

Placed on Blog – January 05

Monday, January 31

Human Issues – Social: Social Security – Statistics versus the individual

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 31, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

Dialoguing - A Neo-Buddhist and a Symbiotic Panentheist

Clyde G. is a respected thinker and Neo-Buddhist who has been acknowledged for his ability to ask questions going to the heart of issues regarding metaphysical models of reality.

[050130 cg] Comment:

Dan:

Yes, let's not let statistics (facts) intrude on "common knowledge". While I don't dispute actuarial tables for life expectancies of various populations, that, in itself, doesn't provide all the information required to analyze the "problem" and support your contention that black males receive fewer benefits for their contribution to the Social Security system.

Paul Krugman, New York Times, wrote (January 28, 2005), "It's true that the current life expectancy for black males at birth is only 68.8 years - but that doesn't mean that a black man who has worked all his life can expect to die after collecting only a few years' worth of Social Security benefits. Blacks' low life expectancy is largely due to high death rates in childhood and young adulthood. African-American men who make it to age 65 can expect to live, and collect benefits, for an additional 14.6 years - not that far short of the 16.6-year figure for white men... "

Black males may receive fewer benefits in absolute dollars, but not nearly as dramatically as portrayed. But even that is not a complete understanding of the "problem".

The Star Tribune editorial (January 17, 2005) writes, quoting actuaries, "In fact, results from more careful research reflecting actual work histories for workers by race indicate that the non-white population actually enjoys the same or better expected rates of return from Social Security than for the white population." Other statistics show that African Americans rely more on Social Security than do whites. And this does not take into account other benefits received by African Americans from Social Security programs.

You then shifted the argument to gender.

Yes, as populations, females outlive males. Well, a simple solution to address the gender inequality issue is to delay the retirement age for females, which would have the additional benefit of improving the financial condition of Social Security.

A logical solution but when dealing with the public, logic does not compute. Such a proposal while being logical would be political suicide, therefore not an option any party would seriously propose.

Personal investment accounts, while not a perfect answer, would address both the problem of race and gender without raising the ugly specter of a political third rail associated with the characteristics of feminism or racism.

[050130 cg] Comment:

A more general solution is to adjust the retirement age and/or the benefit payments according to the life expectancies of different populations (e.g. - increasing the retirement age of white females and increasing the benefit payments for black males).

Again: A logical solution but when dealing with the public, logic does not compute. Such a proposal while being logical would be political suicide, therefore not an option any party would seriously propose.

Personal investment accounts, while not a perfect answer, would address both the problem of race and gender without raising the ugly specter of a political third rail associated with the characteristics of feminism or racism.

[050130 cg] Comment:

You end your polemic by defining "constructive criticism"; i.e., offering a specific solution, and "obstructive criticism". I do not know if this comment was directed at me, but I will respond.

Good. The idea needs to be addressed by some thinker out there.

[050130 cg] Comment:

My first e-mail response suggested: 1) that the "problem" had not been well defined, and 2) if the "problem" existed as stated, that one solution was to improve the life expectancy of black males.

You now argue, "that such an event [equal life spans for black males and white females] may never occur since males in general do not live as long as females. This appears to be influenced by genetics as well as social conditions. In addition, to correct long standing racial problems, while needing to be addressed, will require the attention of many generations."

That the more important underlying problem cannot be solved quickly is hardly a reason to dismiss it.

I did not say the problem should be dismissed. I stated: '.... while needing to be addressed, ...' and then proceeded to suggest if we truly value the individual then we must take action in the present to support our verbiage as well as look to the future.

[050130 cg] Comment:

Paul Krugman writes, "The persistent gap in life expectancy between African-Americans and whites is one measure of the deep inequalities that remain in our society - including highly unequal access to good-quality health care. We ought to be trying to diminish that gap, especially given the fact that black infants are two and half times as likely as white babies to die in their first year." Certainly early childhood health care can be addressed today, even if genetic conditions cannot (and these may be addressable in the near future).

Agreed, but that still leaves the issue regarding the individual living today.

[050130 cg] Comment:

Finally, we will never achieve a quantifiably "perfect equality" (e.g. - solve that an arbitrarily defined population receives more absolute dollars of Social Security benefits than an other) in our social system. It is an ideal; our task is to achieve reasonable fairness.

Agreed 'utopia' is just that 'utopia and as such can never be fully attained, however, that is not to suggest we fall back on such an argument at the expense of the individual.

[050130 cg] Comment:

clyde

p.s: Though you wrote, "I have no interest in initiating a political debate", you may want to re-examine your interests.

I will give that some thought.

Your research was excellently done and much appreciated.

Dan

Sunday, January 30

Reflections – Politics: Social Security – Unintended results

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 30, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

Reflections - Politics: Social Security - Responses

Several issues came up in response to the article entitled 'Social Security – Unintended results'

1. It was stated: Statistics were lacking that support my claim that 'poor black males' receive fewer social security benefits than most, if not any other, major segment of our society.

There are times when one need not 'supply' direct linkage to valid sources. This is such an occasion. It is common knowledge that males have a shorter average life span than women. One such validation comes from the mortality tables of life insurance companies. This fact explains the reason male life insurance premiums are more than that of females.

It is also well documented that black males have a shorter life expectancy than white males.

I do not believe every statement in life needs validation.

2. It was suggested that the solution to black males receiving fewer social security benefits than white females is to improve the life expectancy of black males.

Now that may appear to be an obvious solution but it is also obvious that such an event may never occur since males in general do not live as long as females. This appears to be influenced by genetics as well as social conditions. In addition, to correct long standing racial problems, while needing to be addressed, will require the attention of many generations.

The question then becomes: Do we let present inequities stand, at the expense of the individual, in hopes of 'eventually' correcting said inequities. Such a position gives the appearance of verbalizing the idea that we believe in the significance of the individual while at the same time demonstrating through the lack of action that we, in actuality, have little concern for the real person, for the person alive today. The question then becomes: Do words portray our principles or do our actions portray our principles? I would suggest it is action over words that portray our true concerns.

3. It was suggested by another reader that we should take a more socialistic approach through the process of increasing our attempt to assist those less fortunate than ourselves.

I find such perceptions interesting since most people who think we should pay more in taxes or 'reach out' to a greater degree economically, do not send the government more than they owe in taxes nor do most these people commit themselves to lives of poverty and send all but the minimal amount needed to live, to the UN, the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, Charities, or for the reduction of the US deficit. Again actions speak volumes.

I see people who suggest our society is 'too' 'me' oriented, or 'too' capitalistic, doing what other people in our society do. They buy a house, when they could live in a one room apartment. They

save money for retirement, when they could work until they die. They buy two cars when they could make do with one or none. ...

Now I am not condemning such people for I do likewise. What I am suggesting is that people, who make such declarations, may want to look at themselves in the mirror before they admonish others for what it is they themselves are doing.

The bottom line is: What system works best for the individual, after all, within the model of symbiotic panentheism, it is not only future individuals we need to consider but it is the living breathing individual of today that is significant and thus needs our attention.

I would suggest the concept of personal accounts within the social security system is what addresses the issue of living breathing individuals. Now the point of discussing such issues is just that, to discuss such issues. I would also suggest, criticism for criticism's sake is 'obstructive' as opposed to 'constructive'. 'Constructive' criticism states a problem and then suggests a specific solution as opposed to 'obstructive' criticism which only states a problem and then avoids the risk of offering a specific solution.

Thursday, *January 27*

Reflections – Politics: Social Security – Unintended results

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 27, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

Reflections – Politics: Social Security - Unintended results

Statistics show that the segment of our population which receives the least benefits from social security are poor black males. They die sooner than any other segment of our society.

The oldest living subgroup of our society are single rich old white ladies.

The result: poor black males are still enslaved to the rich white women of America. Where is the justice in this? And they say that the emancipation proclamation freed the black man from slavery! The perception of society: Nothing needs to be done. It appears slavery remains alive and well.

Ah, the hypocrisy of American political perception.

Can this be easily corrected? Of course this can be easily corrected, the process: initiation of ownership of your retirement fund. The Republicans want to establish such funds, the Democrats threaten to filibuster such accounts.

The Democrats profess to be protectors of the downtrodden, poor, and disenfranchised. If this is so, where are the actions to support such proclamations?

Where is the justice, fairness, in all this?

Think about it.

Tuesday, January 25

Human Issues – Society: War - Morality

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 25, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

War - Morality

Question

Is not everyone our 'brother' and are we not our brother's keeper?

Introduction

There are times when war is both moral and ethical. (www.panentheism.com, Home, Aphorisms, 1996 – 2003.)

Analysis

Is war ever moral? The heart of the question lies in understanding of the word morality. The American Heritage Dictionary defines 'morality' as: 'A system of ideas of right and wrong conduct.'

Americans have within their society a great diversity of moral systems. One moral system, however, acts as the foundation to all other moral systems found within their society.

'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; that, whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or abolish it, and to institute a new government, laying its foundation on such principles, and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness.'

'Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; ...' The Declaration of Independence

It is these principles, which provide the rationality regarding the system of morality found within the United States of America. Americans, as individuals and

as a nation composed of free individuals, believe the rights of the governed supercede the rights of government.

The American system finds its rationality within a metaphysical perception of reality based upon the model of symbiotic panentheism. It is within the rationality of symbiotic panentheism that one finds the rationality explaining why interceding, why taking action, on the part of one's neighbor who is relentlessly being abused, is the act of morality and responsibility and why standing and watching the abuse go on relentlessly is the act of immorality and irresponsibility

Remarks

One may suggest that one has no right to interfere, that one should instead show prudence and inform the appropriate authorities of the abuse. (United Nations resolution #18 – regarding the Iraqi crisis facing those individuals living in Iraq, those individuals living in the rest of the world community, French declaration to block any resolution for action placed before the UN Security Council, 2003.) The argument of prudence and informing the appropriate authorities may have merit but if one has taken the prudent action of informing the authorities who in turn agree action should be taken but who then refuse to take said action, then one cannot morally just turn away from the problem and feign indifference. Once prudence has been demonstrated, one has the moral obligation to take action and terminate the relentless abuse.

Monday, January 24

Human Issues – Philosophy: Eternal Recurrence - Purpose

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 24, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

Eternal Recurrence – Purpose

Question

Is an omnipotent and/or omniscient being omnipotent and/or omniscient if it cannot circumvent eternal recurrence?

Introduction

Eternal Recurrence: A doctrine, holding that time is cyclical, to be found in both East and West: in Hinduism (q.v., for example, Sankara 4 and Ramanuja 4); in Greek philosophy (q.v. for example, the Great Year as viewed by Heraclitus, 8); and in modern philosophy (for example, Nietzsche, q.v. 8-9, who deduced eternal recurrence from the concept of a finite universe which is everlasting). (Reese, William L. 1986, Humanities Press, p. 210)

Analysis

The nihilism, which emerges from the concept of eternal recurrence, is thwarted through the effects of a symbiotic panentheism model.

Symbiotic panentheism provides the rationality (Shepard, Daniel J, The War and Peace of a New Metaphysical Perception, Vol. I, Tractate 6: The Error of Kant, How something which is unchangeable, can change and remain unchangeable, Global Academic Publishing, Binghamton University SUNY, Binghamton, New York) as to the process whereby reality adds newness, adds new knowing to the whole of knowing without circumventing the concept of omniscience. A region of timelessness allows for the limitedness of time by placing time 'within' isolated pockets of existence such as within the individual and within universes as opposed to being a universal fabric of the Whole.

In a region of timelessness, all that 'is' can be known yet what 'is not' but 'could be' also exists since it does not yet exist nor has it yet been conceived by entities possessing free will, possessing the potential of free thinking. Omniscience thus exists in a region lacking a universal fabric of time, space, matter, and or energy but on the other hand the potentiality for newness also exists within the same region, exists within the region of the intangible.

In a symbiotic panentheistic reality, it is the development of the individual, which circumvents eternal recurrence, which exists as the 'could be', which exists as potentiality. Thus the individual takes on a rational role of significance to the whole to singularity. The individual having significance to the whole is a new concept which symbiotic panentheism injects into reality.

Remarks

The symbiosis aspect of symbiotic panentheism describes the need of the whole for its parts and the need of the parts for the whole.

Sunday, January 23

Human Issues – Social: Human Harmony – Peace of Mind

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 23, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

Human Harmony - Peace of Mind

Question

If there is only the physical what then becomes of one's intangible self and if there is only the intangible self then what becomes of one's tangible self?

Introduction

Peace of mind represents only half of one's responsibility (Shepard, Daniel J, www.panentheism.com, Home, Aphorisms, 1996 – 2003.)

Analysis

Under the model of symbiotic panentheism, if you are not troubled because you have found peace of mind then you have only fulfilled half your obligation for existing.

The metaphysical model of reality demonstrated by symbiotic panentheism, illustrates two aspects of your existing. (Shepard, Daniel J, *The War and Peace of a New Metaphysical Perception*, Vol. I, Tractate 1: The Error of Zeno, The real and the real illusion, Global Academic Publishing, Binghamton University SUNY, Binghamton, New York.) There is what is inside you. There is what is outside you. To acknowledge one and to reject the other is an irresponsible act.

There are two forms of suffering within the world. There is the suffering of others. There is the suffering within oneself.

The Buddhist concept, the ultimate message of Buddhism, the message that suffering must not be tolerated, applies equally to both what lies within oneself as well as to what lies outside oneself.

One has a moral obligation to devote oneself to the elimination of both forms of suffering. In regards to suffering one has an obligation to do two things, isolate

and contain. One isolates the cause of suffering and then one contains, in its own isolation, the cause of suffering.

Remarks

If one finds oneself abused, one is obligated to one's self to analysis the source of the abuse, isolates it from one's self and 'contain' the cause of suffering through the process of ostracizing the cause of suffering from society rather than through the process of insulating one's self from the cause. The reason one ostracizes the cause of suffering found with society rather than insulating one's self from the cause is to bring peace to others as well as one's self.

Friday, January 21

Human Issues – Religion: Man the Divine - Gnosticism

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 21, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

Man the Divine - Gnosticism

Question:

How is it possible that the man can be of the substance and essence as God?

Introduction:

But Mind the Father of all, he who is Life and Light, gave birth to Man, a Being like to Himself. And He took delight in Man, as being His own offspring; for Man was very goodly to look on, bearing the likeness of his Father. With good reason then did God take delight in Man; for it was God's own form that God took delight in. And God delivered over to Man all things that had been made. (Libellius 1.12 - 13, The Gnostics, Tobias Churton, Barnes and Noble, 1987, p 45.)

Analysis:

You are a part of what it is you are within. If the universe is physical then its very physicalness as well as being limited by the innate characteristics of the physical limits the universe. Einstein demonstrated the direct correlation of matter and energy to space and time through this famous equation: energy equals mass times the quotient of the square of distance and the square of time. Since time and space have been shown to be innate characteristics of the physical universe, innate characteristics of matter and energy or one might say matter and energy are innate characteristics of matter and energy.

You are a part of what it is you are within. If the whole of knowing, omniscience exists and if you have knowing, regardless of how little that knowledge may represent, then your knowing is by definition within the whole of knowing, i.e. You are within God. You are a part of God.

You are a part of what it is you are within. If the whole of presence, omnipresence exists and if you have presence, regardless of how little that prescience may represent, then your presence is by definition within the whole of presence, i.e. You are within God. You are a part of God.

You are a part of what it is you are within. If the whole of power, omnipotence exists and if you have power, regardless of how little that power may represent, then your power is by definition within the whole of power, i.e. You are within God. You are a part of God.

You are a part of what it is you are within. If the whole summation of knowledge – omniscience, summation of presence – omnipresence, and summation of power - omnipotence exists and if you have any summation of knowing, presence, and power, regardless of how little that summation of knowing, presence, and power may represent, then the summation of your knowing, presence, and power is by definition not only within the whole of the summation of all knowing, presence, and power, i.e. You are within God. You are a part of God. but your summation of knowing, presence, and power ‘... bears a likeness of the Father’ and as such is ‘... a Being like to Himself’

In short: ‘... *the Father of all, He who is Life and Light, gave birth to Man, a Being like to Himself*’ Ibid.

Remarks:

And what of Theodicy – omnibenevolence? Omnibenevolence is, through the use of reason, easily demonstrated not to be one of the Omni’s. See *The War and Peace of a New Metaphysical Perception: Volume I, Tractate 5: The Error of Leibniz: Resolving the problem of Theodicy.*

Thursday, January 20

Human Issues - Science: Post-scientific Age - A Radical Break

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 20, 2005 09:34PM (EST)

Post-scientific Age – A Radical Break

Question

If the understanding symbiotic panentheism presents regarding the individuals significance is not the answer then what is the answer to the question: Why is the individual needed, significant? Is it really possible 'God does make junk (unnecessary 'stuff') after all? Are the nihilistic models presented by past metaphysicians really the best we can do in terms of human logic, human rationality, human reasoning?

Introduction

If we are entering a post scientific age (and I for one am skeptical), then the new millennium will see as radical a break as any that has occurred since Darwin produced 'the greatest idea, ever.' (Watson, Peter, *The Modern Mind*, Harper Collins Publishers, 2001, p 7.)

Analysis

What could be more radical a development than the emergence of a new metaphysical system of reality? Symbiotic panentheism is a new metaphysical system wherein an understanding regarding the whole of reality and the elements found within the whole of reality emerges as:

The physical becomes a 'real illusion' to a 'real' intangible, the abstract, while simultaneously the 'real illusion' of the intangible, the abstract, becomes the 'real illusion' of a 'real' tangible, the physical.

The understanding regarding the 'inter-action' as well as the 'intra-action' existing between the 'real' and the 'real-illusion' emerges as the purist form of symbiosis to reveal itself to date.

In short the whole is recognized as just that, 'the whole' (panentheism) and the whole exists for the parts and the parts exist for the whole (symbiosis). Without the whole the parts could not exist and without the parts the whole would be forever faced with Nietzsche's eternal recurrence, 'metaphysical death'. (Shepard, Daniel J, *The War and Peace of a New Metaphysical Perception, Abstract: 'being' being 'Being' – Symbiotic Panentheism – A Perceptual Shift for Humankind – Volume I: Pre-Introduction*, Global Academic Publishing, Binghamton University SUNY, Binghamton, New York)

Remarks

What more 'radical a break' could possible emerge at the turn of the new millennium than a complete understanding regarding the dynamics of the whole of reality to its parts and the parts of reality to the whole of reality? What more 'radical a break' could possible emerge at the turn of the new millennium than a complete understanding regarding a 'real' significance existing for each and every individual be they of earthly origin or otherwise, be it within our universe or within the potentially infinite other universes.

In short: What more 'radical a break' could possible emerge at the turn of the new millennium than the development of the symbiotic panentheistic model wherein the rationality of a nihilistic existence is completely and irrevocably dismantled.

Wednesday, January 19

Human Issues – Philosophy: Chaos – The Void

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 19, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

Chaos - The Void

Question

If nothingness does not exist, how is it, we, humans, can conceive of such a concept?

Introduction

Most ancient peoples believed that only emptiness and chaos were present before the universe came to be. The Greeks claimed that at first Darkness was the mother of all things, and from Darkness sprang Chaos. Darkness and Chaos then spawned the rest of creation. (Seife, Charles, 2000, Zero – The Biography of a Dangerous Idea, Penguin Group, p. 19.)

Analysis

The model of reality introduced by symbiotic panentheism (Shepard, Daniel J, The War and Peace of a New Metaphysical Perception, Vol. II, Tractate 10: The Error of Heidegger, Where one can find a void, Global Academic Publishing, Binghamton University SUNY, Binghamton, New York) provides the rationale explaining the reason the void cannot exist within the physical universe yet can exist nevertheless.

The void, nothingness, cannot exist within the physical universe because the physical universe has a universal fabric composed of matter, energy, space, and time. There is no region within a universal fabric of matter, energy, space, and time where the four, three of the four, two of the four, or one of the four cannot be found.

Symbiotic panentheism, however, demonstrates the universe is found 'within' the intangible, found within a 'region' void a universal fabric of matter, energy, space, and time. Symbiotic panentheism rationally demonstrates how it is that the existence of nothingness, the existence of a void could be found within the same universal fabric within which the physical universe is found to exist.

In fact, symbiotic panentheism, goes on to explain how it is the void could not only exist in a passive sense but in the active sense wherein nothingness takes on a potentially significant function to the whole within which it is found to exist.

Remarks

The concept of existence requires both the characteristic of passivity, existence, as well as the characteristic of the active, action. Symbiotic panentheism clearly explains the rationality regarding both the passive characteristics of a void/nothingness and action/functionality regarding a void/nothingness.

Monday, January 17

📄 Judging Humanity: The most horrific form of inhumanity

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 17, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

So what is it we see as we stand 'outside' God looking 'in'?

The first thing we see is God. Gazing further inward we see the physical universe. Gazing still further in we see the sun, earth, cities, people, medical clinics, a sterile room, a woman in a gown lying on a table, legs spread wide, feet in stainless steel in stirrups, a baby's feet, legs, bottom, back, neck, and lower part of the head ...

What could be more vulnerable than a member of society so new to society that its body dangles over the delivery table as crown of its head is about to slip out of the Mother's vagina in the natural act of 'birth'.

And how do we treat this new member about to be inducted into the human race?

Why we force this individuals to remain with their head half in their Mother's vagina and then with all the expertise of Dr. Mendel we, without using anesthetics, puncture a hole into the base of the exposed skull, insert a tube into the hole we created at the base of this writhing initiate's skull, turn on a vacuum pump, and callously suck out the brain.

This is no exaggeration. This is fact. Check the www under the search terms: Dilate and Extract.

And the liberals in the world go tish, tish, tish. The socialists of the world proclaim this to be the 'right' of the Mother. And the rest of us, well we just go about our business and turn a blind eye.

The holocaust was nothing in comparison. The genocide of the Americas was nothing in comparison. The mass slaughter of the innocents in the Sudan, Cambodia Killing Fields, Bosnia, Congo, ad nauseam ... were nothing in comparison to this.

And why is partial birth abortion perhaps the vilest act committed by humankind?

It is incomprehensible to rank forms of torture, slaughtering of innocents, medical experimentation on humans, child slavery, ad nauseam, for all individuals are equally divine.

Having ruled out the ability to 'rank' abuse, how then can it be said that D & X, partial birth abortions, is the vilest act committed by humankind?

The statement is based upon a time factor as opposed to the degree of cruelty.

The partially born individual has had it's journey in life terminated at its most vulnerable point, terminated at it's weakest point, terminated at the juncture in its travels through the physical at the point of entering society as opposed to traveling through the physical completely embraced in the warmth of its Mother's womb.

Some say that each society will be judged by the manner in which it treats its weakest members, well guess who the weakest member of society is. And guess where it is that partial birth abortions are performed. Why we perform partial birth abortions globally as opposed to regionally.

Now I have never read a historical account, let alone a historian judging some past civilization, based upon how they treated its weakest members. But for those of you liberals, who profess such a belief, let me ask you: How do you think history will judge you when you support such atrocious acts of our present day societies?

Brrrrrrr, this subject gives me the chills and makes me want to literally throw up.

And to think we are committing such acts while immersed in the arms of God after all are we not standing 'outside' God and observing the Big Picture and as such do we not see ourselves, see the newly born, inside God Itself?

Sunday, January 16

Macro-observation Part V: Standing outside God

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 16, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

But just how far can one go, must one go, to understand the 'Big Picture' as compared to the 'big Picture'.

The ecologist (see Macro-observation Part III: The duck-billed platypus) would say one needs to stand just beyond/above the forest biome. The biologist would say one needs to stand just beyond/above the Earth. The cosmologist would say one needs to stand just beyond/above the physical universe.

The theist would say one needs to stand beyond/above God.

It would appear, to understand the Big Picture, one would need to stand beyond/above God.

But the theist would say we cannot do this. There is no place beyond God since by definition God is The All. God is The Whole. God is unbounded. God is the infinite of infinities. God is eternal. God is the Omnipresent, the Omnipotent, the Omniscient. All this may be true by definition but until you are willing to break out of the mode of 'can't', until you are willing to 'step beyond/above God you cannot fully understand The Big Picture, you cannot begin to understand the scientific, philosophical, and religious point of existence as it relates to the Whole.

Now there is no denying you may believe you understand the religious point of existence as it relates to the Whole, since your religion, as do most religions, may provide their perceptions as how it is one's answers the question: What is the purpose of life?.

But humans have more than the tool of religion which it uses to understand reality. Human perceptual understanding of reality occurs through application of three tools, namely: observation/science, reason/philosophy, and faith/religion (for more details see: Thursday, January 6: If not faith, than to what does the thinker revert?).

If one relies upon only one tool of perception one obtains a biased picture of reality.

Now I grant you the theist may be correct in stating there is no 'outside' to God but I am not suggesting one physically step 'outside' God rather I am suggesting one apply the tool of macro-observation. The process required one to simply leave one's self where it is one finds one's self and then simply float within one's knowing upward until one reaches God, float through God, and then float 'through' God into the void. Now I am not suggesting that a void exists beyond God for that is not a rational perception.

As we shall discuss later it is 'within' God not 'outside' God that the 'nothing' can rationally exist. Again that is a discussion to come later.

Bear with me and just go 'there', go 'beyond/above' God, just do it. Stop arguing, leave your physical and mental body where they are and just float your knowing 'outside' God. If you do not do so, you cannot fully understand.

Once you are 'outside' God, once you are viewing the whole picture, an interesting and obvious observation immediately becomes apparent. The ultimate layer of existence is God, is the abstractual.

The obvious then stands out: It is the abstract, the altruistic, for which the individual should reach if the individual wishes to avoid being petty, if the individual wishes to commit one's self to the ultimate purpose of life.

Macro-observational analysis removing one's ability to know from one's self and moving beyond the earth, beyond the solar system, beyond the Milky Way, beyond the edge of the physical universe, beyond the intangible, beyond God and looking in leads to:

Standing 'outside' God – the result: Abstractual hedonism – altruism becomes what is rational.

Saturday, January 15

Macro-observation Part IV: Standing outside the universe

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 15, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

There are two 'locations' within which the metaphysicist could potentially stand while making macro-observations?

Before I go into detail regarding the first potential location a metaphysicist can occupy while performing the task of macro-observation it may help to explain what a metaphysicist is.

Metaphysics is a Greek term which can be broken into the Greek terms: Meta – beyond and physics – the physical.

This breakdown leads to the understanding as to what I am referring to when I speak of a metaphysicist.

A metaphysicist is anyone who is capable of standing 'outside' the physical to understand the physical.

The operative word in that statement is 'anyone'.

Now many philosophers would like you to believe that one cannot be a metaphysicist unless one spends a lifetime in college and obtains a PhD in metaphysics. Nothing could be further from the truth.

Philosophers are perhaps the most arrogant of academics for they perceive themselves to be the 'experts' when it comes to defining 'truth' and understanding 'reality'. What a laugh. What arrogance. What false pride. As they say: Pride cometh before a fall.

The philosophers are about to meet their match from a 7th grade math/science teacher of thirty years. It is only from being 'outside the box', being 'outside' the ivory towers of arrogance that one can fully understand 'thinking out of the box'.

The nihilistic philosophers would have you believe that when one steps 'outside' the physical universe, one steps into nothing. It is such thinking which leads to hopelessness, lack of faith, greed, intolerance, selfish acts, lack of compassion, the very act of resigning one's self to defeatist attitudes and resigning one's self to the forces of nature.

Now I do have to admit that if there is no 'outside' to the physical universe then the arrogance of present day nihilistic philosophers is correct, for if one 'steps' beyond the physical and gazes back into the physical which one has left then all one can see is the physical.

In such a case, the obvious then stands out: It is the physical for which the individual should reach if the individual wishes to commit one's self to the ultimate purpose of life for it would appear, from such a vantage point, from just 'outside' the boundary of the physical universe looking 'in', that nothing exists but the physical.

Macro-observational analysis is the process of removing one's ability to know from one's self and moving beyond the earth, beyond the solar system, beyond the milky way, beyond the edge of the physical universe, and thus leaving one's ability to know just beyond the physical. Looking back 'into' the physical leads to:

Standing just 'outside' the physical looking back into the physical leads to a specific result: Physical hedonism – materialism becomes what is rational.

But such an understanding, the perception that there is no 'outside' to the physical makes no sense.

If such were the case, scientific theories such as the Big Bang Theory, a curved universe, the existence of a primal atom, string theory, a vacuum, vacuum potentials, cause and effect, ... would make no sense since each of these theories depends, in one form or another, upon an 'outside' to the physical.

As an example:

If the universe is expanding, then 'into' what is the universe expanding if there is no 'outside'.

If this universe is based upon 'cause and effect' then what came before the first cause?

Etc.

This then leads us into exploring the second 'location' to which the metaphysicist must look if the metaphysicist is to apply the tool of macro-observation to the whole of reality.

Next: The second potential location from which the metaphysics can apply the tool of macro-observation and its unexpected results.

Friday, January 14

Macro-observation Part III: The duck-billed platypus

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 14, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

The duck-billed platypus ...

To understand the duck-billed platypus one does best if one steps 'outside' the environment of the duck-billed platypus. Such a process is a physical example of 'macro-observational' analysis of the physical.

From this point of view, the observer can understand the unique characteristics of animal and how these characteristics enable the animal to utilize its duck-bill, web feet, thick fur, ... not only to function within its environment but how it is the environment depends upon this unique life form.

There are several issues which arise from this process.

First: The duck-billed platypus would say there is no 'outside' to its environment. Even if such were the case, an observer, such as an ecologist, standing along the stream running through the forested region which acts as the environment of the duck-billed platypus, can 'imagine' hovering above the forested region and viewing the environment from a detached position high above the forest. From such an imaginary perspective, the perspective of being 'above' the environment, the ecologist is capable of analyzing the 'whole' of the environment. With some knowledge of 'whole' and with some knowledge of the elements 'contained within' the whole, the ecologist is capable of determining just how the two, the duck-billed platypus and the ecosystem interact one with the other, depend one upon the other to maintain their personal unique qualities.

Second: Even though the duck-billed platypus perceives their to be no 'outside' to its environment, the ecologist is capable of 'stepping outside' the duck-billed platypus' environment through the use of the imagination.

Third: Even though the ecologist does not actually physically 'step' into a region the duck-billed platypus denies exists, the ecologist does so, steps into this 'non-existent region'.

Fourth: Even though the ecologist remains totally immersed within the environment of the duck-billed platypus, they are capable of stepping 'outside' their body, step 'outside' the forest, step 'into' the non-existent void within which they can analyze the 'Big Picture' regarding the very function of, regarding the contribution of, regarding the purpose of the duck-billed platypus

Now it is true that the environment, the forest biome can exist without the duck-billed platypus but no one can deny that this particular forest biome is unique and enriched as itself due to the very presence and activities of the unique critter called the duck-billed platypus.

The duck-billed platypus exists, has unique qualities, depends upon its environment, contributes to its environment, has purpose to the whole of its environment, has functionality in terms of its contribution towards the overall ambience of its environment. All these understandings are clearly visible from the imaginary position the ecologist takes when the ecologists steps 'outside', steps 'above' their limited perspectives generated from the point of view of the specific rock, setting next to the stream within which they view the duck-billed platypus.

It is through the process of stepping 'outside' the environment of the duck-billed platypus while remaining physically 'inside' the environment of the duck-billed platypus that the ecologist is best able to understand the big picture regarding the animal's contribution to and dependency upon the 'whole'.

The same analogy applies to both humanity and the individual human.

Like the ecologist, the metaphysicist is capable of understanding the function of the individual human to the whole, the purpose for the individual's existing, through the process of 'stepping beyond', 'stepping above', 'stepping outside' the environment of the whole. It is through this 'macro' perspective the metaphysicist is capable of observing and analyzing.

After, and only after, the metaphysicist has made their 'macro-observations' is the metaphysicist, is anyone capable of sharing such observations and analysis.

Next: There are two 'locations' within which the metaphysicist could potentially stand while making macro-observations?

Wednesday, January 12

Macro-observation Part II: Step four

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 12, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

If, however, ... (Macro-observation Part I continued)

If, however, one is to make 'macro-observations' one has no choice but to leave the whole while leaving one's self within the whole.

The result of stepping 'beyond' the whole requires one to take no part of one's self or any part of the whole 'outside' the whole. If such is the case, then what is it one takes 'outside' the whole? One takes the ability 'to know'; one takes the ability 'to understand' the most basic of basics, outside the whole.

Q4: What is one's appearance if one works void personality and void personal perceptions as one applies the tool of macro-observation to the field of conflict resolution?

A4: One's appearance while using macro-observation becomes purely and simply the ability 'to know'.

It is in the pure active state of virgin 'knowing' that one is then able to make 'macro-observations'.

The process of applying the tool of 'macro-observation' clearly demonstrated in my work found in the library of my website: www.panentheism.com and in particular macro-observation is demonstrated in detail within Volume I of *The War and Peace of a New Metaphysical Perception*. Volume I used 'macro-observation' to examine and then resolve conflicting concepts of passive observation as it applied to six major philosophical paradoxes spanning the time from Zeno through Kant.

Volume II continues to demonstrate the effectiveness of applying 'macro-observation' to conflict resolution. Volume II, however, applies the unique tool of macro-observation to the philosophical paradoxes of active observation as opposed to passive observation.

But why is the emphasis of this work placed upon the examination and resolution of mundane conflicts such as philosophical paradoxes as opposed to an examination of society's more explosive issues such as paradoxically conflicting diverse views regarding abortion, race, religion, cultures, assisted suicide, genocide, capital punishment, ... ?

The reason the new tool of 'macro-observation' is applied first to the mundane is to validate both the validity and functionality of the tool in an arena void extreme emotionalism, prejudice, and personal agendas before applying the tool of macro-observation to more explosive conflicting issues.

With this work, 'The War and Peace of a New Metaphysical Perception', humanity begins to understand the difference between passive observation and active observation as it pertains to the significance of the individual, as it pertains to the significance of all 'beings'/individuality/multiplicity/diversity universally.

Volume II begins with Hegel and the examination of 'active observation' as it pertains to the significance of the individual. Volume II examines the significance of all 'beings' universally, examines the significance of all forms of diversity be it cultural, geographical, racial, sexual, or religious.

Last but by no means least, Volume II continues the work initiated by Volume I in examining the significance of all forms of diversity/individuality/multiplicity as they apply to the singularity of the 'whole'/totality itself.

The duck-billed platypus ... (Macro-observation Part II tomorrow)

Tuesday, January 11

Macro-observation Part I: The first three steps

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 11, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

What is this process whereby every one can understand the whole of reality?

Macro-observation is a new means by which we can understand the whole of reality and as such is a new tool by which we can begin to resolve socially divisive issues. Macro-observation is a process which lends itself to resolving conflicts.

Conflict abounds in our societies and metaphysics has the potential to open up a whole new realm for conflict resolution. The key to this new realm of conflict resolution lies in a whole new approach to conflict, which we as a specie have not yet utilized.

Perhaps the most restrained forms of conflicts are epitomized by philosophical paradoxes. Intellectuals have one location wherein they stand as they attempt to resolve such paradoxes. The location intellectuals find themselves standing 'within' as they attempt to resolve long-standing paradoxes is the same location 'within' which society finds itself located as society attempts to resolve paradoxical social issues. The location 'within' which both society and philosophy stand as they attempt to resolve conflicting points of perceptions is best described as 'inside' looking 'out'. The tool such points of perception generate is in turn best described as 'micro-observations'.

Micro-observations are observations made from 'within' the problem itself. Micro-observations are observations made while carrying personal perceptions of one's personal self, one's personal culture, one's personal religion, one's personal nationality, and one's personal, ...

Macro-observations are observations made from 'outside' the problem itself. Macro-observations are observations made free of all preconceived perceptions.

Four questions emerge immediately.

Q1: Are there any unique actions one must initiate to use macro-observations?

A1: To initiate using the tool of macro-observation, one must 'be willing' to leave all forms of knowing, other than the purity of the verb 'knowing' itself, as one steps 'beyond' the problem.

Q2: How does one step 'outside' a problem without carrying one's personal perceptions with them?

A2: If one is to use the tool of macro-observations, one must take the active action of stepping 'beyond' the problem, stepping 'beyond' one's own specie, stepping 'beyond' the furthest frontiers imaginable.

Q3: How far must one 'step out' in order to use this tool called 'macro-observations'?

A3: Since the boundary of the whole is the furthest boundary our specie appears capable of perceiving, one must step beyond the boundary of the whole in order to observe the 'singularity' of the whole and in order to observe the parts of said singularity, in order to observe 'multiplicity'/individuality.

At first glance it would appear it is impossible to 'step outside the boundary of the whole' for to do so presents a paradox. Stepping 'outside' the boundary of the whole implies the perceived whole is not the whole.

If, however, ... (Macro-observation Part II tomorrow)

Monday, January 10

What am I doing here?

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 10, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

So what am I doing here? The question is not meant to ask: Why do I exist? The answer to that question Why do we, individuals, exist? is what the work on my site, www.panentheism.com addresses.

The question I propose is: What am I doing here with and on this site? For the last ten years I was led to believe that I was to record what it was that was given to me. And now, after ten years, as ridiculous as it may appear upon first glance, I sense that I am to begin the process of explaining how it is that 'everybody is right' while at the same time letting everybody know how it is they are 'all wrong'.

In short I am not here to dismantle anything for everything in its fundamental form is correct. Humanity has the correct overview of what reality is and why subconscious understanding as to why, we, as individuals, exist. What humanity has 'wrong' are the nuances of such fundamental perceptions.

Now just who do I think I am that 'I' can go about such a seemingly monumental task? It is not the 'I' that is taking on such a task rather it is that the task needs to be addressed and it is I that is being asked to do so.

Are there others? I don't know but I think so, many others.

I find I am able to enter a state of pure 'nothingness' and if I wait there with no expectation or thought, wait there with simply patience, an understanding begins to flow through me.

What is it that 'flows' through you? Do you hear voices? No I do not hear voices, rather it is just as I stated, an understanding 'flows' through me.

'An understand what?' one may ask. Understand as to what reality truly is, an understanding of a simplistic model of reality capable of changing our perceptions of just what it is we, as individuals, are and why it is we, as individuals, exist..

I have been given just a few simple basic concepts regarding reality as it appears from 'outside' reality itself. Ridicules is the reply after all there is no 'outside' to reality, there is no outside to God.

This is true but it can be done if one is willing to open the mind to a slightly different concept as to how this can be done as opposed to saying 'It can't be done.' Slamming closed the steel door to one's mind.

And how is one to go outside reality, outside God? Tomorrow we will venture there not today.

Well then how about explaining what it is that I have been given.

I have been given the understanding which is basically held universally by our specie:

One: The Supreme Being is Omnipresent and as such all entities, be they tangible or intangible, are 'inside' The Supreme Being – The philosophical term which describes this concept is: panentheism.

Two: Nothing is junk. All entities have purpose, have functionality, and this includes you and I – The scientific term that describes this concept is: symbiotic relationships.

Three: As thinking beings, we, you and I, you and I together, are capable of understanding the whole of reality not just physical reality, understanding our purpose for existing. The religious concept that describes this is: being of the same substance and essence as The All.

Four: There is a technique whereby every one can understand the whole of reality. This is not to say such a technique opens one up to being a conduit of understanding rather it means just what it states: Everyone can understand the whole of reality. The term which describes this concept is: macro-observational analysis.

Five: The understanding of the whole of reality is supportable by our present three most visible and viable tools for understanding reality, namely: science/observation and measurement, philosophy/reason and logic, religion/faith and hope.

It is through the basic model of reality, symbiotic panentheism – symbiosis/science and panentheism/religion and consensus through reason/philosophy that the answers come in torrents.

But isn't this simply a new religion. This model is no religion for it is not based upon faith rather it is based upon not one but three tools we use to understand reality namely: science/observation, reason/philosophy, and faith/religion all simultaneously as opposed to being based upon faith alone.

In addition the model does not undermine any religion be it Atheism or otherwise.

What the model does is reinforce all religions and causes one to become more grounded in their faith. The model acts a foundation, acts as the tap root from which the religious tree can sprout and spread out into the light of day.

Tomorrow's question:

Q: In number four you speak of the process whereby every one can understand the whole of reality. Can you briefly explain such a process?

Saturday, January 8

■ What can science teach religion and philosophy regarding 'absolute' truth?

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 8, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

Science is based upon observation and measurement. Well, actually, science is based upon the faith we have in our ability to make sense of what it is we think we are observing and what it is we think we are measuring.

Science makes observations and measurements and then concludes this or that. There is no way science 'knows' as an absolute whether or not such conclusions are in fact 'truths'. In fact science often modifies and sometimes even completely rejects such conclusions.

This is not to suggest that science is bogus nor does it suggest that science is something upon which we cannot rely.

We understand this concept of science. We understand that science is not perfect, that science does the best it can with the observations and measurements it takes. In short, science does its job, measures, observes, analyses, and then moves on from there. We understand science may modify or completely revise its positions.

We understand science defines truths as best it can and then moves on from there.

We understand that science embraces the concept of defining truths as best it can and then will move on from that point in order that it may continue to advance what it knows about physical reality.

Not only do we, the general population, understand this, but science itself understands this process and accepts this process.

What then does science have to offer religion and philosophy? Science has this very process to offer philosophy and religion. Science has the process of accepting one's self in spite of one's short comings to give religions and philosophy. Science has the understanding that one does the best one can with the tools one has and having done that, having done the best one can, one moves on from there and steps forward into the future.

What does this teach religion? It teaches religion that it does not have to be perfect all the time. It teaches religion to analyze the best it can given the information it has and moves on from there, modifying its position as it goes.

Now this is not to say religion should just become a pile of jelly. Science does not modify its theories lightly or frequently. Once science has accepted a position it does not throw away a universally accepted theory and replace a universally accepted theory with five or six other possibilities. On the contrary science may hold a theory in place for centuries before it collects enough information to bring forth a consensus as to how to replace or modify a popular conception, theory, of physical reality.

The same should apply to religion. But religion does not do this. Various religions latch onto their own concepts of faith and refuse to look back and reexamine any of the concepts in which they have a personal stake. Religions refuse to work on a consensus bases. As such religions have nothing in common from which they can 'move forward'.

If religions would begin the task of looking for what it is they can accept universally, they would begin to do what science does, find common ground, find a common language, upon which they can make 'headway' for the human race, make headway for God, for The All.

And where might this common ground, common language begin? It might begin with the concept of the size of Realty, the size of God. Most religions proclaim God to be 'all present'. There is a Greek word which describes the concept of omnipresent. The word is 'panentheism', not pantheism but panENtheism.

The term pan-EN-theism does not mean that God is in all but rather that all is in God (pan-all, en-in, theism-God), that God is omnipresent.

But wouldn't such a concept imply God is 'in all'? No, the concept of panentheism does not imply God is 'in All', it means just what it says:
pan – all, en – in, theism – God.

There could be existence within God, within which God itself is not found, but more of that later.

But what about the Atheist? Doesn't panentheism imply the Atheist is incorrect? Doesn't this imply there is a God?

Not all Atheists believe there is no God. Some Atheists simply believe that God is not personal. But this to is for another time as to the most fundamental of Atheists who believe there is no God: If God is not in the universe then the most fundamental of Atheists are correct for even though the universe is in God there is, from their point of view, no God .

And what of philosophy? Well philosophy is no different than religion. Philosophy is splintered just as is religion and philosophy has no intention of working from 'a'

point of consensus. Like religion, too many people in the field of philosophy have their own turf to protect, have their own agenda to defend and as such they don't care who it hurts, they will continue to wear blinders regardless of what their actions do to humanity or to the individual.

Saturday, January 8

Just what does this site do and not do?

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 8, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

What this website does:

This website provides the means by which one can logically understand the concept of eternity and the logic behind the concept that each and every individual is responsible for their actions.

This site provides the understanding, via logical arguments, as to how each individual's action, of which they are solely responsible, affects the eternal existence of The All, affects the eternal/metaphysical living environment of the individual taking the action, affects the eternal/metaphysical living environment of all other individuals, affects eternity itself, affects The Absolute Itself.

This site provides the rational arguments necessary to allow one to stand tall against the violence that emerges from nihilistic perceptions, the violence that emerges from perceptions regarding the lack of significance of the individual, and the violence that emerges from hierarchical concepts of all forms be they racial, sexual, gender, cultural, religious, ...

This website provides the rationale supporting the existence of The All/God, the physical universe, the individual, and nothingness.

This site provides the logic necessary to understand the significance of the individual and what that means in terms of protecting the rights of the individual.

This website, through reason and logic, encourages one to live their religion.

This site provides the means to argue the concept that the lives of all individuals have significance and purpose and that because of this we all, each and every one of us, have the responsibility for protecting such rights.

This website provides the rationale needed to understand the concept that 'nothingness' may not only exist but this website provides the rationale needed to understand the very functionality of 'nothingness'. Such an endeavor emerges from the concept that if humankind is capable of using the concept of 'nothingness' as an integral aspect of it's religions, philosophies, sciences, and mathematics it is only logical to reason that The All/The Absolute/The Singularity/Allah/Jehovah/God is capable of doing so.

This website provides a foundation upon which the pillars of religion (beginning with Atheism), in all their grandeur, may stand.

This website does not do:

This site does not shy away from anything.

The website does not introduce a new religion into the fray of human religious perceptions:

This website does not suggest one should nor does it encourage one to leave their religion.

This website does not deny the existence of The All/God, the physical universe, the individual, or nothingness.

This website does not deny eternity nor does it deny the concept that individuals are responsible for their actions.

This site does not establish logical arguments against any individual perception based upon the positive.

This site is not pacifistic in nature.

This site does not provide the logic necessary to embrace pessimistic concepts.

This site does not reinforce the violence that emerges from nihilistic perceptions, the violence that emerges from the lack of significance of the individual or from hierarchical concepts of any nature be they racial, sexual, gender, cultural, religious, etc.

This site does not reinforce nor does it provide any form of rationality capable generating any form of tolerance for genocide, subjugation of the individual or human degradation of any form.

Having said this let me record for your perusal what it was that was freely given to me and as such I freely give to you.

Tomorrow's Question:

Q: What can science teach religion and philosophy regarding 'absolute' truth?

Friday, January 7

The function of faith within this site.

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 7, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

But hadn't it just been stated that faith was not to be discussed here?

No, in fact what has been stated is that this site is to be a location of thought wherein faith is not the only tool used to develop solutions to deep haunting questions which confront the thinker on a daily basis.

The other two tools, in fact the two tools which will supersede faith are observation and measurement dominated by the field of science and reason and rationality dominated by the field of philosophy.

It is in fact the recognition that there are three tools humanity uses to understand reality not just one tool. The three tools are as stated above: observation/science, reason/philosophy, and faith/religion.

Faith is a critical tool. If we have no faith in our ability to honestly observe then science has no meaning. If we have no faith in our ability to honestly reason/philosophy then philosophy has no meaning.

As such we have no choice but to embrace faith just as we embrace science and philosophy as we discuss the soul, consciousness, The All, the discrete, the non-discrete, nothingness, tangible, the intangible, an existence within the universal fabric of space and time, an existence within the universal fabric void space and time, parallel universes, reincarnation, hell, heaven, the lack of The Absolute, the existence of The Singularity, morality, ethics, social dilemmas, religious dilemmas, philosophical paradoxes, scientific befuddlement, monism, quantum mechanics, string theory, eternal recurrence, cosmology, the Big Bang Theory, dualism, nihilism, the three states of existence, existence in and of itself, ...

How does the concept of embracing three tools of perception differ from our present day discussion centered on raging debates involving concepts such as those just listed? Presently, if one finds oneself jumping into a heated debate attended by segments of religious, scientific, and philosophical thinkers one finds the philosophical participants accept philosophical arguments and reject the scientific and religious, the religious thinkers accept religious arguments and reject the philosophical and scientific, and the scientific thinkers accept the scientific arguments and reject the religious and philosophical.

Seldom, if ever, do the thinkers preface their debates by coming to a consensus that if the argument is non-sustainable by all three tools, reason, faith, and observation, than the argument will be discarded.

This consensus is the focus of this site.

As such we cannot leave religion out of this discussion any more than we can leave science or philosophy out of this discussion but what we can do is refuse to allow entry to religious dogmas, traditions, fundamentals, and ... which stand upon the simple inarguable statement: Because God said so.

So it is that this site may be considered an Ontological site or a Metaphysical site or a Cosmological site but one thing is for certain, this site is not a religious site.

Tomorrow's Question:

Q: Just what does this site do and not do?

Thursday, January 6

■ If not faith, then to what does the thinker resort?

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 6, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

Faith is a wonderful thing. It is soothing to the soul. It calms the mind. It allows one to proceed into the future without self-doubt, without fear, and without question. It is through faith alone that one can find perfect peace in the hands of God.

But the thinker, what turmoil they experience, what guilt they feel.

Child thinkers worry about asking questions because they fear disapproval of adults, fear disapproval of the ones they love and admire. Guilt.

Adolescent thinkers worry about asking questions because they fear disturbing the peace of others and have been told: Hell is the punishment bestowed for all those who do not believe. Guilt.

Fathers who are thinkers worry about encouraging their children to think, worry about encouraging their children to question because it might cause their most loved connections to be dumped into the depths of hell itself and not just to into the depths of hell for a year but for eternity. Guilt.

Mothers who are thinkers worry about encouraging their children to think, worry about encouraging their children to question because, like fathers, they abhor doing harm to their children, doing eternal harm to those whom they have carried within their womb, to those whom they have given life. Guilt.

Theists, priests, ministers, Rabbi's, Mullahs, ... fear putting forth questions because they perceive their task to be one of soothing the soul not sending the soul out in a small boat to weather the storm of doubt. Guilt.

All the guilt is inescapable when one relies upon faith and faith alone.

So what is the thinker to do?

The thinker must look elsewhere for his peace. The thinker must find a place to ask the questions without fear of undermining the peace that faith gives others. Where can the thinker find such a place? There are several places one can look, including this site: [Adding Reason to Faith](#). Other places will be listed under favorites as time passes and this site evolves.

This site will soon establish a means by which thinkers can find each other and once having found each other, set up meetings for thinkers. Such meeting sites will be locations where thinkers can go for companionship, solace, and more importantly such meeting places will be locations where thinkers can openly ask questions and discuss the taboo topics of religion which forever pass through their thoughts, discuss all taboo topics without the fear of undermining someone's faith.

And what of those of us that are non-thinkers? What of those who are grounded in faith by faith alone?

Well, if you are a religious person who finds you are capable of accepting faith through faith alone, we wish you well and encourage you to leave this site.

On the other hand if you are a religious person capable of accepting faith through faith alone but would like to help a thinker, be they a friend, family member, or someone in your religious organization, then feel free to participate in this site but do not, do not, attempt to stifle the discussions going on here. They are none of your business and you are not welcome to bring either your condemnations or your obsessions of conversions here.

This is not a place for self-proclaimed missionaries nor is this a place for those attempting to 'save' their own soul through the process of 'saving' the souls of individuals coming here to understand the rationality of their religions.

But if the thinker is to discuss religious, ethical, and moral issues through means other than faith, then by what means will those working here come to understand solutions to questions which they put forward?

Those coming here with the right attitude will find themselves using reason, observation, and believability as their tools rather than faith.

Today's Question:

What are the three means, three tools by which individuals can find rational answers to questions regarding religion, social issues, scientific and philosophical paradoxes, ethics, and morality?

There are three means by which one can find answers to questions regarding religion, social issues, scientific and philosophical paradoxes, ethics, and morality. The three means, the three tools individuals can use to draw rational

conclusions to question are through the mean observation, reason, and and. The dominant fields of study thus become science, philosophy, and religion.

Tomorrow's question:

But hadn't it just been stated that faith was not to be discussed here?

Monday, January 3

What can we 'know' as an absolute?

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 3, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

There is nothing we can 'know' as an absolute.

Religions would say: 'Ah, but we can know as an absolute. God tells us this and that and it is this we can know as an absolute.

In truth, once confronted, religions will admit that such knowing is based upon faith. Knowing based on faith is, to religions, absolute knowing but to the thinker such knowing is no more absolute than any other form of knowing.

The thinker recognizes that we cannot even know as an absolute that the sun will rise tomorrow for the universe 'could' collapse tonight. The universe collapsing is highly improbable but possible nevertheless and thus the lack of absolute knowing.

The thinker, through thinking, has determined that we cannot even know as an absolute that we exist for we could simply be a figment of a higher beings imagination. We could simple be a dream of some other thinker's consciousness.

So what then of God's word spoken to some supposedly special person thousands of years ago? The thinker asks: If I cannot even be certain that I exist, then how is it that I am expected to be certain that God said this or God said that? The religious, the non-thinking religious, then says to the thinker: There is no way for you to understand it, rather you must simply accept it through 'faith'. Have faith. Simply accept it.

To the non-thinker such a response is logical, is easy to accomplish, for the non-thinker simply accepts through faith. But to the thinker it is not that easy. The thinker thinks, that is what thinkers do. Thinking for the thinker is not something they can turn on or off. Thinking to the thinker is no less a part of them than is the sexual organ to the physical body, than is the black pigment to a black person, than is speech to a human being.

But one may say, there are some individuals born, lacking sexual organs, there are some blacks born without pigments, and there are humans who are incapable of speech.

That's true and that is exactly the point. There is no denying that there are individuals born thinkers. Such individuals are may not be as rare as the person born speechless, blacks born albino, humans born sexless, but they are few and far between nevertheless. All individuals are born for a reason. All individuals are unique in their own way.

To ask thinkers to conform to the ways of the non-thinkers found in ample supply throughout the rest of society, is to deny that special individual, deny the thinker their very reason for being unique. To deny the individual uniqueness is to deny the very base purpose for individuality itself.

Thus to 'expect' the thinker to stop thinking is to suggest their God given ability to think was a mistake on the part of God.

How then can we reach out to soothe the turbulent soul of the thinking person? We can reach out by accepting them for who they are and accept their questioning as being a part of what they are, unique, special people.

But can such people, can thinkers, find answers to their questions? Yes they can but they cannot find the answers within the typical environment within which they find themselves. Thinkers are immersed within a sea of non-thinkers.

To find answers to their questions, thinkers must 'visit' places where other thinkers congregate and this is the very point of establishing this blog site.

This site is intended to be a place where thinkers can congregate and talk. As such all communications providing answers to religious questions based upon faith will be filtered out. This site will only accept discussions based upon reason. Faith will be discussed, no doubt. God will be discussed, religious traditions, religious doctrines, religious dogmas, religious teachings, ... will be discussed but only from the point of view of reason, logic.

Today's Question:

How does one determine what is an argument based upon faith as opposed to an argument based upon reason?

Faith based arguments reduce to the bottom line: Because God said so.

Rationale based arguments reduce to the bottom line: Because our perceptual tools of philosophy, religion, and science all support such logic.

Sunday, January 2

Reason versus Faith

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 2, 2005 08:24PM (EST)

Reason versus Faith

First the negative:

But why approach the second day's introduction of this site from the negative first when this site is not about the negative, is not about nihilism, is not about telling individuals that they are 'wrong' and I am right?

This entry will deal with the negative first because it is the negative from which six billion people emerge.

Six billion people today, billions more over the ages and billions more to come, all believe, have faith in the 'fact', that their perceptions, dogmas, traditions, interpretations, and teachings are right and everyone else's perceptions, dogmas, traditions, interpretations, and teachings are wrong.

So is this site about encouraging people to leave their religions?

No. This site is not intended to get people to leave their religion but rather this site is about getting people to live their religion.

But what of the Atheist, does this site have nothing to offer the Atheist?

This site is as much for the Atheist as it is for the Christian, the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Jew, the Muslim,

But how can that be?

Atheistic thinkers have as many questions as do other religious thinkers.

But you sound as if Atheism is a religion in itself. How can Atheism be a religion?

Theism is the belief, faith, in God. Atheism is the belief/faith, in no God, zero God. A God of zero size is in fact the most fundamental concept of God. Zero God is the point from which other religions begin to build their God.

In any case this site is not about 'belief' nor is it about 'faith'.

Second the positive:

This site is about reason.

So what does reason tell us about religion?

The answer to this question is exactly what this site is about, but if you are impatient and want a prelude to this blogging site, you may find the XHTML website at www.panentheism.com to be of help. This site contains eight books, 946 slides, 90 minutes of audio and much more applying to the rationality behind religion.

But why begin a blogging site if you already have a website. Blogging is a new form of advanced interactive internet communication tool and much more versatile than the old HTML web sites.

Will you be leaving the old site on line?

The old site will stay on line for now. The www.panentheism.com site represents ten years of recording what it was that was given to me and is the capstone of forty years of thinking, observing, listening, and meditating.

Why didn't you include in-depth philosophical and religious readings as a part of the process?

During the forty years I avidly read science but intentionally stayed away from in-depth philosophical and religious readings because I wanted to see where independent rational thinking would lead. I did not want my thinking process tainted by 'great' philosophical and religious 'thinkers'. I wanted to explore where independent thinking would lead.

Much to my surprise two results emerged. The first surprise was that I did not find an answer; rather an answer found me. The second surprising result demonstrated that all the 'great' 'thinkers' were correct. It is not a case of one over the other but rather the case of all had a piece of the puzzle. The pieces just had to be picked up and put into place.

As the last ten years demonstrated both results were steeped in reason as opposed to faith

Today's Question:

Q. Is this site intended for one particular faith or lack of faith?

No. This site is about providing a rational answer to doubts regarding the basic principles of faith, all faiths. This site is about providing the rationale which will allow the thinker to be comfortable with their faith, be comfortable living their religion.

If anyone has questions they would like addressed, send your questions to me via my site www.panentheism.com. Click on the 'Contact the Author' icon on the home page and e-mail me. I will soon open up a more direct means of contacting me via this blog.

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Saturday, January 1

Adding Reason to Faith

by [Daniel J. Shepard](#) on January 1, 2005 04:40PM (EST)

There is no denying that faith is a wonderful thing but...

There are many of us who find our minds will not be still. Our minds constantly question, constantly search for answers to our questions.

For some faith is enough. Others wish faith were enough but find the mind will not be stilled even by faith.

Such people are not weak. These people are, simply put, thinkers. They were born that way. They were created that way. To shun them, to attempt to quiet them, does nothing but cause them to retreat into the refuge of their mind where the questions barrage them endlessly, unmercifully. The result can be horrifying for the thinker and the isolation unrelenting.

It is for these people that this site is intended.

It is for the theists, families, and friends of these people that this site is intended. For the families, friends, and theists involved with thinkers would like nothing better than to soothe the mind of the thinkers they know and they understand that the only means of doing so is through the use of the soothing balm of reason.

This is a site which will delve into the logic which provides a rational understanding, a rational foundation for faith.

'Oh ye of little faith ...' take heart for with the implementation of this site your isolation is no longer necessary.

This is a question and answer site:

Today's question:

Q. Who am I to think that I can provide the soothing balm of reason to strengthen one's faith?

A. I am a metaphysicist. I spent forty years listening and ten years recording what it is I have been given. You will find the ten years of written work at the site: www.panentheism.com

Tomorrow's question:

Q. Is this site intended for one particular faith or lack of faith?