

Love, Death and the Hard Truth of Atheism

By David P. Diaz, Ed.D.



It is a natural inclination to love and to want to be loved. People, of course, also have a natural tendency to die; one hundred percent of the time, in fact. For atheists, love is a residual effect of blind materialistic activity, an unguided process without purpose. This is why, under atheism, *death is stronger than love*.¹ What does this mean?

From an atheistic perspective, all loving relationships will end at death. Forever. When death arrives, all lovers will cease to share their love as they cease to exist. The consequence for atheists is the hard truth.

One hard truth of atheism is *abandonment*. Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre believed that, in a godless universe, "*we are on our own* to create our values and to define our very selves. There is no given plan or path we can follow to find meaning and truth."² Atheism suggests that humans are adrift in the cosmos, on our own, without ultimate purpose, and where all presumed purposes are transient and end at death.

Another hard truth of atheism is *insignificance*. Under atheism, there is *nothing significant about our existence*; the world can get along just fine without us. Indeed, it is almost unfathomable to consider how improbable it is that we were

ever born.

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Werner Herzog

Indifference represents another hard truth of atheism. According to Thomas Nagel, “Our first-person subjective desire to go on living clashes ruthlessly with the objective reality that the universe is indifferent to our continued survival.”³ Indeed, as Werner Herzog puts it: “The universe is monstrously indifferent to the presence of man.”⁴ Richard Dawkins puts a fine point on it: “The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but *pitiless indifference*.”⁵

A final hard truth of atheism is a “*will to power*.” German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche explained that power is a greater driving force for human action than love or altruism. Just as no one blames birds of prey for their ruthless desire to overcome their prey, it is absurd to expect strong humans to refrain from manifesting their strength. It is not “within the discretion of the strong to be weak, of the bird of prey to be a lamb.”⁶ In an atheistic belief system, *the strong rule the weak* simply because they want and can. On atheism, power is a supreme motivator of action—the powerful seek to rule—love plays a subordinate role if any.

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Thus, under atheism, the future is transient and eternally dim. However, there is abundant hope for those who believe in God because *love is stronger than death*.⁷ “God is love” (1 Jn. 4:8, 16), and God is eternal (Ps. 90:2). There will come a day when death will no longer rip apart loving relationships because love, like God, is eternal.

For Christians, love can and will be shared for eternity. Humans were created to share a close, loving relationship with God and with other created beings forever. Because of God’s love, humans are neither abandoned nor insignificant. God loves his creation so completely that he gave his only Son over to unspeakable suffering to provide redemption to those who have turned away from him.

God invites all humans into the family composed of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: “God’s love for us is manifested in his generously inviting us into this charmed circle... thus satisfying the deepest longing of our souls.”⁸

Without God, the world portends ultimate despair. In his absence, life and love provide neither hope nor meaning. However, with the existence of an all-powerful, all-knowing, all-good Creator-God comes a coherent and satisfying explanation of life, love, human existence, suffering, and even death. With God also comes the promise of an everlasting loving relationship with our Creator and Savior, who awaits us in the abode that he has created for us from eternity.

About the Author

David P. Diaz, Ed.D. is an independent researcher, retired college professor, and publisher of the *Things I Believe Project*. His writings have spanned the gamut

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Footnotes