

“Intolerance of Intolerance” Diversity Awareness Corner



Beyond This Place... There Be Dragons!

The Philosophy of Positive Atheism



Famous Atheist: Charles Schultz

The philosophy of Positive Atheism was started by Gora in India. Gora was the founder of the “Atheist Center” in India. He eventually met Mahatma Gandhi and they later worked together toward India's independence, which occurred in 1947. He also worked with India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, an Atheist, urging him to support the formation of a secular government in India, which was predominantly Hindu.

In accordance with his Atheistic beliefs, Gora later worked to establish a network of charitable organizations that rivaled those in the United States. Gora also worked tirelessly to end “untouchability” in India.

Religious sects and groups that would otherwise be warring with each other have been known to join forces in denouncing and persecuting the Atheist. The justification for such persecution has been to classify Atheists as evil or wicked. Thus, justification for their persecution, and even extermination was found.

Gora therefore believed that Atheists must demonstrate to the world that they are in fact moral, honest, forthright, and dignified people. Gora later stated:

“It takes work to move into the community and attempt to correct these injustices. And if we don't do it, it won't get done. God is certainly not going to do it for us.”

Atheistic Ethics

The key element of Gora's personal ethic is personal integrity, which is intended to act as a synonym for "honesty." Gora stressed personal honesty, truthfulness, and self-consistency in all human affairs. Gora said that it was hypocritical for an atheist to criticize the "falsehoods" atheists see in other religions and then be deceitful in her or his personal affairs.

Gora's atheistic beliefs combine the individual freedoms humans enjoy with a sense of social responsibility to work toward correcting the wrongs that exist in the world.

Three predominant themes emerge from this aspect of Gora's outlook.

1. RIGHT THE WRONGS OF THE WORLD

The first tenant of Positive Atheism is to right the wrongs in the world. Correcting these wrongs requires effort and a sense of social responsibility since no gods will do this work for man. According to Gora, man is accountable for his own actions and his own situation in life. Changes take place not independent of man's will, but instead, as a result of man's will.

2. TRUTHFULNESS

Positive Atheism teaches that man is only free as long as he is truthful. An atheist is free to say or to do what he likes, provided he does what he says and says what he does. So, in the context of social relations, the freedom of the individual is moral freedom.

3. MORAL SUPERIORITY

Finally, if atheists are to gain widespread social acceptance, they must be able to show the world that they are not morally inferior to theists. This feeling of moral inferiority has resulted in atheists being attacked by theists for centuries. If atheists ever hope to be accepted in the world and not viewed as an "evil element" and escape persecution, atheists must be viewed as moral humans and not threats to others.

Discussion Questions

- **Did you just learn something about Atheism?**
- **Are Atheists "evil devils" you thought they were...or do we tend to just "villianize" what we do not understand? How does "Educate...Educate...Educate" help you here?**
- **Is there room in the world for Atheists? Muslims? Hindus? Christians? Or should we just kill them now?**
- **How would you treat an Atheist working beside you?**

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