

Different Perspectives on the Concept of God

When I was very young, almost too young to remember, I was walking down the street when I was accosted by two young boys, who tried to convince me to accept Jesus as the son of God. Due to the fact that Glenview has a high concentration of practicing Catholics, I was not surprised so much by their religious perspective as by the audacity that they had just shown. However, I was curious about Catholicism, so I asked them a few questions. I recall asking them if I was going to hell, but they responded disingenuously and refused to answer some of my deeper questions about their faith. This experience profoundly shaped the way that I now see organized religion. Although these two boys had not changed my religious agnosticism, they had changed the way I see organized religion. I remember reading a magazine article on the religious strife between the Sunnis and Shiites in the religion of Islam, and thinking of the great dedication that people have to their faith that I lacked. These early experiences ultimately led to my questioning whether or not God exists, what our destiny is, and the ultimate reality that exists beyond what we normally see.

I had continued to develop my understanding of the different religions in the world, but I had not practiced any religion. The knowledge that I gained of Christianity had already convinced me that I would never appreciate a religion that involved going to Sunday after Sunday to receive a sermon. Likewise, my immediate family did not practice a significant religion other than atheism. I had always celebrated the Christmas holiday, but I had never considered my family's celebration to have a large religious connotation to it. My family never talked to me about religion. I had thought that my family had never talked to me about religion because they did not think it was an important part of my education. I later realized that they wanted me to discover my own philosophy and religion, and that they did not want to influence me in a negative way. As I grew older, I became influenced by books, and one of the things that

interested me was the question of our existence. I learned that religion is a very fulfilling aspect of some people's lives. It also occurred to me that my parents had, without my knowledge, given me the opportunity to form my own conclusions and perspectives on religion and faith.

The religious perspective that I most identify with is known as agnosticism, which is defined as the belief that the truth of religious claims is unknowable. I had always regarded others' beliefs with much skepticism, but still I approached the ultimate question of the existence of God with this small belief in the back of my mind that I was somehow ignorant. I could not fool myself with the notion that any conclusion regarding the existence of God could be proved. Furthermore, if God is infinite, God can therefore never completely be comprehended. The theory of divine creation of life, for now, seems to be the most likely theory due to the complexities and infinite improbabilities involved in the creation of a cell, which is defined as the basic unit of life. The existence of a God may or may not be considered important, if it does not affect our lives. With that being said, the perspective of agnosticism gives me the opportunity to appreciate the greater questions about life and our existence. Without the finalizing answers of a religious text, it is possible to experience true enlightenment.

With these things being said, I have been convinced that I cannot arrive at a definite conclusion as to the existence or lack of existence in any sort of God, if God can be regarded as many different things. It is impossible to break the constraints of our subjective experiences and judgements of the world, and to see reality for what it is. We cannot be absolutely certain that something exists if it is out of our immediate sensory experience. I believe that doubt always exists in every question, and that, in addition, some questions are unsolvable. The myths that have been passed down through many generations may not be the same stories that were told thousands of years ago, due to the nature of communication. There is a lack of

information pertaining to the existence of God. Agnosticism might not convey meaningful messages and tales to live life by, but I believe that a person can learn from other religions if they are open-minded and if they are able to see truth in different religious ideas. The belief that I hold represents my uncertainty concerning the characteristics, shape, and form of the God or Gods that are purported to exist. I have never known for certain whether or not there is a God and if he is passive, or if he has communicated with us in the past. I believe that the characterization of God may simply be an attempt by religious believers to put a name or a face to an abstract concept. There is also a possibility that God exists, but only in our minds. If any person claims that they have seen God, they might well have seen God, even if their experience only existed as a manifestation of their mind. The afterlife, right versus wrong, and the meaning of life, can only be defined by people, because these things can never be measured by any apparatus. All of these ideas only truly exist in our minds. These reasons that I have given explain my agnosticism and the process by which I arrived at my answer to the religious question.