

NDEs, Scepticism, and Morality

by [Kenneth Francis](#) (August 2025)



Six Tuscan Poets (Giorgio Vasari, 1544)

Having a healthy scepticism and being cautious about certain issues is not a bad thing. But when such scepticism becomes dogmatic and/or extreme, then philosophical problems arise.

Although dogma is prescribed and justified on theistic

beliefs, the scientific realm holds different standards. Unfortunately, most of what passes for science these days is fake (scientism) and politically driven. And being sceptical on political issues, is quite justifiable because of the numerous lies and broken promises in recent times that the Establishment has subjected its citizens to.

In last months' edition of the UK's [Daily Sceptic](#), Clive Pinder wrote that we believed our borders were safe and secure; we sent our children to school and assumed the curriculum was written by grown-ups; we voted and believed our MP, however flawed, acted in good faith; we paid our taxes, watched the BBC, clapped for the NHS, cheered our team; we believed the experts.

Pinder adds: "Those days are gone. Scepticism is no longer a fringe reflex. It's a rational, self-preserving stance for anyone who has been paying attention. Because nearly every pillar of public life – politics, media, academia, the police, corporations, even science itself–has been exposed not just as fallible, but as actively self-serving, coercive, and too often contemptuous of the people it claims to serve."

But what about scepticism on matters spiritual? Last month, Piers Morgan hosted distinguished neurosurgeon Michael Egnor (a converted Catholic) and sceptical science writer/atheist Michael Shermer on the YouTube channel, *Piers Morgan Uncensored*. They met to discuss topics from Dr Egnor's latest [book](#), *The Immortal Mind*, co-written with freelance journalist, Denyse O'Leary.

Ms O'Leary [wrote](#): "Not surprisingly, near-death experiences (NDEs) headlined the discussion. But Dr Egnor's comments make clear that [The Immortal Mind](#) deals with them in the context of much other evidence for the immateriality of the human mind."

Ms O'Leary said the opening summary gave a good sense of where

we are with NDEs: All near-death experiences where you encounter people on the other side are people who are dead even if you didn't know they were dead. People who near or have near-death experiences have something called [terminal lucidity](#), often summoning their loved ones to say "goodbye." Is it mere noise from a dying brain? Or is it a signal intimating what lies beyond? What is the soul that's supposedly floating out there?

Dr Shermer says there is no scientific theory that explains everything. He adds, this is true with UFOs and psychics and whatnot. And it's just okay to say, you know what, we can't explain everything and there's still a lot unknown. Let's keep an open mind.

Dr Egnor replied, how do you explain the hundreds of accurate perceptions by people who are having near-death experiences of the goings-on in the room? But Shermer, the editor-in-chief of *Skeptic Magazine*, remains a sceptic. He is also an atheist.

Morgan and Shermer also discussed the topics like the existence of the soul, and theorised about the Big Bang, Ouija boards, transhumanism, and if AI could be sentient. Both men were polite with one another and respectful of each other's views. But in my opinion, Dr Egnor won the debate by a long shot, proving that neuroscience provides much evidence for the immateriality of some aspects of the human mind.

Although neuroscience and NDEs make for fascinating stories giving people much hope, I want to briefly touch on the moral aspect of the human mind.

I am quite familiar with Dr Shermer's work and, over the past 20 years, have seen him debating Christian philosophers in many talks, all of which he lost. To be fair to Dr Shermer, he admitted he is not a philosopher, but he nonetheless philosophises on a profound field out of his academic experience.

In discussion with Christian Sean McDowell in 2024, he says he believes in objective truths and gives some irrational examples. There are no objective truths without God, even Dr Shermer's friend Richard Dawkins explained this, despite contradicting himself afterwards.

It is a sad day when I have to quote the Pope of Atheism, but Dawkins said: "In a universe of blind physical forces and genetic replication, some people are going to get hurt, other people are going to get lucky, and you won't find any rhyme or reason in it, nor any justice. The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but blind, pitiless indifference."

For once, Dawkins is right, but he quickly flips back to being crippled by psychological forces on an ontological issue, then flips again describing himself as a 'cultural Christian.'

But back to Dr Shermer: before starting a debate with him, the first question I would ask him is this: "As an atheist, how can you justify your moral indignation for anything? In other words, how can a sack of pre-determined atoms, void of reason or free will, debate a rational person who believes in God (Logos) and logic?"

Without God, *objective* moral values and duties do not exist. So, aren't you piggybacking on the residue of Christian objective moral values and duties? Also, are you ever sceptical about your own scepticism? And, if so, are you sceptical about being sceptical about that scepticism, *ad infinitum/reductio ad absurdum*?"

Finally: "Unlike theistic eschatology, do you believe in the immortal mind, when scientific eschatology and the Second Law of Thermodynamics reveals that both the Naturalistic brain will cease to exist when the Earth and all life are incinerated by the sun in five billion years' time after it

uses up all its hydrogen fuel?"

To these questions, one wonders would Dr Shermer equivocate and/or give some irrational argument, but after quickly debunking such a weak argument, the question above should be asked again. And if Dr Shermer still refuses to give a proper answer, then he should be told: "This debate ends now, as you are fudging the issue and/or avoiding a question you cannot answer. I'll leave the last words to the late Yale law professor Arthur Allen Leff, who stated as follows in the closing of *Unspeakable Ethics, Unnatural Law*:

All I can say is this: it looks as if we are all we have. Given what we know about ourselves, and each other, this is an extraordinarily unappetizing prospect; looking around the world, it appears that if all men are brothers, the ruling model is Cain and Abel. Neither reason, nor love, nor even terror, seems to have worked to make us 'good,' and worse than that, there is no reason why anything should. Only if ethics were something unspeakable by us could law be unnatural, and therefore unchallengeable. As things stand now, everything is up for grabs. Nevertheless:

Napalming babies is bad.

Starving the poor is wicked.

Buying and selling each other is depraved.

Those who stood up and died resisting [Adolf Hitler](#), [Joseph Stalin](#), [Idi Amin](#), and [Pol Pot](#) –and [General Custer](#) too– have earned salvation.

Those who acquiesced deserve to be [damned](#).

There is in the world such a thing as evil.

[All together now:] *Sez who? – God help us!"*

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