

Bret Weinstein & Heather Heying: Atheism Has Failed the West

21 MIN · YOUTUBE · [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=28AVALU8FPS](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28AVALU8FPS)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=28AVALU8FPS>

SUMMARY

The discussion centers on the resurgence of religious beliefs as a response to societal chaos and the challenges of modernizing ancient traditions to fit contemporary realities. The speakers explore the necessity of balancing respect for historical religious practices with the need for adaptation to avoid societal decline, emphasizing the importance of shared values and the role of fathers in shaping the future.

- The re-embrace of religion is seen as a natural response to societal disarray, with a call for a retreat into Orthodoxy.*
- Acknowledges that while ancient wisdom is valuable, it must be adapted to modern circumstances.*
- Emphasizes the importance of establishing shared fundamentals to prevent extinction and promote meaningful liberation.*
- Discusses the challenge of identifying which aspects of ancient traditions remain relevant and which are outdated or toxic.*
- Highlights the significance of rituals and community in providing structure and meaning in a secular world.*
- Explores the philosophical implications of human dignity and equality, suggesting a need for a moral foundation.*
- Stresses the role of fathers in guiding the next generation and the importance of recognizing the value of American civilization.*
- Concludes with a call for a balance between tradition and innovation to navigate current societal challenges effectively.*

the re-embrace of religion makes a tremendous amount of sense we are so far off track and it's so obvious and Atheism has something to do with that I don't think atheism is the cause but it took the safety off the gun and civilization has now run away into this hyper novelty spiral that is it's literally destroying us you can see the individuals are not well the

civilization is not well this this is going to end badly it is absolutely natural and I would imagine that if we had the ability to look back into history with sufficient resolution we would see that there is a retreat into Orthodoxy at the point that you find that your civilization has gone nuts and I think even in uh what little I understand of the sac texts this is this is discussed right that you know

Sodom and Gomorrah are something and the idea is there's something to retreat to when a civilization has lost its mind so it's not surprising that we would see this re-embrace of these ancient Traditions here's the part that's going to be a stretch we can't do it and we must do it right we have to get out of the Spiral we absolutely have to

it may well be that the best tools we have are ancient wisdom patterns that our ancestors knew

but we can't return to them because we don't live in their world and that's the problem so really I think the question is can we embrace the need to retreat from our hurdling into chaos and can the religions figure out how to I wish I had a better word than modernize but can the religions bring themselves up to date for a world that

their authors didn't know anything about either and that is not an easy trick to do because when you look back at an ancient religious text which we regard as the product of evolution right it is a compendium of wisdom that was built by an evolutionary force that pruned the wheat from the chaff that is not up to date to Modern circumstances that said there's nobody on Earth who can look at those texts and say Here's the part that's still

relevant as written here's the part that's relevant but it's written in such a way that you'll derive the wrong lesson from it and here's the part that has become toxic because the new circumstances are radically different from the old ones there's nobody on Earth who can do that job it's you know it's Chesterton's fence all the way down and so when you're faced with that puzzle we have to agree on some fundamentals we have to agree on what

the objective of the exercise is right I would argue the most fundamental objective we don't go extinct second most fundamental we liberate people meaningfully as much as possible beyond that there are a lot of questions about what structures are net positive what structures are net negative and there's no ancient tradition that's up to the challenge as written um if we can all see that if we can understand that you can't go back you can go some degree

back some places yes some places no we are going to go forward one way or the other and we have a lot of control over whether we go forward into hell or we go forward through the Adaptive Valley into some better future that we can't really Envision from here if we understand that that's the puzzle and we are careful about our embrace of tradition recognizing that it's a natural moment for that to be arising then there's a lot of Hope but if we're

going to embrace the Orthodoxy without recognizing that it's not it's not a good fit for the 21st century if we're going to abandon it and hurdle headlong I don't see much of a future for Humanity I think both of those are fatal errors I actually have a question for you um in part because we we have a number of friends who do not have faith as we do not um and these number of friends increasingly say things like I

wish I believed I wish I had religion uh and I don't quite I don't quite know what that means but I've heard it from a number of people at this point and I think that we try we live in a way as if there is as if there is a moral good um even though we did not believe in an external force that is imposing it uh and I

wonder you said that you feel like you're becoming more Catholic every day what what does that mean to you like how does how does that manifest or how how are your beliefs or your actions or is it one or the other that are becoming more Catholic I'm I'm trying to wrestle with what people mean at this point when they say I

am religious or I wish that I had Faith so um I I I I offhandedly will say

I'm like the closest the closest thing Christians can be to Jewish which is I'm 100% Italian and raised Catholic and went to so so like my the being Catholic is like uh is woven into my you know genetic lineage in a certain sense you know it's like you know the pope is in Rome we're actually sending our son to Italy for college like like and to Rome it'll be a short trip to the Vatican so to answer your question it's

like it's it's a couple things so first very tangibly um we made a bunch of Education choices for our son that were very active about all the things that you write about in your book you know we put him in a Waldorf School when he was little and did no media until he was you know pretty old uh relatively speaking and then we've moved him around multiple times um but one of the things that didn't happen is he he didn't get

confirmed he got baptized when he was born but he didn't go through any of the other religious parts of the Catholic sacraments catholicism's got a lot of doodads and a lot of rituals and so I'm actually every Sunday going with him for several hours to this adult right for him to get confirmed it'll actually happen in April after Easter so that's a tangible thing I'm doing and I and what I'm finding is um it's pretty amazing it's amazing to

be there with with him to it even when it's boring which often it is it like every time it Sparks an existential conversation between us as we drive away um and I the way I think about it increasingly is on multiple levels because I'm a I'm like a I think you could tell I'm like a cerebral guy um but there's a couple things that are part of what attracts me back to this

thing I inherited just by accident of birth and family one is um that I like that it hasn't changed very much I mentioned like the lighthouse in a at night like you don't know where you the we Humanity invented lighthouses because when you're in a ship and it's dark and you're in the water you need something that's on Solid Ground so you know how far you are from there even if you don't intend to land and dock it's

like okay that's where that is I know that's always there and that anchor I find powerful um I think the other piece of the puzzle for me is there is a logic that I think is in the old it's in it's in What God Says to Moses in the Bible Moses asks him who are you what should I call you and he says I am who I am or I am being I am

being and that even I don't know if scientifically is is the right word it almost certainly is not but the notion that there is a sort of um there isn't there is a thing that is being that is not nothing but it is the meta of being strikes me as being profoundly true in the same way that um the number two is a is an is a almost an adjective or two books one two but there is a

number two that is an abstract thing that is both real and also not real and what does that mean that it's that that there's this thing number two and we can use or any number for that matter and we can use math and it's like and that it works like it's completely crazy that math works like math shouldn't work what's that mean and and I I'm probably I know I'm like way off the reservation and Brett your brother would probably

have all kinds of stuff to say about this as a mathematician but I look at all that and I say you know what I'm I'm doubling down man I'm doubling down this is I can see where we are and you know what God thank God that going to mass actually feels nostalgic so I actually like it and it's a meditation and you know what I don't even there's a there I don't see any conflict between science and Science and Faith at all

these are two different lenses on two different planes you know I was I went to 12 years of Catholic School Evolution was taught there was nothing unscientific about it and um and then the other piece of the puzzle too is I um I think one of the things that impacted me so much about um 107 and so much about is is I have a deep connection to sort of to Judaism by way of my Catholicism and my relationships and my

friendships and I see this unbroken Brotherhood that is I think the Bedrock of why we're here still and and I I I want to be a part of that and why not be a part of it I think I'm only here once so I'm going to just go with the thing that seems like it you know make sense and you know if I'm going to be Christian why not be the OG like none of those are you asked so

I'm taking the Liberty here to lay it out but is that persuasive to people I don't know I watched this video about you you've mentioned fractal several times and there's this great video and it's got a provocative YouTube clickbait title like the math that no atheist wants you to see and it's it's just the mandal BR set and it's a mathematician who's also a Christian zooming into the mandal BR set and so the mandal BR set for people who

don't know it you should Google it is basically like this visualization of a very simple equation that plots do plots dots on a graph and when you run it through a computer it gives you infinite emergent complexity that is also beautiful none of which makes any damn sense it doesn't make sense why a simple equation would give rise to infinite complexity that doesn't repeat you zoom in and it looks the same but it's

slightly different you zoom in on this little tendril and it looks now it looks really different and oh what's this part over here that looks like an ocean and oh these spirals look like about a thousand other things I see in nature and so so that's like all in my head and then there's this other piece of the moral puzzle and and then I'll stop talking because as an as an interviewer this is like I shouldn't be doing this

this much but you asked um and I I think this might be a good place to end our conversation and I'll just give you my take and then I'll ask you for yours I don't see an argument that sticks for the equal Dignity of every human being absent creation and a soul because we're not all equal some are smart some are dumb some are ugly some are weak some are tall some are short some are malevolent some are

altruistic but like one thing we're not is equal like there's we're not equal equality is a an abstraction and an invention it's not a product of reality and yet I think a quality of dignity equality of our humanness that means I shouldn't kill you to in the service of something because that's just plain wrong because of our equal dignity I have I have tried to find a

suitable non-religious justification for that and I don't see it and I don't a utilitarianism doesn't stack up because you can't measure utility so it's like we've got an equation for what is good how do you how do you measure it well we can't so okay well great but that sounds like nonsense so that's that's my long-winded answer to your question I mean you can react however you see fit to to my diet tribe but my last question

would be as in this whole conversation as biologists as people that study Evolution how do you understand the justification for the equal Dignity of every human being I don't know how to answer that last question um I guess I had I I would love to have the opportunity to spend a long time

talking about what you just what you just said and and we don't have that time I have two I think relatively trivial linguistic responses that um would point to some deeper conversation perhaps in a future conversation um the the rituals that you're going the Catholic rituals that you're exploring with your son on a weekly basis now point to you know must be the shared atmology of rights of Passage and ritual and this is absolutely one of the

benefits of of religion and when humans have tried to create that kind of community with uh enforcement of Rights and rituals uh in the same way absent religion they normally fail and so there is um utility whether or not the utility emerges from something that is actually manifestly real in the universe there is utility in having The Authority implied that says actually you it's time to do this there you must do this uh and then

with regard to the mroo set and um the the variation and the truth and the beauty that emerge the words that come to mind are Darwin's in the end of On the Origin of Species in which he talks about endless forms most beautiful so there is Convergence of of Truth and beauty and reality in these different approaches to understanding the World interestingly uh I'm not even sure it's an analogy because Mandel bro was

motivated to uh innovate fractal math because of its inadequacy for fundamentally biological questions and so uh anyway it's there very directly um with respect to your question I think I don't really want to answer it well because um I like the idea of this fundamental dignity that doesn't require an explanation but I think there is one

and it's more or less an analogy for when we say that a colorblind Society is desirable right we don't mean actually unable to see color but we mean that it's not supposed to matter with respect to your rights and obligations and this is the same you know a psychopath doesn't have equal dignity as far as I'm concerned they have lost it but they were entitled to it before they became what they were um I do want to wrap up

though my pointing out that in our book we describe that human beings in order to get from one Niche to the other have a dual mode that we go from a cultural mode when our ancestors knew well what how to exploit a habitat and how to be into a uh a conscious mode when we're in an environment we don't understand and so my point about we we have to embrace some of what we've been while being open

to innovating something that we haven't yet been is an invitation and the tool that we describe involves a

distinction between the sacred things that are so fundamental that you dare not mess with them at all and what we call the shamanistic and the shamanistic is the experimental side of something that is tied to the same structure so the way religions modernize themselves is that they have the shamanistic side that innovates and discovers what has to be

added to the religion to update it for the new realities you could make the argument that Christianity itself is a shamanistic update to Judaism um so where are we I think we are in the moment where we cannot embrace the Orthodoxy so absolutely that we abandon the obligation to figure out how to modernize these traditions we need the shamanistic it is that moment and if we don't do that part we may save ourselves in the short term but do ourselves in in

the long term I have a a question you can answer quickly I I end every conversation with with this and this has been um I've been such a fan of both of you and your contributions to my own thinking that I just it's been a real honor and and a privilege to have this conversation um we call this Dad Saves America uh because I believe as men in particular it it is a role that the saving of America um requires that we

can't get there from here if we as men don't embrace the heroic nature of being the hero heroic role of being a father but the heroic role also of just being an adult and transmitting that to our kids how do you each of you think about your role in the American story go go ahead all it directed at you first okay uh I mean I I I think it was addressed in many places in this conversation right we have an

obligation to get our civilization through the bottleneck that we very obviously face we have this obligation for a long-term lineage level purpose that's hard for us to actually see and we can see it manifest in flesh and blood in our own children and that's good enough to the extent that we understand that our kids are in danger and that we have to fix the structure that they are depending on in order for there to be a future at all

that's the job and anybody who doesn't see it needs to look harder how about you I think that's right um traveling far a field uh in my 20s sometimes with Brett sometimes independently uh made me an adult honestly um and also made me a patriot and it's not that I thought America was uh was evil I wasn't one of

those people before that but I didn't understand what all it it brought uh to the table and seeing some of the Alternatives out there uh brought reality home and I think that that that may be one of the the themes of what we have been doing when we were professors and now that we are communicating with the world differently you know get out of your own self long enough to recognize the outstanding value of what it is that we have in the United States

and what it is that we are risking with what we are doing if you like this clip you should check out the full video and all the other great content we've got at dad Saves America so be sure to hit the like button subscribe and ring that Bell so you won't miss our new stuff as that drops each week