



The Three Realities

by

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In this first presentation, I am going to present an overview of the three realities known to mankind and show that knowledge of science does not force us into either atheism or agnosticism.

What Is a “Reality”

Before we can discuss the three realities, we need to define just what I mean by a “reality”. A reality has two key principles. First, we must somehow know that it exists. Second, a reality must have properties and follow laws that make it unique from other realities.

How do we know that something exists? One way we know that something exists is by directly experiencing it through our senses (i.e. we can see it, hear it, touch it, taste it, or smell it). A second way we know that something exists is through experimentation. We first define a theory which predicts specific outcomes from experimentation. If we perform the experiments and get the expected outcomes, then we are

justified in stating that a reality exists. The theory may not explain everything about the reality, but it does help us to understand the basic properties of the reality.

Now, the fact that we can experience two different things does not make them separate realities. For example, we experience light and warmth. These are not two different realities, but rather are different aspects of the same reality. The Sun brings the light of day, and it brings us the warmth of spring and summer. In order for something to be a different reality, it must follow a set of laws or properties that are significantly different.

The Reality of the Physical Universe

Our best example of a reality is our physical universe. For many people, the physical universe is thought to be the only reality. We know of the reality of our physical world because we are bombarded with it through our senses. We see the trees, the Sun, and the stars. We hear the sounds of waves against the shore. We feel the gentle breeze and the hardness of the ground beneath our feet. We taste the bitterness of citrus fruits and the sweetness of honey. We can smell the scents of fresh flowers. Everything coming in through our senses tells us that the physical universe is real.

The Properties of the Physical Universe

Since the dawn of mankind, we have studied our physical universe to understand its properties. We know that the universe exists in the three dimensions of length, width, and depth. The universe also follows the one-way arrow of time.

Our physical universe is a highly deterministic reality following a strict law of cause and effect. Everything that happens in the physical universe is caused to happen by some force. For example, we know that when we mix gasoline with air in an automobile engine, we get

water vapor, carbon monoxide, and power that makes the car move to take us where we want to go. If the world was not highly deterministic, then could not count on the gasoline and the air giving our cars power day after day.

We have defined basic laws which state how everything happens in our universe. These laws are stated within our theories of Classical Physics, Chemistry, and Biology. In Classical Physics, we developed laws for such things as of gravitation, motion, and electromagnetism. In Chemistry, we defined the Periodic Table of fundamental elements, and then we defined how individual atoms come together to form molecules with different properties. In Biology, we defined how molecules and energy come together to form life on our planet. We pass our knowledge of the physical universe from one generation to the next through our sciences.

The Reality of the Quantum World

Throughout most of mankind's history, it was believed by many that the physical universe was the only reality. However, beginning in the late 19th century, scientists began to theorize the existence of a second reality. It is the reality of the subatomic world. Scientists discovered that atoms are made up of electrons orbiting around a nucleus of protons and neutrons. They also theorized how protons and neutron are composed of even smaller fundamental particles, called "up quarks" and "down quarks". Experiments using particle accelerators and super-colliders have confirmed the existence of this microscopic reality.

The Properties of the Quantum World

In order for this microscopic world to be a separate reality, it must possess properties and laws that are very different from that of the physical universe.

The fundamental particles of Quantum Physics (i.e. electrons, up quarks, and down quarks) do not exist in space. Rather, they exist as a single point without any length, width, or height. It is only when these particles come together to form nuclei and atoms that the fabric of our three-dimensional space is formed.

Quantum particles do seem to exist in time. Some particles, such as muons and charm quarks are highly unstable and decay over time. Also, based on Einstein's famous $E=mc^2$ law, quantum particles can come into existence and then annihilate themselves as time passes.

The quantum world is not deterministic in the same sense as our physical world. In the physical world, when we combine two chemicals in a beaker, we know with certainty what the result will be. There are no deterministic certainties in the quantum world. Rather, there exists only probabilistic determinism. For example, in experiments involving photons (i.e. particles of light), we cannot calculate exactly where a photon will be detected. We can only say things like "50% of the time it will be detected here, and 50% of the time it will be detected someplace else".

Other properties of fundamental particles, such as entanglement and the Einstein's special theory of relativity, produce results that seem "weird" when compared to classical physics. Yet, these properties have proven to be true through experimentation.

Our theories of the quantum world are contained in scientific fields that go by such names as Particle Physics, Quantum Physics, and Quantum Mechanics. The current theory of the fundamental particles is called the "standard model". However, the study of fundamental particles is an active field of research. Some theoretical particle physicists are studying the concept of string theory in hopes of creating a better model of fundamental particles, called the "theory of everything".

The Reality of the Mental World

Our third reality is the reality of the mental world. It is the reality in which the human mind exists. The existence of this world is known to us by our consciousness. Rene Descartes, who is known as the Father of Modern Philosophy, gave the best argument for the existence of the mental world in 1637 with his famous statement “I think, therefore I am”. Not only do we recognize our own consciousness, but we recognize the existence of consciousness in others through our ability to communicate our ideas and thoughts with others.

Not all people accept that the mental world is a separate reality. In Philosophy, those that do not accept the mental world as a separate reality are called physicalists, whereas those that do accept this idea are called dualists.

Physicalists argue that our science is just incomplete. We have not yet progressed far enough in our science to understand how our consciousness follows the laws of the physical world. Dualists, however, argue that the “explanatory gap” between the laws of physics and our consciousness are far too great to justify that our consciousness only follows the laws of the physical universe.

What about the Brain?

At this point, some of you may be asking “what about the brain”. Isn’t the brain our consciousness? Is not neurology a branch of Biology dedicated to the study of the central nervous system including the brain? Neurologists do study the chemical and electrical properties of the human brain. They can identify which areas of the brain control different aspects of our body and senses. However, neurologists have never been able to explain consciousness.

Neurologists think that any animal with a telencephalon (i.e. the outermost portion of the brain) does experience some level of

consciousness. Hence, our pet dogs and cats experience consciousness, but it is at a less profound state than that experienced by humans.

Neurologists also cannot explain our long-term memories. Different parts of the human brain can be badly damaged, yet long long-term memories persist. Even in Alzheimer patients, long term memory is one of the last things that disappear even through the brain as a whole is severely compromised.

Since neurologists cannot explain consciousness and long-term memories in the human mind, I have come to the realization that the brain is an organism that only interfaces with a mental world that is my mind. The mental world of my mind is a separate reality. This mental world uses the brain to interact with the physical universe.

The Properties of the Mental World

My main argument for the mental world being a separate reality comes from the properties exhibited by our consciousness. First, our consciousness exhibits free will. Now, a lot of what we do seems to follow a cause and effect pattern similar to the physical universe. However, when pressed, human consciousness does have free will. This is exhibited over and over again by people who follow their beliefs, and are willing to suffer the consequences of their beliefs.

The human mind is capable of creation. Beethoven's Nine Symphony is something that Ludwig van Beethoven created in his own mind and then brought it into the physical world by putting his creation on paper and having musicians perform it. We create things on almost a daily basis. Artists create works of art. Architects create unique designs for buildings. Even students writing school essays are performing acts of creation, albeit directed ones. Creation, however, does not exist in the physical world. The strict conservation laws of the physical universe forbid the total amount of matter and energy in the universe to change. In other words, energy cannot be created or destroyed – it only

changes form. Hence, creation is not a property or law of the physical universe.

The human mind is capable of learning and understanding things. The laws of the physical universe do not have provisions for learning and understanding. The human mind understands the concept of infinity even though nothing in the physical universe is infinite.

The human mind experiences emotional and rational thought. There is nothing non-living in our universe that is capable of these types of thought.

I would even argue that the human mind exists outside of both space and time. Our mind does not seem to be bound by physical space. We seem to have a limitless amount of storage for our experiences and our memories. In our mental world, we can go back and relive our memories and experiences from our past. We are even capable of causing our perception of time to speed up or slow down depending on what we are doing.

The bottom line is that our consciousness has properties that are totally different from both the physical universe and the quantum world. When we couple this with the fact that we know that our consciousness exists, we are forced to conclude that consciousness is a separate reality.

God Is the Universal Mind

Once I realized that the human mind is a separate reality, it followed naturally that God could be a universal mind. When one looks at the properties we attribute to God (e.g. emotions, free-will, acts of creation, existence outside of time and space), these properties match up very well with the mental world. Based on this evidence, I reached the conclusion that it is the human mind that is created in the image and likeness of God.

In my personal Existential God, God is the mental world. God exists as the universal mind, a reality separate from our physical universe. As a result, God is no longer something I believe just because someone told me that God exists. Rather, God is something very real to me. When I do my meditative walks, it is the universal mind of God that places thoughts in my own mind. My mind is a part of God. It shares a oneness with God. Rather than driving me to atheism, my knowledge of science and my experiences has caused me to conclude that God exists as this third reality.

Science has also not driven me to agnosticism. An agnostic holds that God is unknowable. However, I know my own mind. If my mind is part of the universal mind of God, then I also know God. Not only do I know God, I am able to develop a very personal relationship with God. I can communicate with God by opening my mind during meditative walks. God communicates with me by placing thoughts into my mind during these walks.

In Conclusion

In conclusion, educated people of the world are aware of three distinct realities. We are all aware of the reality of our physical universe. In only the last 150 years, physicists have learned about the reality of the quantum world. However, for several hundred years, philosophers have argued that the human mind is also a separate reality, and modern scientists of the human brain have not been able to disprove this concept.

In my personal Existential God, I postulate that God is this third reality. God is the mental world. Our human brain is only an interface device into this mental world. If we open up our minds through meditation, we are able to communicate with God allowing us to have a personal relationship with God.

The result of all this is that modern science does not force us into atheism and agnosticism. Rather, my personal Existential God causes me to conclude that God is very real and very knowable. God is no longer just a belief. Rather, my scientific mind has concluded that God is real and readily communicates with me.

In the next lecture, I will explore how this concept of God leads me to a different paradigm of God than that espoused by traditional Christianity. This is a paradigm, however, that I believe modern Christians are trending toward.

For More Information

If you would like to learn more about Existential Gods in general, or about my personal Existential God, please visit

www.ExistentialGod.org.

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