

- Discriminate on religious grounds,
- Frighten the children of atheists with threats of damnation,
- Attack (or even kill) those who break a religion's laws,
- Commit acts of terrorism against "unbelievers," or
- Wage religious wars.

By attacking religion in general, an atheist might hope to eliminate the flawed thinking that leads to these threats.

Finally, there are those atheists who like to discuss religion with theists because they honestly don't understand why a theist would believe in a deity. These atheists are sincerely searching for knowledge about a way of thinking that is alien to them, and the fact that they ask questions or have responses to arguments is not at all an indication that they are trying to dismiss or put down the theist.

To download additional tracts or purchase a copy of *Ask Yourself to Be Moral*, please visit blog.iamanatheist.com

teach good habits of thought (which, they assume, will remove religion from the picture).
 Atheists may also argue against religion purely for defensive reasons. Some atheists find themselves frequently in a position where a theist is either pressuring them to participate in a religious practice, criticizing their lack of religion, or proselytizing and not taking no for an answer. It's no surprise that an atheist might push back in such circumstances, or even become proactively critical of religion in the hope of heading off such conversation.
 Taking this a step further, some atheists argue against theism for more broadly pragmatic reasons. These atheists see religion as threatening because much of the reasoning behind completely innocuous religions is also behind religions that seek to:
 • Entrench their beliefs in law,
 • Attempt to subvert science on religious grounds,
 • Bring social pressure against atheists,
 • Remove "blasphemous" books from libraries,



WHY DO ATHEISTS CARE WHAT I BELIEVE?

A Question of Moral Atheism

from blog.iamanatheist.com



©2009 D. Cancilla. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License

SOME ATHEISTS SPEND a lot of time arguing about religion or trying to get theists to admit that they don't have sufficient justification for their beliefs. It's understandable that Christians would try to convert others to Christianity — they want to save people from eternal punishment — but why would an atheist care what other people believe?
 Many atheists don't care. They have a "to each his own" attitude toward religion, don't enjoy discussing the subject, consider religion not worth talking about, or just feel that it is a personal matter.
 But some atheists are very interested in discussing religion or trying to "convert" theists to atheism. There are a number of reasons this might be.
 Some atheists just like talking about religion. They enjoy the mental exercise or feel confident that they have a clever or insurmountable counter to any argument that might be brought up in religion's favor. Others honestly want to help people. These atheists see theists as people who are living with false beliefs or who are not reasoning correctly, and their intent is to

SOME ATHEISTS SPEND a lot of time arguing about religion or trying to get theists to admit that they don't have sufficient justification for their beliefs. It's understandable that Christians would try to convert others to Christianity — they want to save people from eternal punishment — but why would an atheist care what other people believe?

Many atheists don't care. They have a "to each his own" attitude toward religion, don't enjoy discussing the subject, consider religion not worth talking about, or just feel that it is a personal matter.

But some atheists are very interested in discussing religion or trying to "convert" theists to atheism. There are a number of reasons this might be.

Some atheists just like talking about religion. They enjoy the mental exercise or feel confident that they have a clever or insurmountable counter to any argument that might be brought up in religion's favor.

Others honestly want to help people. These atheists see theists as people who are living with false beliefs or who are not reasoning correctly, and their intent is to

teach good habits of thought (which, they assume, will remove religion from the picture).

Atheists may also argue against religion purely for defensive reasons. Some atheists find themselves frequently in a position where a theist is either pressuring them to participate in a religious practice, criticizing their lack of religion, or proselytizing and not taking no for an answer. It's no surprise that an atheist might push back in such circumstances, or even become proactively critical of religion in the hope of heading off such conversation.

Taking this a step further, some atheists argue against theism for more broadly pragmatic reasons. These atheists see religion as threatening because much of the reasoning behind completely innocuous religions is also behind religions that seek to:

- Entrench their beliefs in law,
- Attempt to subvert science on religious grounds,
- Bring social pressure against atheists,
- Remove "blasphemous" books from libraries,

©2009 D. Cancellia. Licensed under Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 United States License

To download additional tracts or purchase a copy of Ask Yourself to Be Moral, please visit blog:iamanatheist.com



from blog:iamanatheist.com

A Question of Moral Atheism

WHY DO ATHEISTS CARE WHAT I BELIEVE?



- Discriminate on religious grounds,
- Frighten the children of atheists with threats of damnation,
- Attack (or even kill) those who break a religion's laws, Commit acts of terrorism against "unbelievers," or Wage religious wars.
- By attacking religion in general, an atheist might hope to eliminate the flawed thinking that leads to these threats.
- Finally, there are those atheists who like to discuss religion with theists because they honestly don't understand why a theist would believe in a deity. These atheists are sincerely searching for knowledge about a way of thinking that is alien to them, and the fact that they ask questions or have responses to arguments is not at all an indication that they are trying to dismiss or put down the theist.

QUESTIONS OF MORAL ATHEISM: INSTRUCTIONS

We appreciate your interest in helping us spread information about moral atheism! To make copies of this pamphlet for your own use or to share with friends, follow these simple steps:

1. Print pages one and two of this document, one on each side of the same piece of paper (if you don't have access to a duplex printer, print page one, put the page back in the paper tray upside down, and print page two — depending on the type of printer, you may have to experiment a bit).
2. Cut the printout in two, using the thin rules across the middle of the page as a guide.
3. Fold the two pieces of paper in half, making a pair of small pamphlets.
4. Keep one of the pamphlets to read, and give the other away to an interested friend or stranger.

That's it! If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, we invite you to share them by leaving a comment on blog.iamanatheist.org. Thanks!
