



Why Are You Atheists So Angry: 99 Things That Piss off the Godless

Greta Christina

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Why Are You Atheists So Angry?

Why indeed? Greta Christina delves right in to confront this weighted question, fraught as it is with a host of associated queries. The author is diligent and comprehensive in her quest to explain her perspective and that of the atheist community. Along with her well-argued rationale, readers will also be engaged by her willingness to joke and jibe with finesse. She doesn't exempt herself from ribbing and questioning, bravely pointing out how sacrificing her own autonomy and common sense to a mystical belief in tarot cards kept her needlessly miserable in a failing marriage—wasting valuable years of her life. She also catalogs a workplace experience with a cat psychic that highlights the potentially preposterous consequences of blind faith.

Above all, Christina feels that atheism is pervasively misunderstood, with atheists being ascribed a whole host of beliefs and attitudes which they do not necessarily hold. She also takes issue with the simplistic notion that belief in God somehow automatically endows the believer with morality and kindness. Indeed, what perhaps makes Christina most angry is the disconnect between what people believe, say they believe, and choose to believe—and what effect those beliefs have on themselves, their loved ones, and on the world around them. Her core argument is that our beliefs don't just affect us but fundamentally shape how we view others, the world—and, most importantly—determine how we treat others.

The author outlines a long and sad series of cruel and unjust actions all directly attributable to belief in a divine being. Yet, never—and this is a key distinction—does she evoke hatred towards religious belief of any variety. She carefully explains the often overlooked vital difference between anger and hatred, and invokes such figures as the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Gandhi to show how anger can be not just a negative emotion—something perhaps best kept to oneself, but an important catalyst for positive and long-lasting personal and social change. Along the way, she blasts New Age and Eastern mysticism with as much vigor as the major world religions.

Above all, what is most evident from this work—apart from her intelligence and skill as a writer—is Christina's powerful compassion: She cares a great deal about injustice, cruelty, unnecessary suffering, overreliance on chance, and about the damage that spurious connections and non-evidenced-backed policies can have on society and on global relations. This is a lively, sincere, well-researched and thought-provoking read. But don't just take my word for it, do due diligence and read it for yourself!

SEAMUS MULLARKEY (December 24, 2012)

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