

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO DIEGO DREYFUS

Diego Dreyfus is an impressive individual: an engineer, actor, successful entrepreneur, life coach, and motivational speaker. He is intensely self-confident. He knows who he is and he managed to brand himself. He discovered his “gift.” He says: “I designed the life I always dreamed of. I hope I can help you do the same.”

Dreyfus offers a series of workshops with titles such as, Wake Up and Decide (*DESPIERTA Y DECIDE*), Create Money And Feel Abundance (*CREAR DINERO Y SENTIR ABUNDANCIA*), and Create New Paradigms (*CREAR NUEVOS PARADIGMAS*). In the series, “You Are Going To Die,” his site announces: “‘You Are Going To Die’ is a movement focused on the way that each person, who experiences the workshop, can design the life they really want. They will discover what makes them unique and why they came into the world.” (*Te vas a morir es un movimiento enfocado a que cada persona que viva la experiencia diseñe la vida que realmente desea, que encuentre lo que lo hace único y que le permita encontrar aquello a lo que vino al mundo..*)

In particular, I urge you to view his brief video about religion, “Your Religion Is A Story,” which is the focus of this blog. His videos and views are influential, so they merit a closer examination. I will critique his view of religion from the perspective of the biblical worldview.

I do not know Dreyfus personally. I want to assume he is sincere and a seeker after truth, who really wants to help people. In his video about religion he says about himself: “Every time someone comes to me who does not believe in what I believe and questions me, I open up myself and really learn from that person.” But, he claims about those who criticize him: “The problem is your inflexibility, your pride.” He urges his opponents to be open-minded. He chides them and declares: “to open yourself, hurts. Growing hurts. Grow up!”

At the close of his video, he remarks flippantly: “Send greetings from me to your god. I believe we all have the same deity. We just named it differently.”

Really? I do not think so. The god he describes, the inexplicable “something beyond,” is different than the God with whom I am acquainted. This God is knowable. Actually, Dreyfus knows this Being already (Gen 1:26; Eccl 3:11; Rom 1:18-23). I wonder if Dreyfus is open to the possibility of error. Or, sadly, is he so economically and psychologically vested in his brand (himself), that he cannot consider a different paradigm?

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According to Dreyfus, everyone experiences a thirst for cosmic significance. Everyone wants to know “why they came into the world” and “what makes them unique.” Every religion and worldview shares this motive and proceeds along different paths to the same spiritual destination.

Each person has his/her religious “story,” individual “account” of divinity or personal spirituality. It is private and subjective. It is not objective, universal, or authoritative for others. Therefore, one must always be tolerant, humble, open to new ideas, and ready to evolve. On the other hand, people must rely on rational analysis and “question everything.”

Unfortunately, however, many religious – and non-religious persons as well – believe that their tradition is the only correct path, so they judge and reject other perspectives. They especially

reject his view that all spirituality is essentially the same, that each person's religiosity is his/her personal creation, and that each point of view is simply another "label."

Even though religion is motivated by a search for meaning and terminates in the same spiritual destination, it also "gets us into trouble." Religions condemn people who have different opinions and fosters blindness, domination, and conformity.

His spirituality, on the other hand, is based upon critical reasoning and "using his brain." Dreyfus says that he has a personal "spirituality" and he is not a religious "skeptic" or atheist. In contrast to his critics, he is "open," "flexible," and "learns" from those who disagree. But, he is indignant about others' negativity towards him. He is not proud, like many religious dogmatists. He does not judge. He is also intellectually rigorous and spiritually courageous, unlike those who disagree with him.

His religious orientation is eclectic, for he believes "in many things of Jews, Christians, Buddhists and skeptics." His idea of God is immensely personal and subjective, so he cannot "explain" it. His focus is on practice: "to live better here and deliver the best of myself here." The challenge for each individual is to fashion a worldview that seeks the "best of all religions."

From his perspective, "The problem is to believe there is bad and good...There is no bad or good...There are no victims and perpetrators, heroes and villains." He commented in the video, *Brainwashing (lavado de cerebro)*: "There is no absolute truth. What is important is what you feel is truth...Every- thing is subjective and arbitrary." Each individual is autonomous, subject to no moral or intellectual authority except his/her own.

Dreyfus is self-directed, self-defining, and self-evaluating – of himself and others. He claims that "I do not need a box that defines my life" and "I am not judging what you do," but "I have the right to tell you what I think."

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According to Dreyfus, there is no absolute or universal Truth about religion or ethics – except in practice *his* own, which is contradictory. He claims there are "no bad or good" -- except *his* moral evaluations, as evidenced by his indignation – which is also contradictory. To proclaim "there is no absolute truth" and "everything is subjective and arbitrary" is to state an absolute, objective, non-arbitrary Truth. Dreyfus presupposes what he claims to deny – Truth – in order to evaluate others and put himself in the position of ultimate Truth-Maker. After all, it is the sovereign self that must "question everything."

He says that "your religion is a story." It is personal and private. It exerts no obligations on anyone. But, how does he know? By what authority does he relativize each and every religion, reducing them to mere "labels"? Has he studied religiosity in depth? Does he understand primal religion, the history of religions, or the main tenants of the major spiritualities? Does know anything about secular religions (communism and ideology) or implicit religions (consumerism and psychology)? Is he aware of the distinctive teachings and lifestyles of the various founders of the major religions? Can he discern intellectual pride and *self*-righteousness? It seems not.

Dreyfus sets off boldly "where angels fear to tread." He not only pronounces the relativity of moral norms, but also the equivalence of global religions, indeed, all spirituality. He speaks from on high, presuming a transcendent perspective, revelation, in fact. Where does he obtain this divine insight and authority? He says that we should create our *own* spirituality based on the

“best of all religions.” On what or whose criteria -- *his*? What does “best” mean and who has the power to say so – *him*? For which deity does he presume to speak when he peddles the discovery of reality, identity, and purpose? Is he a *self*-declared prophet of the “something beyond”? If all religions are relative, subjective, and arbitrary as he claims, why should we believe *anything* he says about religion? Indeed, his arrogance is astounding and appalling.

Again, his workshop, “You Are Going To Die,” promises to reveal “why [you] *came into* the world.” This is revelation originating outside this world in eternity. It is transcendent information. Where and how does Dreyfus obtain this divine disclosure? Is his god, the “something beyond,” able to communicate? How? What and who does Diego Dreyfus really think he is – something even more than a leader of a “movement”?

Dreyfus’ spirituality is all about himself. “I designed the life I always dreamed of.” He discovered “what makes [him] unique and why [he] came into the world.” His spirituality is consumer-driven and *self*-created. Dreyfus is the poster child of postmodern spirituality, whose creed is *self*-construction through the self and for the self alone, because the *self* is sovereign and sacred. He proclaimed: “I do not need a box that defines my life.” Such self-sovereignty is idolatry, according to the biblical worldview (Gen 3:4; Deut 5:6-8).

His religion is a recipe for the deified Self, a combination of relativism, stoicism, autonomy, and self-help psychology. It provides just enough transcendence and just enough good deeds to satisfy one’s *self*-righteousness. Today, four would-be saviors are ready to help in this quest for *self*-discovery: the therapeutic profession, religious gurus, secular self-help advisors, and the advertizing industry. Dreyfus appears to fulfill more than one of these roles.

His god seems so remote that his religion functions as a kind of practical atheism -- a spirituality for *this* world. There is no talk of an afterlife, redemption, judgment or reward. His focus is “to live better here.” This is what some call an “immortality project”: the search for transcendence and cosmic orientation through the perpetuation of one’s influence in this life and after death.

Dreyfus’ god is unknown – the inexplicable and enigmatic, “*something* beyond.” Maybe, however, the absolute and universal God *has* spoken, but somehow Dreyfus is tone deaf and spiritually blind. Maybe he wears presuppositional glasses that prevent him from seeing the religious data anew or rightly.

Or, is he just a good salesman? Maybe he merely “preaches to the choir,” reaffirming the worldview they already believe, selling a product that confirms their bias. Unfortunately, some people use spirituality to make a profit and many people embrace religion as a comfort that can be bought.

Conceivably, Dreyfus resembles Simon, a magician, described in the Bible (Acts 8:9-24). He, too, was a talented motivational speaker and intensely self-confident. The crowds loved Simon’s message and proclaimed: “This man is the power of God that is called Great” (verse 10). But, Simon was chastised severely by the apostle, because he coveted the power of God for profit. Peter said to him:

May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. (verses 20-22).

I wonder: is Dreyfus a knowledgeable and trustworthy spiritual guide? Or, is he like Simon? Is he sincere or a cynic? Is he too economically and psychologically vested in his brand? Or, is he open to embrace a radically different paradigm?

Sadly, the “gospel” according to Diego Dreyfus is junk food for the soul. It is unhealthy and toxic. It is not nutritious at all. It is addictive, like popcorn, fast food.

I prefer, however, real spiritual nourishment – the Gospel according to Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible.