

IFH MONTHLY

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THE IRISH FREETHINKER - DETAILS

1. WHAT'S IN *IRISH FREETHINKER* - SUMMER 2024

The Summer 2024 edition of *IRISH FREETHINKER* is to be published in May and will be dispatched by post to subscribers; it will be otherwise available for purchase in shops.

The contents are as follows:

- *Personal Basis of Ethics*
 - *Losing Religion, Finding Myself*
 - *Neoreligiosity - Religion & Science*
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 - *Religion Outside School Hours*
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The IFH website (www.irishfreethinkers.com) continues to be developed and editions of *IRISH FREETHINKER* for the period before May-June 2020 and back to Autumn 2016 will be gradually put up on it, as eventually will back copies of *IFH NEWS/MONTHLY*s. There is now also an online payment system on the website. Copies of recent editions of these items not online may be purchased through the site.

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES FOR THE AUTUMN '24 EDITION OF *IRISH FREETHINKER* IS 15 JULY [not Aug as previously stated] 2024 (Editor: ifh.sde@gmail.com)

2. THE NEED FOR A NEW ENLIGHTENMENT

Christopher Hitchens

Below is reproduced, with permission from the Estate of Christopher Hitchens, the final chapter of Hitchens's classic freethinking text GOD IS NOT GREAT: HOW RELIGION POISONS EVERYTHING.

Today, as much as when that book was published in 2007, there is a need for a new

Enlightenment. Two of this chapter's themes - the danger and instability of Iranian theocracy and the threat posed to free speech by Islamic fanatics - remain very obviously and very unfortunately relevant. But the real power of the below, I think, is to be found in these words: "[I]t is better and healthier for the mind to

'choose' the path of skepticism and inquiry in any case, because only by continual exercise of these faculties can we hope to achieve anything." Yes, we remain stuck in prehistory, all right. But if anything can help us to transcend our primitivism, it is the work of Christopher Hitchens. And now from his company I shall delay you no longer.

~ Daniel James Sharp, Editor of 'The Free-thinker'.

"The true value of a man is not determined by his possession, supposed or real, of Truth, but rather by his sincere exertion to get to the Truth. It is not possession of the Truth, but rather the pursuit of Truth by which he extends his powers and in which his ever-growing perfectibility is to be found. Possession makes one passive, indolent, and proud. If God were to hold all Truth concealed in his right hand, and in his left only the steady and diligent drive for Truth, albeit with the proviso that I would always and forever err in the process, and to offer me the choice, I would with all humility take the left hand."

GOTTHOLD LESSING, *ANTI-GOEZE* (1778)

"The Messiah Is Not Coming - and He's Not Even Going to Call!"

ISRAELI HIT TUNE IN 2001

The great Lessing put it very mildly in the course of his exchange of polemics with the fundamentalist preacher Goeze. And his becoming modesty made it seem as if he had, or could have, a choice in the matter. In point of fact, we do not have the option of "choosing" absolute truth, or faith. We only have the right to say, of those who do claim to know the truth of revelation, that they are deceiving

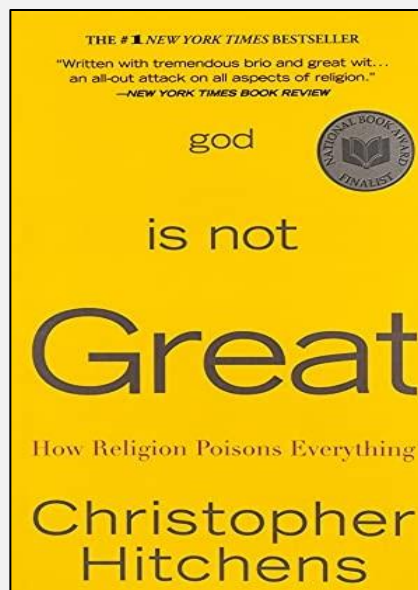
themselves and attempting to deceive - or to intimidate - others. Of course, it is better and healthier for the mind to "choose" the path of skepticism and inquiry in any case, because only by continual exercise of these faculties can we hope to achieve anything. Whereas religions, wittily defined by Simon Blackburn in his study of Plato's *Republic*, are merely "fossilized philosophies," or philosophy with the questions left out. To "choose" dogma and faith over doubt and experiment is to throw out the ripening vintage and to reach greedily for the Kool-Aid.

Thomas Aquinas once wrote a document on the Trinity and, modestly regarding it as one of his more finely polished efforts, laid it on the altar at Notre Dame so that god himself could scrutinize the work and perhaps favor "the Angelic doctor" with an opinion.

(Aquinas here committed the same mistake as those who made nuns in convents cover their baths with canvas during ablutions: it was felt that god's gaze would be deflected from the undraped female forms by such a modest device, but forgotten that he could supposedly "see" anything, anywhere, at any time by virtue of his omniscience and omnipresence, and further forgotten that he

could undoubtedly "see" through the walls and ceilings of the nunnery before being baffled by the canvas shield. One supposes that the nuns were actually being prevented from peering at their own bodies, or rather at one another's.)

However that may be, Aquinas later found that god indeed had given his treatise a good review - he being the only author ever to have claimed this distinction - and was discovered by awed monks and novices to be blissfully levitating around the interior of the cathedral. Rest assured that we have eyewitnesses for this



event.

On a certain day in the spring of 2006, President Ahmadinejad of Iran, accompanied by his cabinet, made a procession to the site of a well between the capital city of Tehran and the holy city of Qum. This is said to be the cistern where the Twelfth or “occulted” or “hidden” Imam took refuge in the year 873, at the age of five, never to be seen again until his long-awaited and beseeched reappearance will astonish and redeem the world. On arrival, Ahmadinejad took a scroll of paper and thrust it down the aperture, so as to update the occulted one on Iran’s progress in thermonuclear fission and the enrichment of uranium. One might have thought that the Imam could keep abreast of these developments wherever he was, but it had in some way to be the well that acted as his dead-letter box. One might add that President Ahmadinejad had recently returned from the United Nations, where he had given a speech that was much covered on both radio and television as well as viewed by a large “live” audience. On his return to Iran, however, he told his supporters that he had been suffused with a clear green light-green being the preferred colour of Islam - all throughout his remarks, and that the emanations of this divine light had kept everybody in the General Assembly quite silent and still. Private to him as this phenomenon was - it appears to have been felt by him alone - he took it as a further sign of the imminent return of the Twelfth Imam, not to say a further endorsement of his ambition to see the Islamic Republic of Iran, sunk as it was in beggary and repression and stagnation and corruption, as nonetheless a nuclear power. But like Aquinas, he did not trust the Twelfth or “hidden” Imam to be able to scan a document unless it was put, as it were, right in front of him.

Yet again it is demonstrated that monotheistic religion is a plagiarism of a plagiarism of a hearsay of a hearsay, of an illusion of an illusion, extending all the way back to a

fabrication of a few nonevents.

Having often watched Shia ceremonies and processions, I was not surprised to learn that they are partly borrowed, in their form and liturgy, from Catholicism. Twelve Imams, one of them now “in occultation” and awaiting reappearance or reawakening. A frenzied cult of martyrdom, especially over the agonizing death of Hussein, who was forsaken and betrayed on the arid and bitter plains of Karbala. Processions of flagellants and self-mortifiers, awash in grief and guilt at the way in which their sacrificed leader had been abandoned. The masochistic Shia holiday of Ashura bears the strongest resemblances to the sort of *Semana Santa*, or “Holy Week,” in which the cowls and crosses and hoods and torches are borne through the streets of Spain. Yet again it is demonstrated that monotheistic religion is a plagiarism of a plagiarism of a hearsay of a hearsay, of an illusion of an illusion, extending all the way back to a fabrication of a few nonevents.

Another way of putting this is to say that, as I write, a version of the Inquisition is about to lay hands on a nuclear weapon. Under the stultified rule of religion, the great and inventive and sophisticated civilization of Persia has been steadily losing its pulse. Its writers and artists and intellectuals are mainly in exile or stifled by censorship; its women are chattel and sexual prey; its young people are mostly half-educated and without employment. After a quarter century of theocracy, Iran still exports the very things it exported when the theocrats took over - pistachio nuts and rugs. Modernity and technology have passed it by, save for the one achievement of nuclearization.

This puts the confrontation between faith and civilization on a whole new footing. Until relatively recently, those who adopted the clerical path had to pay a heavy price for it. Their societies would decay, their economies would contract, their best minds would go to waste or

take themselves elsewhere, and they would consistently be outdone by societies that had learned to tame and sequester the religious impulse. A country like Afghanistan would simply rot. Bad enough as this was, it became worse on September 11, 2001, when from Afghanistan the holy order was given to annex two famous achievements of modernism - the high-rise building and the jet aircraft - and use them for immolation and human sacrifice. The succeeding stage, very plainly announced in hysterical sermons, was to be the moment when apocalyptic nihilists coincided with Armageddon weaponry. Faith-based fanatics could not design anything as useful or beautiful as a skyscraper or a passenger aircraft. But, continuing their long history of plagiarism, they could borrow and steal these things and use them as a negation.

This book has been about the oldest argument in human history, but almost every week that I was engaged in writing it, I was forced to break off and take part in the argument as it was actually continuing. These arguments tended to take ugly forms: I was not so often leaving my desk to go and debate with some skillful old Jesuit at Georgetown, but rather hurrying out to show solidarity at the embassy of Denmark, a small democratic country in northern Europe whose other embassies were going up in smoke because of the appearance of a few caricatures in a newspaper in Copenhagen. This last confrontation was an especially depressing one. Islamic mobs were violating diplomatic immunity and issuing death threats against civilians, yet the response from His Holiness the Pope and the archbishop of Canterbury was to condemn - the cartoons! In my own profession, there was a rush to see who could capitulate the fastest, by reporting on the disputed images without actually showing them. And this at a time when the mass media has become almost exclusively picture-driven. Euphemistic noises were made about the need

to show “respect,” but I know quite a number of the editors concerned and can say for a certainty that the chief motive for “restraint” was simple fear. In other words, a handful of religious bullies and bigmouths could, so to speak, outvote the tradition of free expression in its Western heartland. And in the year 2006, at that! To the ignoble motive of fear one must add the morally lazy practice of relativism: no group of nonreligious people threatening and practising violence would have been granted such an easy victory, or had their excuses - not that they offered any of their own - made for them.

Then again, on another day, one might open the newspaper to read that the largest study of prayer ever undertaken had discovered yet again that there was no correlation of any kind between “intercessory” prayer and the recovery of patients. (Well, perhaps some correlation: patients who knew that prayers were being said for them had more post-operative complications than those who did not, though I would not argue that this proved anything.) Elsewhere, a group of dedicated and patient scientists had located, in a remote part of the Canadian Arctic, several skeletons of a large fish that, 375 million years ago, exhibited the precursor features of digits, proto-wrists, elbows, and shoulders. The Tiktaalik, named at the suggestion of the local Nunavut people, joins the Archaeopteryx, a transitional form between dinosaurs and birds, as one of the long-sought so-called missing links that are helping us to enlighten ourselves about our true nature. Meanwhile, the hoarse proponents of “intelligent design” would be laying siege to yet another school board, demanding that tripe be taught to children. In my mind, these contrasting events began to take on the characteristics of a race: a tiny step forward by scholarship and reason; a huge menacing lurch forward by the forces of barbarism - the people who know they are right and who wish to

instate, as Robert Lowell once phrased it in another context, “a reign of piety and iron.”

Religion even boasts a special branch of itself, devoted to the study of the end. It calls itself “eschatology,” and broods incessantly on the passing away of all earthly things. This death cult refuses to abate, even though we have every reason to think that “earthly things” are all that we have, or are ever going to have. Yet in our hands and within our view is a whole universe of discovery and clarification, which is a pleasure to study in itself, gives the average person access to insights that not even Darwin or Einstein possessed, and offers the promise of near-miraculous advances in healing, in energy, and in peaceful exchange between different cultures. Yet millions of people in all societies still prefer the myths of the cave and the tribe and the blood sacrifice. The late Stephen Jay Gould generously wrote that science and religion belong to “non-overlapping magisteria.” They most certainly do not overlap, but this does not mean that they are not antagonistic.

Above all, we are in need of a renewed Enlightenment, which will base itself on the proposition that the proper study of mankind is man, and woman.

Religion has run out of justifications. Thanks to the telescope and the microscope, it no longer offers an explanation of anything important. Where once it used to be able, by its total command of a world-view, to prevent the emergence of rivals, it can now only impede and retard - or try to turn back - the measurable advances that we have made. Sometimes, true, it will artfully concede them. But this is to offer itself the choice between irrelevance and

obstruction, impotence or outright reaction, and, given this choice, it is programmed to select the worse of the two. Meanwhile, confronted with undreamed-of vistas inside our own evolving cortex, in the farthest reaches of the known universe, and in the proteins and acids which constitute our nature, religion offers either annihilation in the name of god, or else the false promise that if we take a knife to our foreskins, or pray in the right direction, or ingest pieces of wafer, we shall be “saved.” It is as if someone, offered a delicious and fragrant

out-of-season fruit, matured in a painstakingly and lovingly designed hot-house, should throw away the flesh and the pulp and gnaw moodily on the pit.

Above all, we are in need of a renewed Enlightenment, which will base itself on the proposition that the proper study of mankind is man, and woman. This Enlightenment will not need to depend, like its predecessors, on the heroic breakthroughs of a few

gifted and exceptionally courageous people. It is within the compass of the average person. The study of literature and poetry, both for its own sake and for the eternal ethical questions with which it deals, can now easily depose the scrutiny of sacred texts that have been found to be corrupt and confected. The pursuit of unfettered scientific inquiry, and the availability of new findings to masses of people by easy electronic means, will revolutionize our concepts of research and development. Very importantly, the divorce between the sexual life and fear, and the sexual life and disease, and the sexual life and tyranny, can now at last be attempted, on the sole condition that we banish all religions from the discourse. And all this



and more is, for the first time in our history, within the reach if not the grasp of everyone.

However, only the most naïve utopian can believe that this new humane civilization will develop, like some dream of “progress,” in a straight line. We have first to transcend our prehistory, and escape the gnarled hands which reach out to drag us back to the catacombs and

the reeking altars and the guilty pleasures of subjection and abjection. “Know yourself,” said the Greeks, gently suggesting the consolations of philosophy. To clear the mind for this project, it has become necessary to know the enemy, and to prepare to fight it.

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10 BRILLIANT INSIGHTS FROM DANIEL DENNETT

Dan Falk

A GLIMPSE OF A MIND JAMMED TO THE RAFTERS WITH IDEAS

Daniel Dennett, who died in April at the age of 82, was a towering figure in the philosophy of mind. Known for his staunch physicalist stance, he argued that minds, like bodies, are the product of evolution. He believed that we are, in a sense, machines - but astoundingly complex ones, the result of millions of years of natural selection.

Dennett wrote more than a dozen books, some of them aimed at a scholarly audience but many of them directed squarely at the inquisitive non-specialist - including best-sellers like *Consciousness Explained*, *Breaking the Spell*, and *Darwin’s Dangerous Idea*. Reading his works, one gets the impression of a mind jammed to the rafters with ideas. As Richard Dawkins put it in a blurb for Dennett’s last book, a memoir titled *I’ve Been Thinking*: “How unfair for one man to be blessed with such a torrent of stimulating thoughts.”

Dennett spent decades puzzling over the existence of minds. How does non-thinking matter arrange itself into matter that can think, and even ponder its own existence? A long-time academic nemesis of Dennett’s, the philosopher David Chalmers, dubbed this the “Hard Problem” of consciousness. But Dennett felt this label needlessly turned

a series of potentially solvable problems into one giant unsolvable one: he was sure the so-called hard problem would evaporate once the various lesser (but still difficult) problems of understanding the brain’s mechanics were figured out.

Can we build from an account of rudimentary, strained aboutness all the way to human consciousness?

Because he viewed brains as miracle-free mechanisms, he saw no barrier to machine consciousness, at least in principle. Yet he had no fear of *Terminator*-style AI doomsday scenarios, either. (“The whole singularity stuff, that’s preposterous,” he once told an interviewer for *The Guardian*. “It distracts us from much more pressing problems.”)

As keen as the workings of his mind may have been, Dennett was among the least pretentious of scholars. As one journalist noted, he dressed “like a Maine fisherman”; for many years, he and his wife, Susan, spent their summers in a farmhouse a five-hour drive north of Boston. His passions extended beyond science and philosophy: He mastered at least five musical instruments - for a time he earned money as a jazz pianist - and, in spite of his avowed atheism, sang Christian hymns like “O Harken Ye” like a practised choirboy.

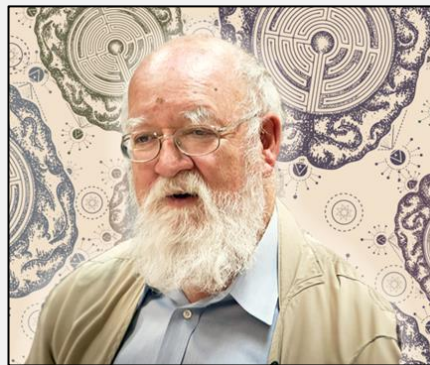
To give a sense of the breadth and depth of Dennett’s thinking, we have compiled

here 10 snippets from his writings and from interviews he gave over the years.

**THE MIND IS A “USER-ILLUSION”
THAT WE MISTAKE FOR REALITY**

And what is this self? Not a dedicated portion of neural circuitry but rather like the end-user of an operating system. ... Curiously, then, our first-person point of view of our own minds is not so different from our second-person point of view of others' minds: We don't see, or hear, or feel, the complicated neural machinery churning away in our brains but have to settle for an interpreted, digested version, a user-illusion that is so familiar to us that we take it not just for reality but also for the most indubitable and intimately known reality of all. That's what it is like to be us. We learn about others from hearing or reading what they say to us, and that's how we learn about ourselves as well. This is not a new idea, but keeps being rediscovered apparently. The great neurologist John Hughlings Jackson once said, “We speak, not only to tell others what we think, but to tell ourselves what we think.”

Bacteria to Bach and Back (2017)



**FREE WILL IS A FANTASY, BUT A
WELCOME ONE**

The traditional view of free will, as a personal power somehow isolated from physical causation, is both incoherent and unnecessary as a ground for moral responsibility and meaning. The scientists and philosophers who declare free will a fiction or illusion are right; it is part of the user-illusion of the manifest image. That puts it in the same category with colours, opportunities, dollars, promises, and love (to take a few valuable examples from a large set of affordances). If free will is an illusion then so are they, and for the same reason. This is not an illusion we should want to dismantle or erase; it's where we live, and we couldn't live the

way we do without it. But when these scientists and philosophers go on to claim that their “discovery” of this (benign) illusion has important implications for the law, for whether or not we are responsible for our actions and creations, their arguments evaporate.

Bacteria to Bach and Back (2017)

**CONSCIOUSNESS RUNS ON
MULTIPLE PARALLEL TRACKS AT
ONCE**

According to the Multiple Drafts model [of consciousness], all varieties of perception - indeed, all varieties of thought or mental activity - are accomplished in the brain by parallel, multitrack processes of interpretation and elaboration of sensory inputs. Information entering the nervous system is under continuous “editorial revision.” For instance, since your head moves a bit and your eyes move a lot, the images on your retinas swim about constantly, rather like the images of home movies taken by people who can't keep the camera from jiggling. But that is not how it seems to

us. People are often surprised to learn that under normal conditions, their eyes dart about in rapid saccades, about five quick fixations a second, and that this motion, like the motion of their heads, is edited out early in the processing from eyeball to ... consciousness.

Consciousness Explained (1991)

**DARWINIAN EVOLUTION HAS
EXTRAORDINARY EXPLANATORY
POWER**

Let me lay my cards on the table. If I were to give an award for the single best idea anyone has ever had, I'd give it to Darwin, ahead of Newton and Einstein and everyone else. In a single stroke, the idea of evolution by natural

selection unifies the realm of life, meaning, and purpose with the realm of space and time, cause and effect, mechanism and physical law. But it is not just a wonderful scientific idea. It is a dangerous idea. My admiration for Darwin's magnificent idea is unbounded, but I, too, cherish many of the ideas and ideals that it seems to challenge, and want to protect them. ... The only good way to do this - the only way that has a chance in the long run - is to cut through the smokescreens and look at the idea as unflinchingly, as dispassionately, as possible.

Darwin's Dangerous Idea(1995).

NO MIRACLES ALLOWED

The two related philosophical problems I was trying to solve - at least in outline - can be rendered quite straightforwardly. First, how can it be that some complicated clumps of molecules can be properly described as having states or events that are about something, that have meaning or content? And second, how can it be that at least some of these complicated clumps of molecules are conscious - that is, aware that they are gifted with states or events that are about something? You and I have thoughts and ideas and hopes and fears and we know that we do, and we can tell others about them. How is that possible? ... Can we build from an account of rudimentary, strained aboutness all the way to human consciousness? That is the task that any physicalistic or materialistic theory of the mind must execute. No miracles allowed.

I've Been Thinking' (2023)

CULTURAL EVOLUTION CAN MIMIC BIOLOGICAL EVOLUTION

The concept of cultural replicators - items that are copied over and over - has been given a name by Richard Dawkins, who proposed [in his 1976 book *The Selfish Gene*] to call them memes, a term that has recently been the focus of controversy. For the moment, I want to

make a point that should be uncontroversial: cultural transmission can sometimes mimic genetic transmission, permitting competing variants to be copied at different rates, resulting in gradual revisions in features of those cultural items, and these revisions have no deliberate, foresighted authors. The most obvious, and well-researched, examples are natural languages. The Romance languages - French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and a few other variants - all descend from Latin, preserving many of the basic features while revising others. Are these revisions adaptations? That is, are they in any sense improvements over their Latin ancestors in their environments? There is much to be said on this topic, and the "obvious" points tend to be simplistic and wrong, but at least this much is clear: Once a shift starts to emerge in one locality, it generally behoves local people to go along with it, if they want to be understood.

Breaking the Spell (2006)

RELIGION DOESN'T NEED TO BE ABOLISHED - MERELY FIXED

Does religion "poison everything," as my dear, late friend Hitch [Christopher Hitchens] insisted on saying? Only in a very attenuated sense, I think. Many things are quite harmless in moderation and poisonous only in quantity. I understand why Hitch emphasized this view; as a foreign correspondent he had much first-hand, dangerous experience with the worst features of religion, while I know of all that only at second hand - often from his reportage. I, in contrast, have known people whose lives would be desolate and friendless if it weren't for the non-judgemental welcome they have received in one religious organization or another. I regret the residual irrationalism valorized by almost all religion, but I don't see the state playing the succouring, comforting role well, so until we find secular successor organizations to take up that humane task, I am not

in favour of ushering churches off the scene. I would rather assist in transforming these organizations into forms that are not caught in the trap of irrational - and necessarily insincere - allegiance to patent nonsense.

'Letting the Neighbours Know', a chapter in *The Four Horsemen: The Conversation that Sparked an Atheist Revolution* (2019)

BEHAVIOUR IS PREDICTABLE

Here is how it works: first you decide to treat the object whose behaviour is to be predicted as a rational agent; then you figure out what beliefs that agent ought to have, given its place in the world and its purpose. Then you figure out what desires it ought to have, on the same considerations, and finally you predict that this rational agent will act to further its goals in the light of its beliefs. A little practical reasoning from the chosen set of beliefs and desires will in most instances yield a decision about what the agent ought to do; that is what you predict the agent will do.

The Intentional Stance (1987)

THE TRUTH REALLY DOES MATTER

The real danger that's facing us is we've lost respect for truth and facts. People have discovered that it's much easier to destroy reputations for credibility than it is to maintain them. It doesn't matter how good your facts are, somebody else can spread the rumour that you're

fake news. We're entering a period of epistemological murk and uncertainty that we've not experienced since the middle ages.

The Guardian, Feb. 12, 2017

REALITY IS MORE MAGICAL THAN MIRACLES

Some people don't want magic tricks explained to them. I'm not that person. When I see a magic trick, I want to see how it's done. People want free will or consciousness, life itself, to be real magic. What I want to show people is, look, the magic of life as evolved, the magic of brains as evolving in between our own ears, that's thrilling! It's affirming. You don't need miracles. You just need to understand the world the way it really is, and it's unbelievably wonderful. We're so lucky to be alive! The anxiety that people feel about giving up the traditional magical options, I take that very seriously. I can feel that anxiety. But the more I understood about the things I didn't understand, the more the anxiety ebbed. The more the joy, the wondrousness came back

Interview in the New York Times Magazine,
Aug. 27, 2023

Dan Falk is a science journalist and broadcaster based in Toronto. His books include *The Science of Shakespeare* and *In Search of Time*.

**Article reproduced from *Nautilus*,
1 May 2024.**

4.

GOD AND MORALITY

On 6 May 2024, a letter was published in the *Irish Independent* newspaper. The following quotations were given from Nietzsche and Sartre.

“When one gives up the Christian faith, one pulls the right to Christian morality from under one's feet.” (Nietzsche)

“Everything is indeed permitted if God does not exist, and man is in consequence forlorn, for he cannot find anything to depend upon either within or without himself. He discovers forthwith he is without excuse ... thus we have

neither behind us, nor before us in a luminous realm, any means of justification or excuse. We are left alone, without excuse.” (Sartre)

In short - what piffle! Beware of some existentialists (whether attributively or self-designated). Morality derives from innate species solidarity, the rational 'golden rule', and our highly evolved cerebrum with its capacity for sympathy and empathy. Some of us can get over early religious indoctrination, others can't. (Nietzsche trained to be a Pastor; Sartre came from an intensely religious home.) **Ed.**

5.

HUMANIST MEETINGS IN IRELAND

Belfast Freethinkers

Meeting quarterly, 8.00 p.m.
Holiday Inn, University St, Belfast
Contact: Roger 0777 858 3435
roger.kelly.2@ntlworld.com

North Down Humanists

1st Sunday of month, 11.00 a.m.
Coffee Cure, Bangor Castle
Contact: Andy Barr, 078 889 20063

North Dublin Humanist Community

3rd Monday of month
Contact: Alan Tuffery
atuffery@tcd.ie

South Dublin Humanist Community (SDHC)

Contact: 086 857 2005
Janielazar@gmail.com
Mailing List: southdublinhumanistcommunity

Humanist Association of Ireland

Monthly meeting at rotating venues, mostly
Dublin
Details of next meeting at humanism.ie
or HAI Facebook Page

Westport Humanists

2nd Sunday of month at 12.30 p.m.
Wyatt Hotel
Contact: Seamus O'Connell
087 245 3536/098 50802
shayoc37@gmail.com

Cork Humanists

Contact: Geraldine O'Neill 086 812 8892

<http://corkhumanists.weebly.com>

Humanists West (Galway)

Last Sun of month, 12.00 noon
Garden Room, Ardilaun House Hotel, Taylor's
Hill, Galway
Contact: Sheila Garrity 086 603 5104
spgarrity@hotmail.com / humanistswest@gmail.com

Kilkenny Humanist Group

2nd Sunday of month, 11.00 a.m.
Langton House Hotel, Kilkenny,
Contact: Patrick Cassidy 089 463 0005
patrickacassidy@gmail.com

Mid-West Humanists (Limerick, Clare, Tipperary)

3rd Wednesday of month in Limerick
Contact: Peter 086 815 5102
info@midwesthumanists.com
Also check <https://midwesthumanists.com>

North West Humanists

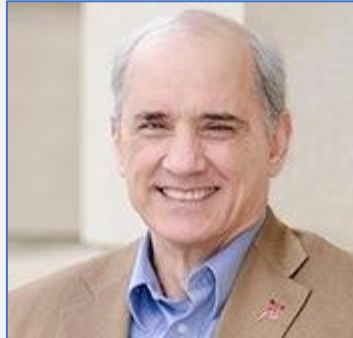
2nd Tuesday of month
Radisson Hotel, Sligo
Contact: Gill Bell 087 295 8206
humanistgb@gmail.com

Waterford Humanists

3rd Monday of month, 7.30 p.m.
Phil Grimes Pub, John St, Waterford
Contact: Teresa graham22@gmail.com



THEY SAID



[About theism] My heart cannot accept what my mind rejects.

Dan Barker (former evangelist and now leading U.S. atheist)

[Civilization defined]: the conscious culture of reason.

Leo Strauss

[Sometimes] true words are not {always} beautiful; beautiful words are not {always} true.

Tao Te Ching

No idea is above scrutiny and no people are beneath dignity.

Maajid Nawaz

As men's prayers are a disease of the will, so are their creeds a disease of the intellect.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Atheism is a result of intellectual honesty.

Paulo Bitencourt

Who knows most, doubts most.

Robert Browning

Nothing is above scrutiny, Nothing is infallible, Till you accept this simple fact, No society is reparable.

Abhijit Naskar

Nearly all people stand in great horror of annihilation, and yet to give up your individuality is to annihilate yourself. Mental slavery is mental death, and every man who has given up his intellectual freedom is the living coffin of his dead soul.

Robert G Ingersoll

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