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Atheists and Unicorns

by Gene Mims

*I have read a number of comments recently by people who claim to be atheists. Their claim is certainly not a new one.*

Actually Gene, if you brushed up on your history, you might learn that Atheism IS a new phenomenon in 'Western Civilization' that has only become public in the last few centuries with the advent of modern science. If people *were* Atheistic in the distant past, they knew enough to keep their mouths shut.

*In fact for me, it is a worn-out one. I began thinking about those who claim to be atheists and my mind kept coming back to one question. Why do atheists always talk about God?*

Gene, that answer is quite simple: It's not an imaginary God that piques our interest, it's the horrors perpetrated by His followers that piques our interest; and for millions, it has literally been a life-or-death interest.

*Listen to an atheist or read one and you will notice that they always talk about God, believers, churches, theology, faith, etc.*

Gene, so you've never heard an Atheist talk about science? or politics? or history? or art? or music? or family and friends?

Gene, it doesn't sound like you've ever listened much to Atheists; but I have; and they talk about all those things.

*To me this is remarkable.*

Gene, I agree. It is remarkable that you could have missed Atheists talking about all the subjects I mentioned, unless, you avoid them like the plague - and that's the real reason you are clueless as to what they talk about, isn't it?

*So remarkable that I have give some thought to such a paradox.*

So Gene, what did you come up with?

*Unicorns*

Gene, unicorns?

*Stay with me for a moment*

Okay Gene, you can have your moment. But this better be good.

*and I think I can give you a better understanding to my perplexity concerning atheists. You see I do not believe in unicorns.*

See Gene, that creates somewhat of a problem. If you are a Christian then you believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God. If the Bible is God's inspired Word, then you as a Christian must believe in unicorns because the Bible refers to them in multiple places; which you can google for yourself.

So your argument is already ... in deep trouble.

*You may and that is surely your right, but I don’t.*

Gene, you have it backwards: I don't and you must.

But I've thought of a way out of this one for you, Gene: convert to Islam. Then you only have to believe in a winged horse; much more believable.

*They are cute in cartoons, movies, and comic books, but I must confess that I don’t believe in them. So what’s the point. The point is that since I don’t believe in unicorns I don’t give them much thought.*

Gene, what other creatures in God's inspired Word don't you believe in? Talking snakes? Talking donkeys? Fire-breathing dragons?

Gene, how do you decide which parts to believe and which parts are fairy tales?

*I don’t write about them or speak about them.*

Gene, you don't have to write about them ... the Bible already did.

*I don’t go to conferences on how to stop people from believing in them.*

Gene, you've obviously never attended an Atheist conference. I've attended, and watched videos of many of them, and have yet to see anyone discuss how to stop Christians from believing in fairy tales.

*I do not fund legal societies to stop people from being able to talk about unicorns in schools and public places.*

Gene, Atheists do not attempt to stop people from talking about their religious beliefs in schools and public places. They attempt to stop those people from pushing their beliefs on others in schools and public places. There is a difference. One you refuse to see.

*I don’t worry if people celebrate holidays dedicated to unicorns. For me they don’t exist.*

Gene, Atheists do not worry about Christians celebrating Christmas because most Atheists celebrate Christmas. It was Christians who worried about people recognizing other celebrations during a time that they claimed belonged exclusively to them. That's why Christians boycotted stores that tried to include everyone during the holiday season.

In case you are wondering, when we celebrate Christmas or Easter, we don't need to believe in the fairy tales behind them to give them meaning. We still derive great enjoyment from interacting with family, friends, and children.

*To all bent-out-of-shape atheists I say simply, GIVE IT UP!*

Gene, there is nothing to give up. This essay consisted of nothing more than a series of Straw Man arguments that misrepresented Atheists in order for you to play the victim.

And if anyone is getting all bent out of shape, it's the one who types commands in all-caps, followed by an exclamation point.

*Find something else to worry about like global warming, Republicans, education, war, and rain forest destruction.*

Gene, Atheists do worry about the global warming that you refuse to acknowledge; we do worry about ignorant evangelical Republicans who, at every turn, attempt to herd all of us back into the middle ages; we do worry about education, which you Ghost Worshippers are attacking in a desperate attempt to prevent the next generation from learning about the science which is exposing your horrid religion for the corrupt moral system that it is; we do worry about war, while our previous president (Bush) seemed only worried about running out of places to invade; and we do worry about rain forest destruction which means nothing to overfed, ignorant Bible thumpers.

But Gene, don't gloat too much over our worries because, unlike conservatives who are afraid of progress, we embrace it.

*Let those who believe in God alone.*

Gene, you have it backwards ... again. It is religious believers who refuse to let those, who will not submit, alone. That's why you have missionaries all over the world. That's why you have entire television networks devoted to your ancient death cult. That's why churches rally their flocks and send them out to discriminate against gays, other religions, and Atheists. None of those things I just listed, describe Atheists.

*If He doesn’t exist then why all the worry and concern?*

Gene, you weren't listening earlier. We are not worried about your imaginary friend. We are worried about His followers ... nutbags like you.

*If He does exist then you don’t care anyway. He won’t bother you.*

Gene, exactly which version of the Bible do you use?

For a Christian, you've made some awfully bizarre statements. If God exists, He has made it very clear how He is going to "bother" us.

*Try not to be bothered by what you don’t believe in and work on what you do know. The more you talk about God the more likely it is that those who may share your position might begin to doubt it and actually search for Him and find Him.*

Gene, if that were true then Christianity wouldn't be crashing worldwide. It would be growing ... like Islam. Maybe that's why you are trying so hard to get us to shut up. You people have to find some way to stop the hemorrhaging.

For centuries blasphemy laws prevented Atheists from spreading their doubts. Now that you can no longer enforce them in modern nations, you are forced to defend all your childish little beliefs. But Muslim nations still execute people for blasphemy, and as you can see by official statistics, it works as well for them as it did for Christians in centuries past.

*I suggest a truce.*

Gene, I suggest you google General McAuliffe's reply to the Germans at the Battle of the Bulge.

*If you will not worry about those of us who do believe in God, then I promise not to begin a campaign against all those who continue to believe in unicorns.*

Gene, as I have already proven ... they are one in the same.

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THE SCIENCE SEGMENT

Two-pronged Immune Cell Approach

Could Lead to a Universal Shot Against the Flu

Seasonal epidemics of influenza result in nearly 36,000 deaths annually in the United States. Current vaccines against the influenza virus elicit an antibody response specific for proteins on the outside of the virus, specifically the hemagglutinin protein.

Yearly vaccines are made by growing the flu virus in eggs. The viral envelope proteins, including hemagglutinin, are cleaved off and used as the vaccine, but vary from year to year, depending on what flu strains are prevalent. However, high mutation rates in envelope hemagglutinin proteins result in the emergence of new viral types each year, which elude neutralization by preexisting antibodies in the body (specifically the hemagglutinin proteins’ specific receptor binding sites that are the targets of neutralizing antibodies). On the other hand, other immune cell types are capable of mediating protection through recognition of other, more conserved parts of hemagglutinins or highly conserved internal proteins in the influenza virus.

Researchers report that influenza virus-specific CD8+ T cells or virus-specific non-neutralizing antibodies are each relatively ineffective at conferring protective immunity alone. But, when combined, the virus-specific CD8 T cells and non-neutralizing antibodies cooperatively elicit robust protective immunity.

This synergistic improvement in protective immunity is dependent, at least in part, on other immune cells -- lung macrophages and phagocytes. An implication of this work is that immune responses targeting parts of the virus that are not highly variable can be combined for effective protection.

The two-pronged approach is synergistic, so by enlisting two suboptimal vaccine approaches, scientists achieved a better effect than each alone in an experimental model. Now, they are rethinking past approaches and looking for ways to combine T-cell vaccines and antibody vaccines to make a more effective combined vaccine.

Overall, studies suggest that an influenza vaccine capable of eliciting both CD8+ T cells and antibodies specific for highly conserved influenza proteins may be able to provide protection in humans, and act as the basis for a potential ‘universal’ vaccine.

These results suggest a novel strategy that could potentially form a primary component of a universal influenza vaccine capable of providing long-lasting protection.

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FAMOUS QUOTES

Alan Moore (born 1953) 59 Years old

He is an English writer primarily known for his work in comic books, a medium where he has produced a series including Watchmen, V for Vendetta, and From Hell. Frequently described as the best graphic novel writer in history, he has also been described as "one of the most important British writers of the last fifty years". He has occasionally used such pseudonyms as Curt Vile, Jill de Ray, and Translucia Baboon.

Moore started out writing for British underground and alternative fanzines in the late 1970s before achieving success publishing comic strips in such magazines as 2000 AD and Warrior. He was subsequently picked up by the American DC Comics, and as "the first comics writer living in Britain to do prominent work in America" he worked on big name characters such as Batman and Superman, substantially developed the character Swamp Thing, and penned original titles such as Watchmen. During that decade, Moore helped to bring about greater social respectability for the medium in the United States and United Kingdom.

Despite his own personal objections, his books have provided the basis for a number of Hollywood films, including From Hell (2001), The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (2003), V for Vendetta (2005), and Watchmen (2009).

"Yes, there is a conspiracy, indeed there are a great number of conspiracies, all tripping each other up…

the main thing that I learned about conspiracy theories

is that conspiracy theorists actually believe in the conspiracy

because that is more comforting.

The truth of the world is that it is chaotic.

The truth is, that it is not the Jewish banking conspiracy, or the grey aliens, or the twelve-foot reptiloids from another dimension that are in control, the truth is far more frightening;

no-one is in control, the world is rudderless."