

Is There a God? Misconceptions

Transcript of a clip from the talk IS THERE A GOD by Rev. Ernest O'Neill

Is there a God? Will you think about that a little yourself? Is there a God? One of my problems was that I continually answered another question even though I kept saying that I was answering the question -- Is there a God?

I kept trying to answer other questions. You might like to know some of those other questions that even our professors at school and our teachers answer and they claim to be answering the question -- Is there a God?

The first one I had trouble with was when the liberal theologians said, "What does it matter? What does it matter, whether there is or there is not? If it gives old ladies and poor psychological cripples some comfort, what does it matter whether there is a God or not?" Well, I think there are many old ladies who feel the same as I do, who do not want to live an illusion. We don't. We are not such cripples that we need an illusion or a lie of which we are willing to be the deceived victims. So, we don't want a God that is just an illusion. When I heard people asking the question -- "Is there a God?" -- I often thought, are they asking, "Is there some great 'other' that will give poor souls some encouragement in their life"? That's not the question. That's not the question at all. The question is -- Is there a God? Is there a supreme being?

Some of us don't have trouble with that misconception but we have trouble with another one. We say, "Is there a miserable, gloomy, old gentleman living in heaven somewhere who tells us not to go to the theater, not to dance, and not to smoke? And when He looks down and sees any of us enjoying ourselves at all, he yells, "Cut it out!" I found that was the question I was trying to answer. I was giving the name "God" to all the distorted, depressing misconceptions of him that I had accumulated during the past years. I was saying, does such a morbid old being exist? That's not the question we are asking. That is an emotional question but the intellectual question we are asking is, is there a supreme being, who is greater than all of us here, and who is responsible for putting us all here?

You may wonder, why do some of the greatest minds in our world NOT believe in God? It's because of this third misconception. A lot of us think we are asking, not the question -- Is there a God? - but -- Is there a being that I must obey? Of course, we don't want to have anybody that we have to obey, so we answer "No". That's what causes many of the most intelligent men and women in our world to deny the existence of God. It's amazing, but they do.

They deny the existence of God not on intellectual reasons at all, but because they know the consequences that would follow once they admit that there is a God. And the consequences are, that they would have to obey that God.