

If God doesn't exist - then why do so many people believe he does?

This is a very interesting question. If so many people believe it - doesn't that mean it's most likely true? This question exposes a flaw in human nature that causes mass quantities of people to believe in things that are obviously not true. And many of these people are smart people. So why do smart people believe in stupid things? It has to do with the human brain being an imperfect tool. And logic is not the dominant factor that controls our thinking.

To answer this question we have to look back at human evolution. The ability to reason and communicate and to pass on knowledge from one person to another is at best a few hundred thousand years old. Before that our brains were dedicated to defending ourselves, obtaining food, and mating. And those instincts are far stronger and more well developed. One of those instincts is the instinct to socialize and act as a group in order to better survive. We are like a hive of bees who are individuals, yet can't survive by themselves. Bees live in hives which are really a super organism which is a collection including thousands of bees. Although humans are not as integrated as bees, we are definitely herd animals, and we depend on being part of society as our super organism. And that dependence on society is something that is hard wired in our brains on the instinct level and is far stronger than logic is.

An example of instinct being stronger than logic is President Clinton having sex with Monica Lewinsky. Here's a smart guy who obviously knew better but did it anyhow. In fact if you actually read the Starr report you can plainly see how he struggled to stop doing it and break it off and just couldn't help himself. And when it comes down to it - we're more like Clinton than most of us realize. If we weren't - the human race would have become extinct millions of years ago. If you look at what Clinton did in the context of instinct rather than logic - it all make total sense.

But sex isn't the only instinctive behavior to override our logic. Our need to organize as a society is at least as strong as our sexual instincts. For example - much of our brain and the structure of our mouth, tongue and vocal cords are devoted to speech. And speech has only one purpose - to communicate with other people. And we communicate because we have to. It's a key part of our survival strategy. We are totally interdependent on each other and our very being is programmed to form associations and work as a group. It is important to fit into the herd - and as we see in times of war - we are even willing to die for the herd.

Our common knowledge which I call the Tree of Knowledge is what distinguishes us from the animals. Our collective intellectual commons is far bigger than any one human mind can store and we are dependent on others to process knowledge for us and we have to trust others that they know what is true so that we can function in society. And the most common way of relying on external information is if "everyone" seems to accept it.

The advantage of the human mind allocating information storage and trust to other people or groups of people is that we have access to much more information than we can store and process ourselves. The disadvantage of this information allocation is that if the group is wrong - then all the members are wrong.

The need to be a member of a group is stronger than logic and will override logic.

It is often difficult for an individual to go up against the group mind pressure on some specific issues. Especially when it come to religion and especially if the information was drilled into you at a young age. The Church provides a sense of community and belonging and emotional security that we are all hard wired to need. It is important to us to be part of our groups for many reasons. So - when the groups we depend on believe that God exists - we accept that God exists even if our logic would suggest that he doesn't. Our need to be part of the group is much stronger than logic and therefore our minds play tricks on us in order to make our logic adapt around what would otherwise be an obvious flaw.

So - how do we rise above our instincts and determine what the truth really is knowing that our minds are under influences stronger than logic? For example - maybe my need to associate with my fellow cult members (people who I

associate with) who are atheists are driving me to espouse positions that have undermined my logic. One always has to question ones own imperfect mind. If you were raised as a Christian - how do you know if you should question that?

There are a lot of religions on this planet and they have very different views of God - or Gods - or no God. One thing that is common is that people feel in their heart usually that the religion they were raised in is the true religion and that all other religions look like heathen nonsense. Christians think Muslims are primitive heathens, and Muslims consider Christians to be Infidels. Both use this view to justify slaughtering each other as surrogates of a mythical God. I personally was raised Jewish (somewhat) and had to believe that being a Jew was better than any other religion, because if it weren't my parents would have converted to the better religion. And I believe that Jews really are one of the better religions on the planet even though the Old Testament is total bullshit. So - why do I believe that? Are Jews in some way superior - or - do I think that because I was influenced that way when I was a kid? How do I separate reality from the influences of my imperfect brain?

First - I look around at other people's bias based on the way they were raised and I have to assume that I am biased as well. And that what I believe about Jews is tainted by my instincts. I have to assume that my attitude towards Judaism is probably more favorable than reality would support since everyone else on the planet thinks their religion is best based only on being raised that way.

So - if you look around and see what I see - that people believe the religion they were raised with - and you believe the religion you were raised with - can you accept that it is as likely that you are as wrong about your religion as they are about theirs? Even though you "know in your gut" that you are right - you can't help but notice that they also "know in their gut" that they are right. In fact - for what it's worth - I know in my gut that I'm right. That believing in reality is the true religion. So - who's right? (I am!)

Getting back to the point here. All religions are cults - including this one. Our need to connect with a group and to identify with society is instinctive. Cult behavior isn't limited to just religions. Nationalism is similar. America is a cult. We believe we are better than everyone else and if God were here on Earth that he would be an American. Other cults include political parties, sports teams, neighborhood associations, memberships in organizations, corporations, etc. People organize into groups and are often willing to compromise their logic and accept the view of the group.

Have you ever wondered why - when a Jehovah's Witness, for example, comes to your door to convert you - that there's nothing you can say to them to shake their belief - even though what they are preaching is extremely idiotic? The reason you will never get anywhere is that this person is socially connected to this group. They are providing him more that just religious beliefs. This person has his identity tied to the cult mind. It gives him a sense of community and belonging and this identity and community is something that is important to him. If he were to question the beliefs of his group - he would eventually realize that it's bullshit and it would result in his having to leave the group. If this person is not prepared to leave the group - then his mind will play whatever tricks it needs to play in order to hang on to the required belief. Unless this person is ready to leave the cult - there is no way his mind can possibly accept information that is contrary to the required views of the cult.

Although it's easy for us to look at the Jehovah's Witnesses, or the Muslims, or the Hindus, or any other religion we are not a member of and see how ridiculous their beliefs are - when it comes to our own religion, country, or political party, well - that's different. Is it not true that the reason you might believe in the Bible and the God of the Bible is really because you have been brainwashed that way from childhood and that due to old mental patterns and fear of what you would lose socially - not to mention the idea that you are going to die and cease to exist - that you are too afraid to really consider that reality is not a pretty place and there is no God and we are out here all alone - responsible for our own choices - and with no parent figure in the sky to take care of us?

Anyhow - my point is - there are a lot of things that lots of people believe in that just aren't true - and it is the dharma of the Church of Reality to explore this and learn ways of separating what is real from what is not.