

How to Talk to an Atheist about God

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else.

Don't use the word "God", that's a good place to start. From my experience most atheists have a lot of issues with that word and all the baggage it carries with it. As soon as you say that word it conjures up images resembling Gandalf of Lord of the Rings or Dumbledore of the Harry Potter series. Not to mention the whole history of human conflicts that we attribute to somehow being part of the Creator's big plan.

In the mind of an atheist (or anyone really) it's hard to separate the terminology from the concepts that have been historically associated with it. So don't go there. Start somewhere

Where did human life come from?

Everything comes from somewhere; you came from your parents and they came from their parents. We can follow that scientifically all the way back to mitochondrial Eve. But where did she come from?

Perhaps she came from an evolved Ape who also can be traced back to something else, and that as well traced back to something else that evolved over a very long period of time. If you follow the logic of evolution, you have to keep tracing life back to a smaller and lesser evolved existence until you get to – what? The source perhaps, which is some sort of invisible energy, but we're really not sure where that comes from either.

It's kind of like following a river upstream. The river keeps getting smaller until you get to the source which is underground, beyond your vision. If you want to see where it comes from underground, you will have to dig really deep. But even if you find the underground source of water, will you know how it got there or how it came to exist?

Beyond Our Perception

One of the biggest problems in communicating ideas is our limited perception of reality, and our even greater limitation with respect to explaining things we can't perceive with our 5 physical senses. We can explain what we know, and we know what we can explain. But there is a lot still that we don't know, can't see and can't even imagine.



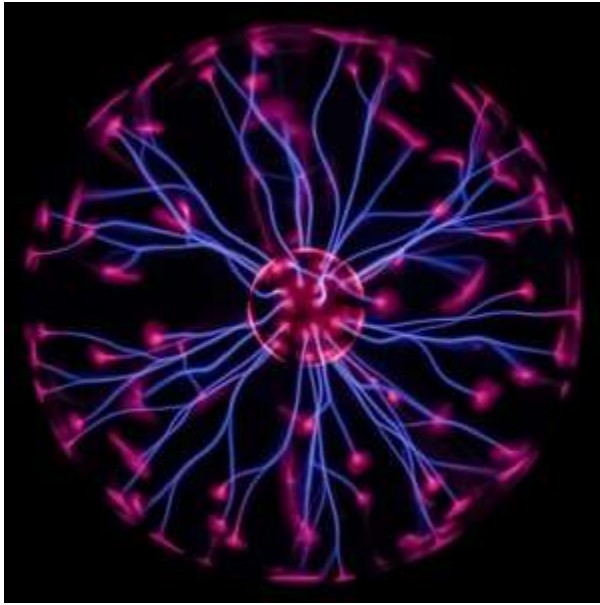
This reminds me of a baby in the mother's womb. Can the baby see what the mother looks like? Does the baby know how it came to exist inside the mother's belly? Does the baby have even the remotest understanding of what's coming (birth), or what life will be like on the other side?

Scientists and psychologists have come to the conclusion that an unborn child is in fact affected by the mother's emotions and environment. It is said that the unborn child has consciousness by the sixth month of pregnancy and that the mother's thoughts and emotions play a part in shaping the child's personality.

By the sixth month of pregnancy the baby can see, hear, taste, feel, experience and even learn. But even with all this capability and consciousness the baby still cannot perceive the faces of its parents, they are invisible to the unborn child. The baby is being nourished in a safe environment where everything it needs is supplied, but it does not have the perception, cognition or language to understand or explain any of it.

In the Womb of Source

The analogy I'm drawing here is that we are similar to the unborn child that is alive, conscious and responding, even learning yet still quite limited in what it can perceive about life. We can't see God; we can't even prove that God exists, but some of us have this sense that there's something much bigger out there that we're connected to, but it lies beyond our perception.



Recent developments in quantum physics have even scientists questioning the nature of reality.

Everything that we think of as solid is in fact just pure energy, and all energy is connected. If we trace human life back to its origin through the history of evolution or through the science of physics we will get to the same point, something invisible that we don't completely understand yet.

An Intellectual and Philosophical Explanation

The Exposition of the Divine Principle strives to explain in intellectual, philosophical and religious terms the nature of the Origin, Source or Creator that is invisible to us. Any explanation is going to be limited because we are still "in the womb" so to speak. However, for inquiring minds there is a lot of depth to what it has to say.

"... [the Origin] is the absolute reality, eternal, self-existent and transcendent of time and space. The fundamental energy of [the Origin] is also eternal, self-existent and absolute. It is the origin of all energies and forces that allow created beings to exist. We call this fundamental energy universal prime energy." Creation 2.1 p 21, Exposition of the Divine Principle

One short quote does not do it justice. However, as I have done above, references to the unmentionable word can be edited and simply stated as "the Origin", only to prevent the negative baggage from blocking further understanding.

The Bottom Line is Always Love

We don't all have to agree intellectually about the origin of life because what we actually can prove is limited. People need time and space to explore their own understanding, and everyone has the free will to interpret and think as they wish. The one thing that will always be true is that human beings need to exist in a realm of love in order to develop to their fullest potential.

So instead of arguing about the existence or nature of a creator, perhaps the best way to "explain" what we believe is by loving others unconditionally. Reflecting the nature of "the Origin" as love is our birthright and purpose, and it is the common base that all beings can relate to.