

## ATHEISM'S ULTIMATE PROBLEM – EXPLAINING EXISTENCE –

Jon Gary Williams

Could there have ever been a point at which absolutely nothing existed? Could there have ever been non-existence? Is non-existence possible? The obvious answer to these questions is “no.” If there ever was absolute non-existence, the only logical conclusion is that there never could be anything. Or else one must accept the notion of something coming from nothing – existence arising from non-existence.

However, surprising as it may seem, many who hold the philosophy of atheism feel compelled to answer “yes” to these questions, for atheism, by its very nature, demands that non-existence is as possible as existence. Why? Because if existence is merely an accident (a basic requirement of atheism) then non-existence would have to be the logical alternative. Therefore, atheists are forced to agree that if existence never happened, the only thing left is non-existence. So they face a very, very serious problem.

As such, atheists find themselves in a precarious circumstance. First, they realize their materialistic view (that existence is an accident) forces them to concede that ultimately there could have been non-existence. Yet, second, they know the idea of something coming from nothing is illogical, contradicting common sense.

Hence, squeezed between these two mutually exclusive positions, what are atheists to do? Believe it or not, many have launched out on a “something from nothing” venture, a venture into absurdity. But, the painful truth for atheism is either accept the “something from nothing” theory, or face the idea that something is eternal.

However, atheists find it extremely difficult to deal with the concept of eternal existence – that there is something which never had a beginning. Why is this so difficult? Primarily because atheists adhere to only a material (physical) existence. Yet, how can matter, of itself, be eternal? There is no logic in this. How is it possible for lifeless matter to somehow, somehow be self-existent, never having had a beginning? This really makes no sense and atheists realize it!

But atheists also know there is an alternative offered by many to the question of what it is that could be eternal – something not confined to the natural. Something supra-natural. The alternative? Mind. However, for atheists, entertaining the idea of an eternal mind is unacceptable, for this infers the existence of an eternal intelligence. To them this will never do and must be rejected at all cost.

Well, where does this leave atheists? For them only one avenue is open, but one that is logically impossible – existence coming from non-existence or something coming from nothing. Yet, for atheism there is really nowhere else to turn.

Consequently, many have actually taken the giant step of attempting to rationalize the irrational – existence coming from non-existence. Really? Yes! And this is not altogether new. Over two decades ago the “something from nothing” fantasy was seen cloaked in a so-called “scientific” format. In 1984 *Scientific American* published the following statement.

“...probably the most revolutionary model is the notion that all matter and energy in the observable universe may have emerged from almost nothing. The inflationary model of the universe provides a possible mechanism by which the observed universe could have evolved from an infinitesimal region. It is then tempting to go one step further and speculate that the entire universe evolved from literally nothing” (p.128).

So, there it is – existence from non-existence. And, presumably, this is supposed to erase their dilemma? Hardly. It only shows the foolish extent to which some will go in their defense of atheistic materialism.

In that short paragraph, describing a so-called “inflationary model,” notice these ambiguous remarks: probably, notion, may have, possible, could have, tempting and speculate. Notice also in the first sentence the universe came from “almost nothing,” however, in the second sentence the universe came from “literally nothing.” Now which is it -- almost nothing or nothing? Such absurd and contradictory rhetoric shows the silliness and weakness of atheistic rationale.

Though the atheist claims there is no God, the fact is this is something he cannot know. He cannot say he knows it now, for countless equally intelligent people are convinced there is a God. And, since to him there can be no consciousness after death, he could know it then either. So, even if his view was right he could

never know it! What an unenviable position – living through life promoting a view that, even if you were right, you would never know it! But this is the vulnerable and fatalistic outlook facing the atheistic mind.