

# **ONLINE LECTURE # 13**

# Various Belief Systems

- **Agnosticism**
- Agnosticism is of the essence of science, whether ancient or modern. It simply means that a man shall not say he knows or believes that which he has no scientific grounds for professing to know or believe.
- Agnosticism is the view that the existence of God, of the divine or the supernatural is unknown or unknowable
- **Atheism**
- The term “atheist” describes a person who does not believe that God or a divine being exists. Worldwide there may be as many as a billion atheists, although social stigma, political pressure, and intolerance make accurate polling difficult.
- It has come to be widely accepted that to be an atheist is to affirm the non-existence of God. Anthony Flew (1984) called this positive atheism, whereas to lack a belief that God or gods exist is to be a negative atheist.
- **What's the Difference between Atheism and Agnosticism?**
- There is a key distinction. An atheist doesn't believe in a god or divine being. ... However, an agnostic neither believes nor disbelieves in a god or religious doctrine. Agnostics assert that it's impossible for human beings to know anything about how the universe was created and whether or not divine beings exist.

# THE DAWKINS' SCALE

## 1. STRONG THEIST:

I do not question the existence of God, I know he exists.

## 2. DE-FACTO THEIST:

I cannot know for certain but I strongly believe in God.

## 3. WEAK THEIST:

I am very uncertain, but I am inclined to believe in God.

## 4. PURE AGNOSTIC:

God's existence and non-existence are exactly equiprobable.

## 5. WEAK ATHEIST:

I do not know whether God exists but I'm inclined to be skeptical.

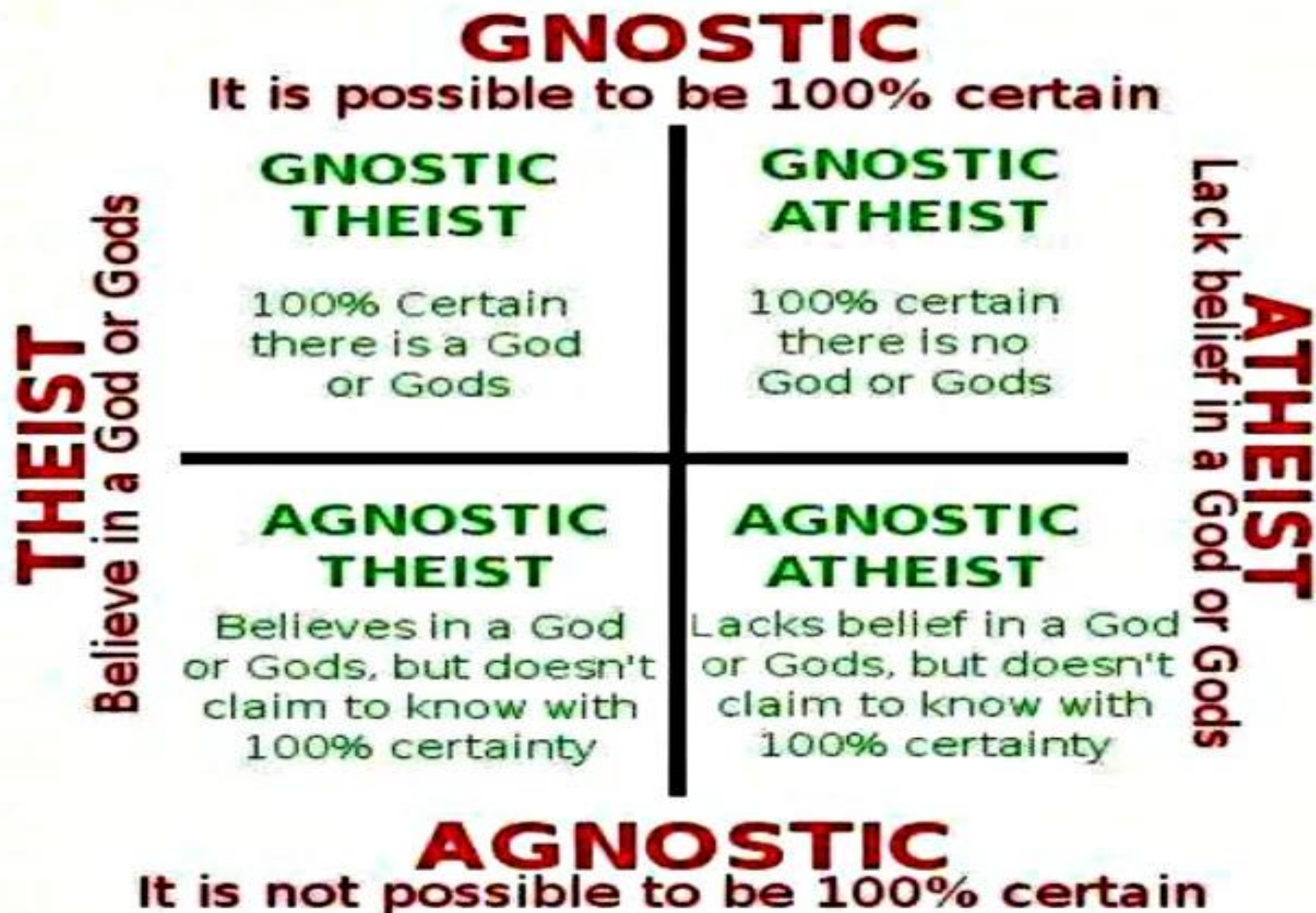
## 6. DE-FACTO ATHEIST:

I cannot know for certain but I think God is very improbable.

## 7. STRONG ATHEIST:

I am 100% sure that there is no God.

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- **Monotheism**

- It is the belief in the existence of one god, or in the oneness of God. As such, it is distinguished from polytheism, the belief in the existence of many gods, from atheism, the belief that there is no god, and from agnosticism, the belief that the existence or nonexistence of a god or of gods is unknown or unknowable.

- **Polytheism**

- Polytheism is the belief in, or worship of, multiple gods (usually assembled in a pantheon). These gods are usually distinct and separate beings, and are often seen as similar to humans (anthropomorphic) in their personality traits, but with additional individual powers, abilities, knowledge or perceptions. Common deities found in polytheistic beliefs include a Sky god, Death deity, Mother Goddess, Love goddess, Creator deity, Trickster deity, Life-death-rebirth deity and Culture hero.

- **Types of Polytheism**

- **Hard Polytheism:**

- The belief, prevalent in mythology, in many gods and goddesses which appear as distinct and independent beings, often in conflict with one another. Examples are the ancient Sumerian, Egyptian, Greek and Roman mythologies, as well as Norse, Aztec and Yoruba mythologies. Another example of hard polytheism is Euhemerism, the postulate that all gods are in fact historical humans.

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- **Soft Polytheism:**
  - The belief (similar to inclusive monotheism) in many gods and goddesses which are considered to be manifestations or "aspects" of a single God, rather than completely distinct entities. This view sees the gods as being subsumed into a greater whole, as in most forms of Hinduism and some New Age currents of Neo-Paganism.
- **Henotheism:**
  - The devotion to a single god while accepting the existence of other gods, and without denying that others can with equal truth worship different gods. It has been called "monotheism in principle and polytheism in fact".
- **Monolatry (or Monolatry):**
  - The belief in the existence of many gods, but with the consistent worship of only one deity. Unlike Henotheism, Monolatry asserts that there is only one god who is worthy of worship, though other gods are known to exist.
- **Kathenotheism:**
  - The belief that there are many gods, but only one deity at a time should be worshipped, each being supreme in turn.



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- **Ditheism (or Duotheism):**
  - The belief in two equally powerful gods, often, but not always, with complementary properties and in constant opposition, such as God and Goddess in Wicca, or Good and Evil in Zoroastrianism and Manichaeism. The early mystical religion Gnosticism is another example of a ditheistic belief of sorts, due to their claim that the thing worshipped as God in this world is actually an evil impostor, but that a true benevolent deity worthy of being called "God" exists beyond this world.
- **Misotheism:**
  - The belief that gods exist, but that they are actually evil. The English word was coined by Thomas de Quincey in 1846. Strictly speaking, the term connotes an attitude of hatred towards the god or gods, rather than making a statement about their nature.
- **Dystheism:**
  - The belief that gods exist, but that they are not wholly good, or possibly even evil (as opposed to eutheism, the belief that God exists and is wholly good). Trickster gods found in polytheistic belief systems often have a dystheistic nature, and there are various examples of arguable dystheism in the Bible.

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- **Pantheism**

- Pantheism is the view that the world is either identical to God, or an expression of God's nature. It comes from 'pan' meaning all, and 'theism,' which means belief in God. So according to pantheism, "God is everything and everything is God."

## OR

- Pantheism, the doctrine that the universe conceived of as a whole is God and, conversely, that there is no God but the combined substance, forces, and laws that are manifested in the existing universe. The cognate doctrine of panentheism asserts that God includes the universe as a part though not the whole of his being.
- **Deism**
- Deism is derived from Latin "deus" meaning "god" is the philosophical position that rejects revelation as a source of religious knowledge and asserts that reason and observation of the natural world are sufficient to establish the existence of a Supreme Being or creator of the universe.
- During the Age of Enlightenment, especially in Britain and France, philosophers began to reject revelation as a source of knowledge and to appeal only to truths that they felt could be established by reason alone. Such philosophers were called "deists" and the philosophical position that they advocated is called "deism".