

The Holy Man And The Scientist

by
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Okay, here's the difference between Religion (Christianity, Islam, Bhuddism, Great Furry Talking Mushroom, and all the rest), and Science (test tubes, telescopes, calculators and various other battery-operated devices), as I see it:

One day, two wise men met at the top of a very tall tower. One was a Holy Man. The other was a Scientist.

The Holy Man said, "I, the man of God, have heard a story about a great Soul who lived long ago. He was called into the Heavens by his Father - "

"His Dad was up there?" the Scientists said, pointing at a nearby cloud.

"No, no. It was his spiritual Father. He - "

"Up in one of those clouds?" said the Scientist.

"No, no. He was waaay up there, higher than the dots of light in the night sky. He - "

"Because those clouds are a long way off there," said the Scientist.

"I know how bloody far off they are. The point I'm trying to make - "

"If he fell from up there, he'd get a nasty bump on his noggin," said the Scientist.

"But He wouldn't! He's the Father Almighty! Power Incarnate. He - "

"Could get gangrenous if it wasn't treated real soon," said the Scientist.

"WILL YOU LISTEN!" the Holy Man screamed. The Scientist closed his mouth. "Thank you. What I was trying to say was, that a long time ago, there was this great Soul. And one day, after He was called by His Father - "

"The guy hiding in the clouds," said the Scientist.

"Yes - NO! - I - just listen, will you?! This great Soul, He heard His Father calling to Him, and he - "

"Yes?" said the Scientist.

"He... ascended."

The Scientist glanced up at a puffy white cumulus drifter high above them. "What, up on one o' those things?"

"Yes. Up there... and beyond," said the Holy Man.

"What did he stand on?" asked the Scientist.

"Well, nothing."

"Then he fell right on his keister, didn't he?" asked the Scientist.

"Certainly not! He had the power of the Holy Spirit with him."

"Which did...what? Solidified the ice crystals in the clouds and made a floating parapet for him?"

"Of course not!"

"Did it... create a whirlwind that simultaneously balanced the force of gravity and downward pull from the weight of his body?"

"Nothing of the sort!"

"Well then it must have... caused an expulsion of solar vapors so powerful that it pushed the entire planet away from him, matching exactly the speed at which he fell, so he only APPEARED to be ascending into the clouds," said the Scientist.

"No, no, no! Can you not understand? The God Almighty gave Him the power to ascend, from His own Divine Spirit!" said the Holy Man, exasperated.

"Oh," said the Scientist, not fully comprehending, but not wanting the Holy Man to be any more wroth than he already was.

They stood there on the tall tower for a long time, the Holy Man and the Scientist, staring up at the soft, floating clouds. Finally, after what seemed an eternity, the Scientist asked, "Can you do it?"

"What, the ascending thing?" the Holy Man replied. "No. Of course not."

"Oh," the Scientist said, then added, "So, you can't duplicate it under laboratory conditions?"

"I don't see what difference that makes," the Holy Man said, irritated.

"Simple," the Scientist said. "If He can do it and you can, too, then it's merely a Natural Law. If neither of you can do it but people said He could, then it's just a fable. If He could do it but you can't, then it was a genetic predisposition favoring one species over another. Sort of like having an opposable thumb."

Gritting his teeth, the Holy Man asked, "And what if I could do it, but He couldn't?"

"Well, that's simple," said the Scientist. "That's Evolution!"

Whereupon the Holy Man grabbed the Scientist by his collar and threw him from the very tall tower. The Scientist, lacking in faith, fell many feet and landed on his head, whereupon gangrene set in and scrambled his wonderful set of preordered ideas.

And the Holy Man was dragged off to the Prison, there to live the rest of his life in dark misery for the mistake he had made.

The moral of the story: You're damned if you do, and you're damned if you don't.