

God for the Atheist

This is the first essay from this author in almost 10 years; at the very least 8 years, but who's counting? The difficulty has always remained actually getting the words out of my head, and on paper. Oh sure, I can talk for hours about any subtopic of recovery; just ask anyone who knows me for more than a month, but unfortunately writing requires a discipline which usually escapes me. Very excellent advice had been offered to solve my conundrum, for example, "just write anything", "You should talk into a tape recorder then transcribe it", "Ask people you know who are writers what they do". A-HA! That's the one! When learning about how to do something successfully the best source becomes people who are successful DOING what you wish to learn. Duh. So, I sought out my Writer comrades. I'm not talking about people who blog, journal, or keep a diary; I'm talking about people who earn a living, or at least submit pieces for publication. THESE people have the discipline, which I seek to tap. Here's the best part: They are all currently blocked! For those who do not understand, the term "blocked," in the literary universe it is the equivalent of a singer losing her voice, or a dancer breaking an ankle. It is debilitating. Then I realized I had been going to the wrong source. You see, as awesomely talented, and successful as these people may be, or have been, they are HUMANS!

Now I have been RECOVERED from Alcoholism and Addiction for over 22 years. This was accomplished by nothing less than a modern miracle. YES, MIRACLE! By definition, a miracle is something that is impossible but it happens anyway. Well, miracles originate not from humans. Their source is God. Perhaps it is the God that popped into your head when you read the word God, but in my experience it is not. Unfortunately a lot of prejudice exists. Most people to whom this writing is addressed reject the notion of any sort of God affiliated with any organized religion, no matter how loose or liberal that particular faith, sect, denomination, or

God for the Atheist

non-denomination may be. In this particular case, the only God presented will be that of Alcoholics Anonymous, and references to their presentation from their book, known as the Big Book, of who, or what, God may be. And then, finally, the presentation of God that Atheists can use effectively.

For better or worse, the program of recovery as presented through the Twelve Steps, is about having a transformation of belief. The term “spiritual awakening” refers to waking something inside of someone, which is not of the physical world, or simply put: God.

To illustrate: In *The Doctor's Opinion* chapter of the Big Book, Dr. Silkworth writes, “One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change.” This psychic change is previously described as the solution to the problem of Alcoholism. “... unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is little hope of his recovery.” “... once a psychic change has occurred ... [He] suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.” Twelve rules to be exact. The Twelve Steps are designed to create an entire psychic change.

The proposition of the problem and solution of Alcoholism is simple. On page 64, we read, “... for we have not only mentally and physically, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome we straighten out mentally and physically.” The problem and solution expressed in two sentences. Simple! But how can one who claims to be Atheist accomplish this?

Let us look at the chapter *We Agnostics*. By definition, an agnostic is someone with no knowledge of God. It is sometimes confused with Atheism, which is no belief in God.

God for the Atheist

Agnostics can mostly agree that there may be a God but they are not sure who or what it is, which is a fair argument. Because ultimately who can *really* define God? The world religions all have different opinions and visions of who and what God or the Gods are. Many people subscribe to those beliefs, and it is substantial for their lives. However, we are talking about finding God to convert Atheists. Yes, convert.

If one is to be successful in overcoming Alcoholism they MUST find a Higher Power, or to use a short, simple word, God. That's not my opinion; it's AA's opinion. We just read it from their book. To further clarify their stance, page 44 states, "...you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer." Singular. Only. One choice. Twice more on the same page the same sentiment is expressed. "To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face." Two choices: death or God. "But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life – or else." Again, only two choices.

The definition of a fact is a piece of information that is not necessarily truth, but it is a proven experience upon which many agree. The easiest example is one plus one is two. Fact. It is a fact because we agreed. So by my count we already have 5 statements from the Big Book, which express the solution to Alcoholism is God.

Alcoholics Anonymous states over and over the problem and solution. On page 45, we read, "Lack of power, that was our dilemma. (Problem) We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously. (Solution)" Proposition: "But where and how were we to find this Power?" Answer: "Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve

God for the Atheist

your problem.” Hold on a second. So basically what Alcoholics Anonymous is saying is that this book is HOW we are to find this Power? “And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.” Well there you have it. AA has just told us they wrote a book about God.

But what about the Atheist? So AA can’t work for them? Not if they continue to define themselves as an Atheist. That’s right. There is no such thing as an Atheist in AA. Oh there may be people who claim to be Atheists, who go to meetings of AA, but they may not be real Alcoholics, or they may not be beyond human aid. Listen, AA is really only interested in helping people who *NEED* a Power greater than themselves. The entire Twelve-Step program is designed to create a miracle. Only God can make miracles. He may choose humans to carry them out but without God the impossible remains impossible.

Erroneous statements that AA does not define God abound. In fact, AA defines God quite often, and in many ways. The example found on page 46, states, “...as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God.” “...*Power, which is God.*” By identification, God is the Higher Power. Any Power greater than ourselves IS God! Hang on; it gets better.

Remember we previously read that the book enables us to find God. The entire book repeats the process required for attaining a spiritual awakening, which causes the entire psychic change necessary for permanent recovery. So HOW is answered often. “Clear-cut directions” appear for achieving recovery. If anyone follows these directions in order, the end result is recovery. Even more blatant is the statement found in the chapter, *How It Works*, “But there is One who has all power--that One is God. May you find Him now!” There it is again. The

God for the Atheist

solution to alcoholism, and ALL our problems: God. Recall our dilemma is *lack of power*? So, if we know what has all power, and the instructions are find Him now, WHERE are we to seek it?

Fortunately, AA tells three times on one page where we can find God. Page 55, says “...deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God.” “We found the Great Reality deep down within us.” “...search diligently within yourself...” Now that’s odd. It sounds like they are saying the thing that has ALL power is inside of us. Indeed. In terms of Buddhism, we are all One. But that would mean we are all God! How is that possible? Simple. That inner voice that we all hear when we are about to do something that may dangerous, or destructive to ourselves is God. You know the voice. It whispers, “Hey, that’s a bad idea.” Some could call it our conscience. Ok, but where does that conscience originate? Some say humanity, some say oppression, some claim self-determination, but many believe it the voice of knowledge.

Tricky stuff this God within, but let’s analyze it deeper. If God is within, but we are blocked from that internal source of Infinite Power, then how are we to access it without some sort of human aid? That is what this writing addresses.

First, we need to remember that human power does not work. It fails utterly. Next, we must understand a Power greater than ourselves can be abstract, or it can be practical. That’s right, it can be practical. Practically speaking, this power controls every human being on the planet. It is inescapable; its effects can be felt, seen, and relied upon. It enables healing. It causes death. It ignites love, war, hate, and friendship. It extinguishes fires, wears mountains, changes seasons and harvests. It is immeasurable beyond certain agreements. There has not

God for the Atheist

been one human in the history of existence who has gained power over it. It is the ULTIMATE Higher Power: TIME!

If you atheists don't think Time is a Higher Power try showing up for your job any time you want, or not showing up at all, and see if Time has any consequences. It's the only thing that actually heals pain. I know you want to argue that medications can heal pain, but they too have a time element. Every medication gives instruction about the dosage and the time between doses. So even the synthesized medicine world has Time to which they answer. Nature is also subject to King Time. From root to rot, a tree is slave to Almighty Time. Think about when you are trying to hang a picture on the wall, and you're banging a nail and miss to hit your finger. When do you want the pain to end? Now! There is no NOW. Now is relative to moments of Time.

The best we can do with NOW is TODAY. But it is always TODAY! Yesterday is a memory of events. We can even capture those events on film and video to keep the memory fresh but the actual event and experience is complete and cannot be relived the exact way. Perhaps similarly; but not exactly.

As it is said, tomorrow is a mystery. We don't ever know what will ACTUALLY happen. We can plan. We can try to control. We can be relatively certain. Tomorrow never comes because when we wake up it is today again! We can't stop that event from happening. Hours, minutes, seconds, days, weeks, months, years all fall away without any hope of keeping them. What we keep is knowledge and experience. That's what makes Time so important. Imagine reliving the same day over without any change. They made a movie about that, and

God for the Atheist

despite every different way the main character attempted to change the outcome it was still the same day. It was not until he stopped trying to control Time that things finally changed.

Try to control getting older. Only suicide with stop that. And then you are playing God, and are a TRUE Atheist. Only an Atheist believes there are no consequences for their actions in this life. I'm sure there will be readers who will argue they knew someone who committed suicide, and they had a strong faith and belief in God. To those people I say bullshit. That is yet another attempt at playing God. The NATURE of Human Beings is to survive. It's not the same as Fear. It is built into our DNA. We continue to do things to try to stay alive longer, and beat Time. People who commit suicide aren't thinking about anyone but themselves. The most popular Christmas movie of all time is precisely about the erroneous, and selfish thoughts of a man thinking it would be better if he never existed. So he is shown what things would have been like if that were true. He then realized his life was not about him.

The point is showing the self proclaimed Atheist it is IMPOSSIBLE to be an Atheist if you are a sane and rational Human Being. If you are that out of touch with reality that you want to deny Time as being REAL and ALL-POWERFUL you have much bigger issues than recovery from Addictions.

Check your own experiences. Aren't there moments from your past you wish you could relive? But it's impossible. There is play that examines that idea. The main character dies, and given the opportunity to relive one day in her life. She chooses reliving her twelfth birthday because she remembers how wonderful it was, and she feels if she could relive that she will be at peace. Unfortunately, she tries to get the people in her life at twelve to recognize her NOW

God for the Atheist

because she will be gone from their lives in 13 years. Her disappointment is solidified when none of the people react the way she wants thus proving that you cannot control Time.

We are obsessed with Time. Many books and movies have been made about Time travel. Every one of them concludes it is a bad idea to try to manipulate Time. The consequences are usually disastrous. And examine your own life again. Time dictates everything! When you wake up, when you work, when you rest, when you eat, how long of a break at a job do you receive, when you go to bed, when you have fun, all succumb to Time! All of your leisure activities have time constraints. Movies, plays, concerts, dances, meetings, even dates are limited by Time. You celebrate Time. Birthdays, Anniversaries, Holidays, Religious Events, New Years, Graduations, Special Occasions are all subjects of Time.

Your money is subject to Time as well. You trade Time for Dollars. Perhaps some of you are fortunate enough to have skill factored into the equation, but ultimately you are getting paid for your Time. It is the biggest labor negotiation. Seniority, Sick Days, Vacation, Wages are all calculated based on Time. Your money becoming more or less valuable is based on Time. Time has ALL POWER.

Now let's apply this to recovery. Even if we search deep within ourselves we will find that Time is there as well. We are never the person we were a moment ago. We are in a perpetual state of change. The pain we usually feel is in resistance to change. Change is dictated by Time. Change is what is needed for recovery. The belief that we can control our desire for consumption by ourselves is ludicrous. If we allow time to dictate when we can consume then we are relinquishing control. And we have already admitted we have no POWER, and that we need Power in order to recover. If we have Time we have all the Power we need. If we wait

God for the Atheist

another 5 minutes before consuming we can look at our experience of Time allowing us to not drink. That's Power. If we can do it for 5 minutes we can do it for a lifetime because Time is in control. If we turn to Time to allow our pain or discomfort to pass; Time will make it so.

Imagine if you never get to "retire?" Imagine if your pain never ends? Imagine never getting a day off from working? We all bow to Time's will. Every religious figure who has ever walked the Earth has been beaten by Time. I'm sure everyone can believe in Time. Embrace Time. It is the ULTIMATE God.

Keep the Faith!

BB Tim