

DID GOD BECOME MAN? (PART 1 OF 5): A NATURAL BELIEF IN GOD

Rating: 4.0

Description: The Belief in One God and service to Him is one which is inherent in all humans.

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By: Dr. A.B. Philips

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The vast majority of human beings have always believed in God. From the most ancient civilizations to the most primitive of modern societies, religions with God at their center have formed the foundation of human culture. In fact, the denial of God's existence (atheism) throughout history was limited to a few individuals until the rise of communism in the 20th century.

Even today, in the secular societies of the West, where modern social scientists armed with Darwinian theories have argued that God is merely a figment of the human collective imagination, the overwhelming majority of citizens, laymen and even scientists, hold steadfast to their belief in God.

Consequently, the overwhelming body of archeological data in support of God's existence has led some anthropologists to conclude that belief in God (deism) must be inborn and not learnt. Although the vast majority of social scientists proposed otherwise, recent scientific discoveries appear to support the minority view that deism is innate. In an article entitled "God Spot is found in the Brain," Dr. Vilayanur Ramachandran of the University of California at San Diego said that the phenomenon of religious belief in God is hardwired into the brain.



'God Spot' is Found in Brain

by Steve Connor

Science Correspondent

SCIENTISTS believe they have discovered a "God module" in the brain, which could be responsible for man's evolutionary instinct to believe in religion.

A study of epileptics, who are known to have profoundly spiritual experiences, has located a circuit of nerves in the front of the brain, which appears to become electrically active when they think about God.

The scientists said that although the research and its conclusions are preliminary, initial results suggest that the phenomenon of religious belief is "hardwired" into the brain.

Epileptic patients who suffer from seizures of the brain's frontal lobe said they frequently experience intense mystical episodes and often become obsessed with religious spirituality.

A team of neuroscientists from the University of California at San Diego said the most intriguing explanation is that the seizure causes an over-stimulation of the nerves in a part of the brain dubbed the "God module".

"There may be dedicated neural machinery in the temporal lobes concerned with religion. This may have evolved to impose order and stability on society," the team reported at a conference last week.

The results indicate that whether a person believes in a religion or even in GOD may depend on how enhanced this part of the brain's electrical circuitry is.

Dr. Vilayanur Ramachandran, head of the research team, said the study involved comparing epileptic patients with normal people and a group who said they were intensely religious.

Electrical monitors on their skin – a standard test for activity in the brains temporal lobes – showed that the epileptics and the deeply religious displayed a similar response when shown words invoking spiritual belief.

Evolutionary scientists have suggested that belief in God, which is a common trait, found in human societies around the world and throughout history, may be built into the brain's complex electrical circuitry as a Darwinian adaptation to encourage cooperation between individuals.

If the research is correct and a "God module" exists, then it might suggest that individuals who are atheists could have a differently configured neural circuit.

Despite growing evidence that man is hardwired with a “physical facility for belief,” the fact that the concept of God has varied greatly among human societies still leads some thinkers, even those who believe in God, to conclude that religions must be manmade.

However, thorough research reveals a common theological thread linking the various religions. That link is the belief in a Supreme Being among the various gods, a monotheistic foundation that can be found in even the most externally pantheistic of religious systems. For example, the concept of God in Hinduism exists as a single example among many religions, which supports the view that human beings were originally monotheistic and through various degenerative processes became polytheistic. In spite of its many gods and idols, Hinduism has a single Supreme God above all, Brahman.

Traditionally, most anthropologists have concluded that religion devolved from various stages of polytheism to monotheism, beginning with early man’s deification of the forces of nature, then, eventually, devolving into ditheism to consolidate all of the supernatural powers into two main gods (a god of good and a god of evil), and, finally, simplifying into a belief in one god, monotheism.

Thus, religion, according to anthropologists and social scientists, has no divine origin; it is merely a byproduct of the evolution of early man’s superstitions, based on his lack of scientific knowledge. Hence, these same theoreticians believe that science will eventually unlock all of the secrets of nature, resulting in the disuse of religion to explain natural phenomena, and, the consequential extinction of religion altogether.

Man’s innate belief in a Supreme Being, however, seems to support the opposite view, proposing instead that man began as a monotheist, but in time, strayed into various forms of polytheism. This view is further supported by fact that all of the so-called primitive tribes, which have been “discovered,” have been found to hold a belief in a Supreme Being. No matter what their evolutionary stage of religious development is found to have been at the time of “discovery,” most were found to believe in a Supreme God over all other gods and spirits. As such, the concept of a single Supreme Being remains in most of the religion’s as evidence that the masses strayed away from monotheism by giving some of God’s attributes to other aspects of creation, which eventually came to be regarded as lesser gods in some cases and as intercessors in others. Nevertheless, a Supreme God, in whatever form He takes, is at the core of most religions.^[2]

Footnotes:

[1] The Sunday Times, 2 Nov. 97, p. 19.

[2]

As God said in the Quran: “**So set you your face towards the religion, *hanifan* (steering away from the association of any others with God), the nature [framed by] God with which He has created humankind. No change let there be in the creation of God, that is the straight religion, but most men do not know.**” (Quran 30:30)–
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