

Why I Do Not Believe in God

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Vol. – 1

Prabir Ghosh

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



“For several years Prabir Ghosh, general secretary of the Indian Rationalist and Scientific Thinking Association, has challenged Hindu "godmen" and exposed their miracles as what he describes as cheap hypnotic tricks better performed by magicians.

“Now he is challenging the claim of the Missionaries of Charity, who say a photograph of their founder, Mother Teresa, when placed over the stomach of 30-year-

old Monica Besra, cured her of a tumour.”

-- [BBC News](#), October 4, 2002

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/2299217.stm

“Prabir Ghosh, head of the Science and Rationalist Association of India. Ghosh... based in Calcutta, has deflated the claims of many of India's self-proclaimed Hindu holy men and miracle workers. He doesn't believe that Mother Teresa's miracle should be exempt from scrutiny...

“Ghosh tells **TIME** that he will shut down his association and turn over its 2 million rupees (\$40,000) to the Catholic order if the sisters will put the medallion to the test and have it cure another tumor.”

-- [TIME](#), October 14, 2002 (The same article was published at [US edition](#) of the TIME on October 21, 2002) <http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1003488-2,00.html>

<http://www.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,501021021-364433,00.html>

“Prabir Ghosh, secretary of the Calcutta-based Indian Rationalists Association, openly questions the miracle... **Most agree with him that Mother Teresa does not need miracles to be declared a saint.**”

-- [BBC website](#) , October 16, 2003

http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3181974.stm

Prabir Ghosh, the 62 year-old General Secretary of the Science and Rationalists' Association of India, is a renowned author, columnist, film maker and political scientist. He is the internationally famed debunker of godmen, astrologers and other merchants of "destiny and spiritualism".

In his crusade against social evils he has survived at least 20 attempts on his life since the mid-1980s. He is also the undisputed founder of the modern concept of Contemporary Rationalism and the pioneer of the rationalist movement in India. Establishing the legal right to mention "Humanism" as religion is just one out of his numerous outstanding feats. He on behalf of the Science and Rationalists' Association of India offers US\$62,500 to anyone who claims to possess supernatural power of any kind and proves the same without resorting to any trick. Since his first collection of essays '*Aloukik Noy Loukik [Vol - I]*' (literally translated means 'Everything is Natural, not supernatural') was published, Prabir Ghosh's name was established firmly as an essayist with a difference, with a mission. His books feature in the list of best-sellers for the past 17 years. "Guru Busters", the documentary made on him by Channel 4, BBC Television, 13 years back remains a sensation even now. He was also covered by The Times, London, and New York Times in their cover story. The uncompromising attitude and the stunning self-confidence which comes from deep conviction within, has given him a He-man image. But to those who know him closely, he is friendly, easily approachable, a loving and caring human being.

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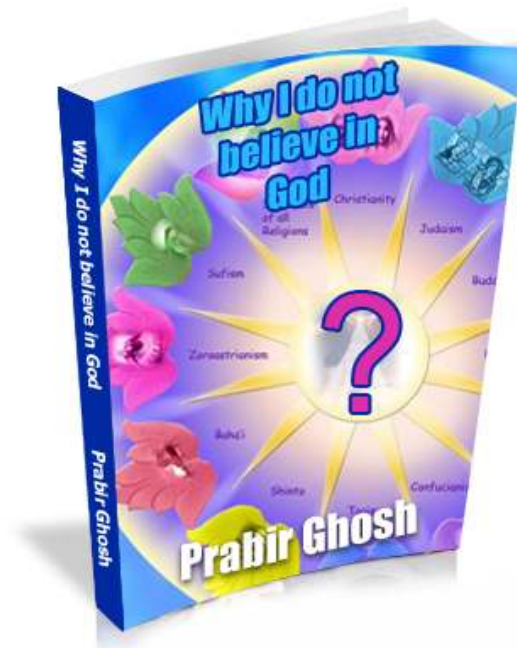


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Chapter – 1

Religious Faith : some common but obstinate questions.

Point No. 4

Can you prove that there is no God?

‘Can you prove that God does not exist? That astrology is bogus?’ Such questions are very common. The answer is equally simple. I will narrate an incident to explain the fallacy here.

It was 23rd of January, 1990. There was a seminar in Krishnanagar Town Hall, about 200 km from Kolkata. A debate, ‘Astrology versus Science’ was arranged, for which I was invited. Many astrologers and tantriks (practitioners of Tantra, a Hindu cult) were present. It was there that these two missiles were hurled at me. The audience was visibly thrilled.

Before going into details, I confessed to the gathering that I was not omniscient, and was not always able to explain whatever I felt. So many things happen in our lives, the causes of which we cannot always fathom. For example, I have noticed that whenever I jumped three times consecutively on one spot, I grew in height. I went into great details, addressing the eager crowd. “I can even show you. If I skipped hard, springing on my two feet, I gained at least 3 inches in height. I don’t know why or how it happens”. The crowd started fidgeting uneasily, whispering to each other. There was a pole of some kind standing at one corner of the ground. It was probably meant for

hoisting flag. I pointed at the pole and called one of the tantrik yogis to come and check what I was trying to show. On my instruction, he marked my height against the pole as I stood there. There was pin-drop silence. I skipped three times and came to the pole and asked Mr. yogi to check my height. I heard whispers from the public- 'there, he's become taller!' 'Yes, yes, it's true' etc. The yogi checked my height. He checked again. Then again. Surprised, he exclaimed, 'No!' 'It's the same; you have not grown any...' Now it was my turn to be surprised. 'No? How come? You mean I haven't?' I blurted out. 'Have you measured properly?' With confidence, the tantrik faced the audience and said loudly, 'anyone can come and check. His height is still the same; he hasn't grown even by half an inch.' I apologized, 'well, I'm sorry. May be today it didn't work, but I tell you: believe me, it really happens at times. Many times I have gained a few inches and have come back to normal within a few minutes. I don't know what happened today' etc. The crowd started humming in dissatisfaction. Some of them protested in disbelief. 'Could you explain how it happens?' I started again. But this time the yogi was adamant. He shouted angrily, 'what is there to explain? You could not show the trick. You failed. First you do it, then comes the question of explaining.' Meekly I said 'Please have faith in me; today I failed, but I will prove it next time. Can't you believe me?'

'Sorry, Mr.Ghosh. We cannot trust you. I don't expect anyone with a reasoning mind to believe in your absurd claim.'

'You mean to say I'm a liar? One failure makes me a cheat? Can you prove that my claim was false; that I do not grow in height whenever I jumped three times?' It was my turn to get annoyed.

The yogi tantrik could not contain his anger any longer. 'How can you ask us to explain something which you could not show in the first place? It is your job to prove what you claim. It is the duty of the claimant to prove what he claims, and not the other way round.'

'Ah! Lovely,' now I cheered and turned towards the gathering intently enjoying the drama. 'This is exactly what I wanted to say. It is always the responsibility of the believer to bring out the proof in support of his belief. Whether it is about the existence of god or the infallibility of ancient texts like astrology, it is the primary duty of those who claim, to bring sufficient documentary proof in support of their claim. After testing and cross-verification, the rational human mind would accept or reject the claims'.

The crowd exploded in laughter and loud applause. I knew I could get home my point.

Point No. 8

If there is no God, then why still the majority of humans believe in God and practise religion?

We have to face this question all the time in different forms. The question is about number. "The number of people who actually believe is so vast that their opinion cannot be ignored." Let us have a look at history. Only about five hundred years ago, Nicholas Copernicus came out with his book, establishing the scientific truth that it is the Earth along with all the other planets that revolves round the sun, and not the other way round. After him followed Bruno, Galileo. Bruno was alone then. All the thinkers,

scientists and priests of the day who mattered and the majority of common people who did not matter – all were against his theory, rejecting it with one blow as bogus, nonsensical and anti-religion. Bruno was imprisoned in a chamber with a roof made of lead. It froze in winter and turned into an oven in summer. This torture went on for eight long years. Then as he refused to withdraw his scientific views in a public statement, he was burnt alive for going against the Bible. Galileo faced almost the same fate of torture and humiliation later. But in spite of all their efforts, the ‘majority’ of people, along with God, God’s sons and the all-powerful priestly classes could not stop the Earth from revolving round the sun. So, the ‘number’ of believers does not really matter when it comes to the question of truth.

Anaxagoras (Greek philosopher of the 5th century B.C.) announced, some 2500 years ago, that the moon has no light of its own and explained the causes of waxing and waning of the moon and the eclipses. He was sent on exile after years of torture by this vast ‘majority’, whose opinions do not matter any more.

Even during the 16th Century, people used to attribute the cause of diseases and epidemics to unknown evil power or sins committed by people. Swiss professor of alchemy Dr. Paracelsus announced for the first time that diseases are caused by the presence of various germs and bacteria in the body. The reasons were not acceptable by the majority of people, all of whom were blind followers of the Church. To save himself from imminent death by capital punishment, Dr. Paracelsus had to flee his country.

History has taught us, time and again, that the strength of scientific truth does not lie on the number of believers. Numerical support has nothing to do with truth, which is self-reliant. The aim of science is to find that truth.

If we had to believe what the majority considered to be true, we would have to still believe in the geocentric theory of the universe (The theory of the churches that the earth is at the center of the universe). Innumerable blind beliefs would still continue to plague us. But that was not to happen. Spread of knowledge percolates gradually to all levels of society and man accepts truth sooner or later. God's wishes could not stop the progress of reason.

Chapter – 2

Theism: Mythology versus History.

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Chapter – 3

Theism : Science – Civilization – Progress

Point No. 26

It is true that most scientists are non-believers in the existence of an Almighty God as the creator of the Universe. But can their word be the last word? The Scientists keep analyzing and refuting each other theories, to establish new ones. And that is why we find scientists like Newton and Halden, Satyendranath Barua and Einstein, all have some time or other, expressed a deep spiritualism and a strong belief in the omnipotent.

Actually scientific conclusions do not depend on anybody's personal opinion. They depend on experiments and the empirical knowledge derived from it. The result is pure knowledge; the knowledge of truth. Personal conjectures, feelings and emotions have nothing to do with it. Those who believe in the existence of the omniscient, omnipotent God have to first give a definition of God, a uniform one, only then it can be established as a truth. What is the point in arguing about the existence of something, which has not yet been defined.

We agree that not only in India, all over the world we have scientists who, in spite of their success in respective fields, have deep faith in religion and the existence of God. We respect them for their contribution in their respective scientific fields. But still we also have to agree that they are humans grown up in their own socio-cultural environment. Our Indian Social environment is such that even a very successful

scientist known for his analytical mind, cannot always come out of the social background, the family atmosphere in which he has been brought up. A child grows up with daily rituals of praying in front of idols, of regular 'roja' and 'namaj'. Weekly visits to the Church from early childhood, instills a natural faith in the stories of miracles. Then there are stories of ghosts and demons, of people being possessed by evil spirits, stories made up by newspapers and television. Being conditioned by all these from childhood, a man may in future take up 'science' as a subject and become a professional. If he or she is good academically, success comes naturally.

Can we help it if Satyen Bose believed in spiritualism and the Godmen and women utilized his explicit reverence for them in their booklets and leaflets for propaganda? Can we help it if scientist Halden believed in Telepathy? A scientific temper is entirely a different matter. A Bengali daily wrote in its editorial in support of theism – 'a Surgeon prays for success before an operation etc.' We say that even if they do so, it only shows that they believe in a super – power or they do it by habit. It does not prove that there really is God.

Confusion regarding Einstein

Recently, there has been a tendency among the prominent, media of our Country to project the grant scientist Einstein. May be there is a scheme behind it. We know that Einstein never believed in supernaturalism nor in any personal God who responded to prayers or rituals. Even if Einstein was a believer, it would not have mattered much to rationalists, because someone's strong personal faith in anything does not prove its existence in any way. But what we know from Einstein's writings is that he spoke

categorically against the 'Religion of fear' against the idea of a personal God. If God meant 'ethics', he had no objection to it. In fact, like spinoza, he loved the God who expressed himself in the wonderful order of the entire universe. To him the deep sense of wonder at the beauty of Nature and its orderliness was the closest he could be with God. He called it 'Cosmic religion'. If to someone 'Nature' means God, or 'love' means God, then there is no problem at all. I conclude with Einstein's unforgettable lines. A man's ethical behaviour should be based on sympathy, education and social ties and needs; no religious basis is necessary. Man would indeed be in a poor way if he had to be restrained by fear of punishment and hope of reward after death. "[P-39, Einstein's Ideas & Opinions, Rupa].