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No, the World is Not Enough

"I'm doing great without God, thank you very much," said the atheist in response someone else's facebook status according to a recent Revelife post.

In fact, I think this is actually the strongest argument for atheism, "Can't this world just be enough." Creation is pretty great after all. There are lots of good things in the world: waterfalls, love, trees, philosophy, architecture, etc. We are so lucky to be able to have access to the things that most of us do, rich relationships, safety, a beautiful world. It's only natural that adrift in all this goodness, we could feel satisfied.

I don't blame anyone embracing the joy in life. Yet, for many people, the world is not enough. Billions of people are poor or live in war zones or struggle with (preventable) life-threatening diseases. Gasping for breath on the dirt floor of a hut in the sweltering slums doesn't exactly equal self-fulfillment.

The world is just not enough for many people, most people even. Now, some might respond that it is our duty to work to alleviate the sufferings of others precisely because the world is not good enough. That is excellent. It is truly praiseworthy, selfless, and valuable. However, no matter how much better the world gets, is it realistic to think that we can completely eradicate war, famine, disease and hate?

It's not that we shouldn't try, because we should, but we will never be able to fix everything in the world. And even if we did, there would still be death and the inconsolable pain or losing a loved one, especially in an accident before their time.

But there is another place where there is no death or pain. There is a reality deeper than this one and anyone can reach it at any time by seeking God. Eternal life, unified with God, is the highest form of goodness. For even on this earth, all that is good comes from God whether we attribute it to him or not.

Because of all the suffering in the world, I sincerely hope that this world is not all there is. But I have always felt that way, even since I was a child. I remember the first day that I learned about atoms (in fourth grade), and running my hand along a stone wall thinking

about the rock being made of atoms. It seemed to me that if atoms and particles were the only constituents of the stones and of human beings, life just wouldn't make sense. I felt there could be no meaning to existence. What would our lives matter if everything was an indifferent process of energy collisions.

That day has always stuck in my mind as the day I knew there was something else at work in the universe, though I was not sure what. Since then my life has been a search for the truth that was beyond the walls of the world.

C.S. Lewis noted this deep, inner longing well in *Mere Christianity*. He famously wrote that, "If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." I do have that desire, very deep down. Maybe I am insane. It's a possibility. Maybe some people do not feel this way. Maybe we have been taught to sublimate our longings that seem fantastical and out of this world because they seem impossible. But nothing is impossible with God.

Now, I am aware that many atheists find their lives meaningful and fulfilling. This is wonderful; what a world it would be if everyone could live with such feelings. There is something to existentialism, even though I may disagree, that people can make meaning despite knowing the utter transience of their own lives.

Though in an existential world, the lives of Christians (or of Christ) or anyone who sacrifices their worldly good for a higher good become unintelligible. If each person defines his/her own reality as the only absolute, it makes no sense to ever give that up, since it is all we have. The lives of hermits, altruists, anyone who has given up the world would cease to make sense. Though, we could all be insane. I accept that as a possibility, although I do not agree with it.

To me, the lives of extraordinary men and women such as Mother Teresa, Gandhi, or St. Simeon (who lived 37 years on top of pillar) stand as a testament to the existence of a reality beyond our own. So maybe this place is all we've got, but I sure hope not. Many of the greatest lives ever lived would become in vain if they did not seek earthly glory.

Is the earth enough of a world for you? What makes your existence meaningful?

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