



Humanists of Sarasota Bay, Inc.
Sarasota, Florida

HUSBAY NEWSLETTER

MAY 2021

NATIONAL DAY OF REASON

Monday May 6, 2021

By Matthew Fisher, Member of Florida Atheists

National Day of Reason is upon us. Being an atheist doesn't require much effort. There aren't any creeds to memorize or religious services to attend regularly. So long as you don't believe in any gods, even if you never give the subject a second thought, you're an atheist or agnostic. Never thinking about it may not be the best course of action in modern society, though. There are good reasons to think that making a conscious effort to be open and deliberate in your godlessness would be better for you and those around you.

The most important principles which the godless should commit themselves to are skepticism and critical thinking. You don't have to be skeptical or a critical thinker to be an atheist or agnostic however, a moral and relevant atheism is one that is founded on a habit of skepticism. One of the worst intellectual failings which people have is simply accepting as true whatever claims they hear, regardless of the logical or empirical support which the claims may (or may not) have. Skepticism means not accepting whatever we hear; critical thinking means examining claims and ideas to determine how valid they are.

It's easy to be skeptical and critical of others' ideas, but harder to exercise the same scrutiny

of things we already believe. If we engage in self-reflection and introspection, we can skeptically examine the ideas we have accepted uncritically for so long. If our own ideas can't stand up to the same criticism which we apply to others' ideas, we're behaving hypocritically. What's more, the better we understand ourselves and why we believe things, the better we might understand others as well.

Many people are in the closet about being godless. This is often for good reasons, but being open, public, and unapologetic about one's godlessness is important: first, because it helps one feel more comfortable with oneself, and second, so that people can see that godlessness doesn't make one an immoral monster. Godless humans should commit to setting a good example about what godlessness means, and should not imply that there is something shameful about it by keeping silent.

I'm a godless heathen. I've sort of always been one however, I was raised in a super conservative, fundamentalist-Christian home. Even though this was a very awkward and painful experience I'm proud to state: I continue to have a generalized love for life.

Learn more [here](#).

Humanism is a progressive philosophy of life that, *without theism or other supernatural beliefs*, affirms our ability and responsibility to lead ethical lives of personal fulfillment that aspire to the greater good. To learn more go [here](#).

The Purpose of Life ...is Life, amun

Or/ What if Eve's Apple Was a Magic Mushroom?

By Robert Magill

The sole purpose of life, and therefore our only human purpose may simply be, life itself. That, upon reflection, would appear to be almost enough. The life force does have its urges though, lots of them, it would appear. After countless eons of self-replication along came sexual reproduction, life had apparently gotten to be in somewhat more of a hurry. Life then pursued bigger and better forms of itself as mobility, size, vision etc. ensued over time.

Vision was unique and a promising end in itself, but life appeared to desire a different platform with which to fully employ this new sense. Many prototypes came and went, and eventually on the scene appeared humankind complete with a newly acquired awareness. Whence came then, this thing, this awareness, this brightness in the void, so cherished by life our very species could be made forfeit to preserve it? Perhaps it was the animal curiosity of some lumbering hominids possessed of sufficient cranial matter that chanced upon a source. The menu of vegetable suspects is quite large. The plants, cacti, mushrooms and vines that possess the chemical soups that have the ability, and perhaps desire to exert themselves aggressively when combined with suitable host brain, is legion. We currently regard these substances as "mind altering" but could they perhaps have been "mind creating" at some remote point in time?

Students of psychedelic phenomenon have reported a tendency among this family of substances to exhibit a strong urge to promote its own agenda over the host consciousness at times. Life, in this way, may have introduced the initial spark of awareness in receptive hominid brains with suitable vegetable matter containing psychedelic chemical ingredients. Imagine the wonder this revelation surely produced in a previously unconscious world. The binges and quest for more light shows that followed in the still only partially illuminated minds of these creatures must have been incredible.

Although partially illuminated may be an apt description, it diminishes these beings. In fact they were the life force's handiwork of the moment. Complete and complex animals, intuitive and instinctive, brainy but still totally a part of the remarkable life force of planet Earth. They are true focus of humankind's ongoing search for the "higher order"; the "god within", the "promised land", and all the rest. Humans continue to look outward for salvation despite the occasional quiet voice that urges "look within". The psycho-active helpers produced a new phenomenon here on Earth but this prized awareness still rests on the shoulders of one

of life's creatures: a functioning hominid. Human consciousness would do well to respectfully examine it's host.

Perhaps this initial visitation of consciousness onto a receptive human brain and the incredible awakening produced therein is responsible for the ongoing human quest for enlightenment. Our species has demonstrated a universal affinity for various visions, ecstasies and raptures and they have been zealously sought for millennia. Perhaps then, a racial memory of, and longing for a return to that original staggering event gives impetus to the universal spiritual quests we humans faithfully follow to this day

Eventually something went wrong between human beings and the life force. Life lives on by consuming itself but the feasting is benign. Humans often miss the subtlety. We know large portions of the recent history of our species and it's not very good. Considering our known history, can we begin to significantly amend our ways if life demands a timely accounting? So if and when life decides we have exhausted all possibility of further usefulness, and our excesses overwhelm life's other vital interests, do we then risk severance of the thread with life? Should we begin to tug ever more gently at this tether to lessen our risk? Does life even care about the fate of us, its creature? Probably not, countless other species have traveled along on life's quest, prospered to a degree and vanished. Will we join them?

Of course it is possible life may now be providing itself with a non-life fallback to the dilemma posed by our misuse of awareness and consciousness. If humankind becomes suspect of probable catastrophic losses to many of its other progeny, life then may seek to substitute Artificial Intelligence for flawed human intelligence. We, ourselves, may rapidly be creating the instruments for our future replacement with life's resigned encouragement. Life may value this tediously acquired awareness beyond all measure. More the pity for humankind.

These phenomena are unique on the planet; life, the life force and the awareness/consciousness of one primate species. What we regard as ultimate reality is simply the stories we tell ourselves and others combined with whatever actions humans are capable of accomplishing. Humanity must now learn to live with 5 Gigabit technology becoming a reality and should perhaps begin to wonder which future Gigabit number will be the one to

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Haiku Quintets: dandana.us/fivepalms

Whither Sisyphus?

climate doom, racism,
monied politics, gun-lust,
inequality

blind pronatalism,
antiscience religion's
child sacrifice cult

the stone will prevail,
overwhelming misery
defies my frail push

indulge soothing myths?
battle fates beyond my means?
pray to absent gods?

I'll tend my garden
I will watch my children play
I will write haiku

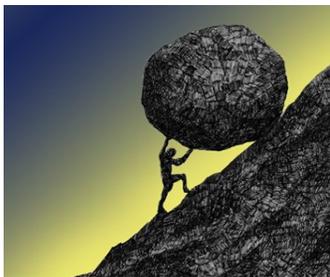


Image source: sisyphusa

Disclaimer: This haiku renders the author's stance as one Sisyphus among seven billion. It does not recommend same to fellow humans, nor to policy-makers. This is art, not advice.



Continued from page 2

provide the artificial intelligence and awareness deemed sufficient by the life force to render human beings redundant if it chooses to do so? Could we, perhaps, change our behavior? end
righttrax@aol.com

Note: (I used logical simplicity a.la Einstein but could not include freedom since the life force on our planet appears to be a closed system. The premise is advanced without a prior model and with the near certainty of rejection because worldwide left hemispheric lateralisation resists right brain grounding.)

Evangelical Vaccine Hesitancy

Millions of white adults in the U.S. do not intend to get vaccinated against Covid-19, presenting a significant obstacle as the country races to reach herd immunity.

The opposition is rooted in a mix of religious faith and wariness of mainstream science, fueled by broader cultural distrust of institutions and gravitation to online conspiracy theories. Some have been energized by what they see as a battle between faith and fear, and freedom versus persecution.

While many high-profile conservative pastors have endorsed the vaccines, other influential evangelical voices have sown fears. In churches, on talk shows and on TikTok, they warn the devout that "globalist entities" will "use bayonets and prisons to force a needle into your arm," or that the vaccines are "an experimental biological agent."

Some pastors have largely remained quiet, in part because politics has increasingly shaped faith among white

evangelicals. Hesitation is further complicated by longstanding distrust between evangelicals and the scientific community.

Elaine Ecklund, director of the Religion and Public Life Program at Rice university, said that there has been a "sea change" over the past century in how evangelical Christians see science, rooted largely in the debates over evolution and the secularization of the academy.

For slightly different reasons, the distrust of vaccines is sometimes shared by Asian, Hispanic and Black Christians, who are skeptical that hospitals and medical professionals will be sensitive to their concerns, Dr. Edklund said.

"We are seeing some of the implications of the inequalities of science," she said. "This is an enormous warning of the fact that we do not have a more diverse scientific work force, religiously and racially."

From the NYT

Special Interest Groups

Here is a list of Special Interest Groups (If you have an idea for one, please let us know).

SIG Names

Current Affairs (CAF):

Life's Experiences (LEX):

Non-Fiction Review (NFR):

Creativity (CRE):

Roundtable (RT):

Science Technology & Medicine (STM): What have you learned, and would like to share

Focus of the Group

Events discussed during the current news cycle

Your memorable experiences to share with the group

Reviews of non-fiction books, magazine articles, films and TV

Includes short stories, poetry, blogs; in other words fiction writing (including reviews) as opposed to non-fiction review.

A discussion of a topic selected by the SIG hosts

Check our website for specific information by clicking [HERE](#).

We need members to step up and help us develop programs for our SIG (Special Interest Group) meetings! Do you have a story to tell? A book to review? A rant? Do you have a career experience or hobby to share? A talk about a technology you like? A topic you would like covered? (We can find a speaker.) Have you written a book? Let us know ASAP!

Monthly Meetings

Summer lectures will be planned depending on the state of the COVID-19 pandemic

Link to Zoom meeting will be provided the day of meeting.

Next Board meeting June 17, 1:30 (Members contact Dave Helgager for link to attend meeting)

Concerning one of our members

We received word from Rhea Ward that the health of Chuck Smith, former Board member and treasurer, has been declining steadily with a variety of ailments plaguing him. We wish Chuck and Rhea all the best during this difficult time. You can reach Rhea via email at reheareta@gmail.com for more info.

And Now This

In the words of one of our illustrious board members, "If Al Gore were to tap dance while giving one of his climate lectures, it would be an example of and '*Al-Gore-rhythm*'"

Thanks Barry....



We are all atheists about most of the gods that societies have ever believed in. Some of us just go one god further.

(Richard Dawkins)

izquotes.com

“*The Three Mothers* is a tribute to and celebration of Black motherhood from the late 1800s to the present.”

A book review by Karen Koenig

The Three Mothers is a tribute to and celebration of Black motherhood from the late 1800s to the present. It focuses on the unheralded, historically ignored women who, against all odds, raised three Black men who forever changed the course of our nation: James Baldwin’s mother, Berdis Baldwin; Malcolm X’s mother, Louise Little; and Martin Luther King, Jr.’s mother, Alberta King.

This book will enlighten those interested in Black History, women’s history, and how the United States came to be the country it is today for worse and better. The book’s author, Anna Malaika Tubbs, a Cambridge Ph.D. candidate in Sociology and a Bill and Melinda Gates Cambridge Scholar, has written a meticulously researched scholarly work on a subject that is near and dear to her heart as a new Black mother herself.

She writes that “Louise, Berdis and Alberta were well aware of the dangers they and their children would be met with as Black people in the United States, and they all strove to equip their children not only to face the world but to change it.” And make indelible changes, their sons did, though sadly, each was outlived by their mother.

Tubbs delves into as much background as she can find on Berdis, Alberta, and Louise, reaching back into history to tell their stories and show how they came to be as strong and influential as they were. She paints a bleak but realistic picture, pieced together from many sources, of how Blacks, especially Black women, were dehumanized throughout our nation’s history. This historic background serves to make the three of them shine more brightly, highlighting their courage, strength of character, resilience, and vision of a more humane society, and how they passionately fought against dehumanization and taught resistance to their sons.

For the rest of the review click [here](#).

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