reality is that permission to educate children “in the natural way” won't be given by parents who were similarly indoctrinated in the god lie when they were children – and thus the god meme continues to infect humanity.

To try to exterminate the god meme, to extricate humanity from the vicious circle, it appears that one sensible approach is to try to expose the god lie, which is what I've tried to do in my book. In particular, my goal for the first unfinished appendix was (and still is) to show some of the history of how humanity managed to get itself into the “god-awful mess” of believing in “The God Lie.”

It was (and still is) a difficult task for me to undertake, because I spent my life studying and working in the physical sciences, not in history. Consequently, for the posts that follow in Act II of this blog (which later I'll include as one of the two final appendices for my book), readers are cautioned that they're not written by a historian and that I'll be relying heavily on the results of other authors. Also, I would be appreciative if those readers more knowledgeable about history would submit comments correcting my errors and misunderstandings.

As for the second appendix, it deals more with science and, therefore, shouldn't be so difficult for me to write. I'll provide more introductory material about it when I get to Act III of this blog. Soon, I'll post the first "chapter" of the first appendix, starting with demonstrating a few of the many lies and plagiarisms in the Old Testament. As for my comments in the Postscript to my previous post dealing with the possibility that, for Act II, I'd post (maybe monthly) more comments on the news, my experience during the first month of trying that (while trying to write the first appendix) taught me that, for me, it won't work: the news of the day gets amazingly moldy after sitting around for a month.