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**The Little Book About God – Part 2**

Introduction

If you’ve read “*The Little Book About God*,” you know that God exists. In fact, as far as we can understand, God has always existed and always will.

You realize that, without God, you would not be here right now at this moment in time and at this particular place on earth. Because of God, you’re aware that you’re alive. You’re inside your body experiencing life through the aperture of your five senses. You are self-aware.

You know, or you think you know, that we humans are different from other mammals. About 200,000 years ago, give or take 100,000 years, God began imparting self-awareness to us humanoids. We started to become aware of ourselves and aware of our life and, to a lesser extent, aware of our death.

We started to “think,” whatever that means. We started to create, and we’ve been creating ever since. All of the writings throughout history, all the art and music we enjoy, and all the technology upon which we rely, are a legacy of our forebears who have created these incredible things.

God started something – something momentous. We don’t know if we are a “one-off,” unique in the universe, but that doesn’t really matter, does it? We’d be delighted if God did the same for aliens on other planets, just as long as they stay on their own back yards and don’t mess with us. We have more than enough problems of our own making without dealing with weird folks from outer space.

Knowing that God exists gives many of us comfort, but unfortunately God seems to have left us to our own devices. We can’t rely on God to relieve our pain and suffering. Children suffer and die every day from disease and from abuse at the hands of their care-givers; mothers suffer and die in childbirth; men suffer and die trying to protect their families against the evil deeds of other men. Remember what happened to the family described in Truman Capote’s “In Cold Blood”?

We repeatedly pray, “God have mercy. God have mercy. God have mercy.” But God appears to turn a blind eye to what happens to us. Why is that? If God infused each and every one of us with self-awareness, why doesn’t God seem to care what happens to us? That is *the* question we’ll grapple with in this little book.

We’re *here*, and we want to know *why*.

Chapter 1: **DOES GOD CARE?**

If you’ve read “*The Little Book About God*” you may recall the paragraph:

*If God does exist, there must be a logical reason for God’s lack of response to our prayers. I can think of four:*

1. *God may not have the ability to provide what we pray for;*
2. *God may have the ability to do so, but may not care about us;*
3. *God may care for us but may not want to be a wish-fulfiller; and*
4. *There may be no God at all.*

God doesn’t seem to care about our pain and suffering, but does that mean God doesn’t care at all what happens to us?

There’s *caring* on a personal level, and then there’s *caring* on a universal scale. There’s an important difference between the two.

On a personal level, our relationship with God is lovingly expressed in the famous *Godspell* song “Day by Day.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ekoHxB4idmg>

*Day by day,
Dear Lord, of thee three things I pray:
To see thee more clearly,
Love thee more dearly,
Follow thee more nearly,
Day by day.*

Most people who follow the Judeo-Christian and Muslim religions seek a personal relationship with God whom, they believe, is caring and provides comfort and solace in times of pain and suffering. In the Buddhist religion, as I understand it, there is no “god” but enlightenment comes from within. I confess I have no knowledge at all of other religions (Hindu, Sikh, Bahai, *et al*.).

Throughout the Judeo-Christian Bible, called the “Old Testament” and the “New Testament” by Christian believers, there is a continuing thread: God is watching over us, knows what we do, and will provide needed help if we ask for it through prayer.

Jesus said:

*See the birds of the sky. They don’t sow, neither*

*do they reap, nor gather into barns. Your heavenly Father*

*feeds them. Aren’t you of much more value than they?*

Matthew 6:26

In the Old Testament, God is portrayed as quite judgmental. God requires loyalty and trust (which Abraham proved when God commanded him to sacrifice his son Isaac) and requires obedience (as Jonah learned the hard way inside a whale). God is said to favor the Jews over the gentiles (as Jonah showed when he conquered the “promised land”) and also favor certain Jews (e.g., Jacob) over others (Jacob’s twin brother Esau). In all times, however, God was, and is, on hand, directly interested in what people are doing.

In the New Testament, Jesus and his followers portray God as loving and kind.

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-5

Furthermore, according to Jesus, God created and treats everyone equally, whether they be Jew or gentile, law-abiding or scofflaw. In fact, Jesus spent more time with the unsavory and the despised (e.g., tax collectors) than he did with the righteous and socially acceptable (e.g., the Pharisees and the Sadducees).

*"As Jesus went on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax collector's booth. ‘Follow me,’ he told him, and Matthew got up and followed him."* Matthew 9:9-13. See also Mark 2:13-17 and Luke 5:27-28.

No matter what the message is, though, there is never any question that God is watching over us, day by day.

*He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and*what doth the Lord require of thee*, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?*

<https://biblehub.com/micah/6-8.htm>

The problem is: Much as we would like it to be so, there is no credible, scientific evidence that God is there for us on the personal level.

To be brutally blunt, God does *not* answer our prayers.

So what is God up to? Why has God made humans so special – much different from all other mammals – and has then left us alone to deal with the hardships of life on our own?

Chapter 2: **GOD’S PLAN FOR US**

There has to be a reason God made us special - not just special but *really* special. We’re so different from other mammals we might as well have come from another planet.

You’re inside your head seeing, listening, smelling and tasting, and you can feel touch on any part of your body. For a period of time, which is very short compared to the long history of mankind, you inhabit your body and navigate through whatever options you have to reach the goals you have set for yourself. God has given you consciousness, at your particular place on this earth and at this particular time, and let you go.

But why did God do this? Why has God infused consciousness into all of us humans for the past 200,000 years or so? God must have a reason. God must have a *Plan*. Right?

To start this discussion, let’s take a good look at the Bible’s Book of Job. This Book is someone’s idea of God’s thought process, as told in story form:

*Job is the bee's knees. Really. He's blameless and upright, and he has kids, a wife, land, and a bunch of sheep. Doesn't get much better than that. Up in the heavens, God brags to the divine assembly about Job. Lo and behold, Satan comes out and challenges God on Job's goodness. This can't end well.*

*Satan tells God that, sure, Job loves God now, but take away his earthly possessions and his children, and he will dump God in a New York minute. God agrees to the challenge, and Satan unleashes a force that kills all of Job's family except his wife, kills his servants, and reduces his homes to dust. Ouch.*

*But guess what? Job remains loyal. He refuses to denounce God. Take that, Satan. God gets to back to bragging and Satan sets up another challenge. This time, God lets Satan give Job a nasty rash, boils, and blisters all over his body.*

*Now Job becomes a much less happy camper. After all, he was loyal to God, and look what happened. He doesn't renounce God, but he does insist that he deserves some kind of explanation—wouldn't you want one? His buddies Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar have an answer: it's his fault. Hmmm.*

*Job isn't quite satisfied with that explanation. Just in the nick of time, Elihu pops in to tell Job that he may not have sinned, but he still has no right to question his fate. After all, God's universe is still endowed with immortal power. Bottom line: Job should suck it up.*

*After much fretting and many speeches, God finally shows up. Why? For a scolding. Where was Job on the day the universe was created? Where was Job when God was designing the architecture of the seas and the continents?*

*Needless to say, Job feels a little humbled and acknowledges that, as a mere mortal, he can't possibly understand everything in an immortally ruled universe. Taking Elihu's advice, Job goes back to his day job, and eventually God gives him double what he had at the outset. Job lives to a ripe old age, and both God and Satan fade into the shadows.* The Shmoop Bible Guide [www.shmoop.com/book-of-job/summary.html](http://www.shmoop.com/book-of-job/summary.html)

Albert Einstein is said to have said, “*Everything should be made as simple as possible, but not simpler.*” He also noted,“*When the solution is simple, God is answering.*”

God’s Plan may well be complicated but, following Einstein’s theory, let’s try to keep it simple.

When studying the Book of Job, we need to bear in mind the author was just an ordinary mortal, like you and me. Being a mortal, the author had no special knowledge or expertise about God, nor about God’s plans for humankind. However, the author’s story is a good starting point for our consideration of the subject.

By the way, no one knows who this author actually was. Some say it was Job himself, but that doesn’t seem likely because the story is written in the third person and reveals intimate details about his life. Who does that? No matter who the author was, though, he/she sure had a wild imagination!

Parsing the story of Job, we can break it down as follows:

1. God sits up in the heavens with his “divine assembly.”
2. God continuously watches what goes on here on earth.
3. God brags to his assembly about the goodness of Job.
4. Satan is in the heavens too, and is allowed to speak to God.
5. Satan and God make a wager on Job’s reaction to hardship.
6. Job stays loyal to God although his life is nearly ruined.
7. Job questions his fate and asks his friends for advice.
8. God speaks to Job and scolds him for questioning his fate.
9. Job is humbled and acknowledges he’s unworthy.
10. God rewards Job with great wealth and old age.

What can we learn from this story?

First of all, we’re not the first to wonder about God’s Plan. The author of the Book of Job considered this subject too. Second, we can’t possibly understand the enormity of the universe that God has created and continues to create. Third, it’s presumptuous of us even to question God’s thought process. The best we can do is to be a good person, to be loyal to God, and to *suck it up*. “*What doth the Lord require of thee…*”

Bottom line: What we *didn’t* gain from the story is any real insight into God’s Plan. We’ll have to figure that out all on our own - if we can, that is.

Chapter 3: **SO WHAT ARE WE HERE FOR?**

God *must* have a Plan but, unless I’m missing something, there’s no possible way to find out about it. We can only guess at it. So let’s do that. Let’s make an intelligent *guess*.

I can think of several possible scenarios for God’s creation of human beings with self- awareness, something we may call “advanced life.”

1. God has been conducting an experiment with us in order to find out what will happen;
2. God can foresee what will happen and;

 (a) God will eventually interfere to save us from ourselves; or

 (b) God will not interfere with us, no matter what we do;

1. God has created advanced life on a number of different planets, and:
2. The advanced life on the planets is substantially the same as we are; or
3. The advanced life on the planets is substantially different from us.

There are probably other, far more complicated, scenarios, but remember: We’re keeping it simple.

1. The Great Human Experiment

Humans, imbued with consciousness, behave strangely and unpredictably to say the least. Unless God has the power to see into the future, there is really no way for God to foresee what a person will do. Add more and more humans to the mix and the human actions and reactions become even more complicated and difficult to predict. Each person reacts differently to stimuli; together, in groups, they are more unpredictable still.

So it is not unreasonable to assume that God does not know what will happen to humans once they are set in motion. What humans do is neither linear nor logical, which makes watching them anything but boring. It is probably not correct to attribute curiosity to God, but without fore-knowledge of the future, God would naturally want to watch the human race to see what happens people over time.

As a corollary to this possible scenario, this experiment would require that God stay removed and keep “hands off,” so as not to affect the outcome in any way.

1. Will God Save Us From Ourselves?

The human race is in deep trouble. Each time we fight a war we maim and we kill our brothers and sisters. We say we’ll never do that again. But then we do. This cycle has repeated itself again and again since the beginning of recorded history.

Also, our hate knows no bounds. Some people hate those who have a different race or a different religion. Others hate those with a different sexual orientation. The hate is so strong for some people that they’re motivated to grab a gun and start shooting.

In *The Little Book About God*, we just assumed that God would step in at some point to save us from ourselves. Otherwise, as certain as day follows night, we will surely bring an end to our human civilization. Be it through nuclear war, incurable disease, global warming, or some other threat to our existence, our path forward will surely end badly.

In *The Little Book About God*, we imagined God would send an Angel called “Ariel” to save us.

*The weapons of war became so powerful that, for a time, it looked like humans would eventually obliterate each other, and in so doing would also obliterate many of God’s creatures and plant life on earth. God therefore became concerned and sent a representative to turn humans away from this destructive behavior. The Angel Ariel was tasked with this mission to save God’s creation.*

But what if God does not intervene? What if God instead sits by and watches our self-destruction? That is certainly a possibility. Considering our destructive behavior, maybe we’re not worth saving. Just sayin’.

1. Life on Other Planets

God gave humans self-awareness on planet earth. Did God do the same for others (let’s call them “aliens” for lack of a better word) on other planets?

For aliens to reach the level of intelligence required to communicate with each other and to “do algebra,” I believe God would have to be involved.

As I explained in *The Little Book About God*, I don’t believe self-awareness or consciousness can happen spontaneously by itself. No matter how complex a biological brain or a man-made computing mechanism may be, it could not organize itself into a “being” with its own self-awareness. Assuming arguendo that one such brain or computing mechanism might manage to accomplish this feat, only an outside force like God could impart self-awareness to *each and* *every* brain of the human species, without exception. We’re all different, except in this respect.

# Let’s digress a moment to discuss what it means to have “intelligence,” as we know it. In the book “*Welcome to the Universe: An Astrophysical Tour”* co-authored by Neil DeGrasse Tyson, Dr. Tyson postulates a test that any being (person) must meet to acquire scientific knowledge. That person (specifically, an alien from another planet) must be able to “do algebra.” Without that ability – the ability to do advanced math - there is no way to define and understand scientific principles.

# The mathematical formulae F=MA (force equals mass times acceleration) and its electrical equivalent V= IR (voltage equals current times resistance) are just two very simple examples of scientific principles that need to be expressed in mathematical terms. Mathematics is the universal language. Wherever you are on this earth, and no matter what language you speak, the mathematical equations that describe physical properties are the *same*.

# It was Einstein who showed us that the physical sciences remain the same, no matter where you are in the universe. That being true, this requires that the math be the same wherever you go. Aliens must be able to do the *same mathematics* as we do if they are going to do science and engineering. On this planet at least, only humans can do that.

# Even if some organism on another planet has the *capability* to “do algebra,” that doesn’t mean that they *do*. Developing and using mathematics requires the motivation to create, and that only comes from self-awareness. And self-awareness requires that special gift from God.

# I doubt that within my short lifetime on this planet Earth scientists will discover advanced life on another planet. Scientists have continuously monitored deep space for many years, looking for signals from other life forms. Thus far they’ve received absolutely nothing, not even the faintest hint, to indicate that someone or something out there is attempting to communicate with us. If such communication ever does happen, it may be thousands of years from now, which is merely a split second compared to the billions of years it may take for advanced life to develop. At this point only God knows, and God is not telling.

# It would be a momentous occasion if advanced life were to reveal itself to us. We would immediately try to establish communication and learn whatever we could from this new source of knowledge. We’d immediately want to learn about the biology and the anatomy of these creatures on a faraway planet. Are they similar to us, or are they substantially different? Knowing about them would give us a greater understanding of ourselves. Whether the advanced life be similar or different from us, we would no longer be unique to the universe. That in itself would be humbling and give us reason to reflect upon our purpose here on earth.

# Discovering advanced life on another planet just might put an end to our repeated cycles of war and peace. It might even render unnecessary a visit by the Angel Ariel.

#  THE END