



## ONLINE ATHEISM AND ITS IMPACT ON THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

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### Abstract

*With the great development that the world has witnessed with regard to technology, and specifically the emergence of the Internet, there have been a number of negative and positive impacts on the individual and society, perhaps the greatest benefit of the Internet is to provide access to infinite information and knowledge with ease by browsing the websites spread on the Internet and the ease of communication. The Internet has contributed greatly to the ease of communication and sharing between individuals regardless of distances, and has provided immediate access to anyone in the world. However, in light of the huge spread of information, it is difficult to choose the correct and accurate information, and among the misconceptions on the Internet are atheism or disbelief in God and inclination through the people of faith, rationality, disbelief in resurrection, heaven, fire, and dedication of all life to the world only, which is what is today called "secular or non-religious". Atheists base their ideas on their denial of the unseen altogether and in detail their mockery of rituals their fierce war against good morals and customs maximizing them for matter*

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*and nature. This research aims to clarify the full meaning of atheism in terms and form, and the importance of technology in the spread of information..*

**Keywords :** Electronic Information, The Internet, Online Data, Atheism, Social Media

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## **I. Introduction**

This is a brief research entitled Atheism on the Internet and its impact on the individual and society. Through this article, I intended to examine the phenomenon of atheism that has spread recently. And especially over the Internet by explaining its reasons and manifestations so that these pages can become a guideline for preachers and for Islamic teaching and preaching institutions by making a lot of efforts to include advocacy speech for such issues, as well as to concern, protect and taking care of young people who are the future of the nation. As it is obvious to anyone who has an insight that the Internet now has become a platform of many different cultures, as it is one of the productive fields for the preacher to convey his message in the fullest way. Indeed, all praises to almighty Allah S.A.W. Definition of atheism in Arabic language and in terminology atheism is the abandonment of intent, turning away from unfairness, and shunning away. Then it is used for every curved, crooked and bent object, which is not straight, therefore the grave was called the limit because it is in one side of it, not in the middle.

Allah's are the excellent names; so call on Him thereby; and leave alone those who profane His names. Anon will they be requited for that which they were wont to work [III]. Terminological meaning of Atheism: Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq said: "By atheism, we mean disbelief in Allah and deviation from the path of people of faith and rationality, and the occurrence and emergence of denial of resurrection, heaven and hell, and devoting life to this world only.". Atheism may be defined as "doubt or firm belief that there is no Creator and there is no path to the universe and that there is no other life after death." Thus, agnosticism and skepticism define the definition of atheism.

## **II. Available Information On Internet About Atheism**

### **Causes and Types of Atheism**

Following are the general causes of atheism: Lust overcomes the mind of a person, scientific weakness, mental imbalance, and hatred of some members of religions, error in the introductions and in the first observations lead to error in the results. Types of contemporary atheism, atheism can be divided in two types: scientific atheism and emotional atheism.

### **Definition of Scientific Atheism**

It is the belief that there is no God and that there is no other life after death with scientific evidence and theoretical proofs. Among the most important supporters, promoters and spokespersons of scientific atheism is Stephen Hawking, Charles Dickens, Lawrence Krause, Christopher Hitchens, Hades and Dent [V].

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### **Emotional Atheism**

"It is the denial of the existence of God as a result of some wrong practices by some of the followers of religions or for a special personal psychological reason of an atheist without scientific evidence which supporting that."

### **Reasons for Emotional Atheism**

- I. The moral reason and like to avoid religious commandments: Many people want to escape from the circle of religious controls.
- II. The problem of good and evil in the world of tragedies that exists in life without people finding divine intervention for this matter by claiming.
- III. The behaviors of extremists in religions.

The Egyptian Ministry of Endowments stated in a report: "The violent practices of terrorists and militancy among some Islamic groups are the cause of the spread of atheism in some Arab countries." Ministry explained: "The most prominent reasons which push young people towards atheism are the practices of terrorist atonement groups which pursue brutality, intimidation and slaughter in the name of Islam which issued a distorted concept of the teachings of religion and established a bleak picture of brutality for it, which alienated a number of young people from Islam and pushed them towards atheism." [I].

- IV. Wars between followers of different religions, the majority of which are religious based.
- V. Wrong understanding of some legislations in Islam and in other religions and the lack of awareness of the wisdom of these legislations.

### **III. Literature Review**

Atheism as an idea has been on a small scale since ancient times. In the time of the Prophet, may God's prayers and peace be upon him, he found some who did not believe and believe in resurrection, publishing, reckoning and punishment. Almighty said: "They said what is but our life, this world we die and we are alive and what does not perish except for eternity" [Al-Jathiya: 24].

Moreover, they say, "There is not but our worldly life; we die and live, and nothing destroys us except time." And they have of that no knowledge; they are only assuming. Al-Yaqoubi (d. 292 AH), in his history, talked about eternity and said: They claimed that man is still, and will not go away and that the age is permanent, not his first nor the last [IV]. In addition, Al-Jahiz (d. 255 e) explained his article in his "Book of the Animals" and mentioned that they only believe in physical things [II]. Al-Biruni then presented in his book "The Remaining Signs of Past Centuries", but this idea did not have a suitable environment to grow and expand in the advanced ages. Henry Bergson says, "Human groups without science, arts and philosophies were found and still can be found, but there was never a group without religion."

The seed of atheism remained limited to people who were later called "heretics". Ibn al-Muqafaa was accused of atheism through his book (Kalila and Dimna), a person who enjoys the protection of the Sassanid king who was condemning the asceticism cannot issue where he was accused of having taken a translation (Bab Barzoye) as a bridge to spread and broadcast his atheistic ideas, as these ideas that are skeptical of religions. Likewise, Ibn al-Rawandi, he was accused for his stance on religion written in his book (The Emeralds), and Jaber bin Hayyan was accused of atheism and Muhammad ibn Zakaria al-Razi as well. In that era, there were some individual cases that were accused of heresy, but of course, they did not take the nature of the stream or sect, but (those cases) had faced rejection from religious scholars, rulers and politicians alike.

In the modern era, this idea began to find to have followers in Europe after the criticism of the Bible became available to them. Moreover, atheism at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century became a powerful stream that attracted many scholars and politicians and created great countries on the basis of atheism so the Soviet Union and People's Republic of China and other Countries that have taken atheism as an approach.

In the world of Islam, the atheist was afraid to announce his atheism, but at the beginning of the twentieth century the situation changed and for atheists, there were forums, newspapers and even positions in the state, and this had a number of reasons, the most important of them:

First: The declaration of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the modern Turkish state, one of the foundations of which was secularism of the state, the separation of religion from life, and the release of freedom to criticize the Islamic religion, and even urging it.

Second: governments in their constitutions putting unclear expressions in which the atheist does not see a restriction that stops him from declaring his atheism.

Third: Some atheists entered the national movements and pretended to be jealous over the homeland, so the Muslim youth deceived them and began spreading atheism without a supervisor or accountant [VII].

Fourth: Receiving high (official) positions of many of those who do not have the religious education and have no jealousy over Islam, so the atheists find favor, even with the declaration of his atheism, and this may be a reason for declaring other atheists publicly denouncing their faith.

Fifth: Some devotees and adherents of the law neglect the side of jealousy over the truth. Therefore, we see them making friendship with the atheists and flattering them with compliments and describing them with sincerity and they do this in the hope of to get the pleasures of the worldly life, by doing so the atheists earn free publicity from those who think it will bring this favor to Muslims [VI].

In the wake of this favorable atmosphere, some atheists tried to spread their ideas through some publications. A book was published in Turkey entitled (Mustafa

Kemal) by Qabeel Adam, which contained ugly defamations and calumniations in religions, especially he targeted the Islam, in which he explicitly called for atheism in religion and praised the European mentality.

Then Ismail Ahmed Adham tried to spread atheism in Egypt, and wrote a booklet entitled "Why am I an atheist?" Moreover, printed at Al-Taawun Press, Alexandria, around in 1926. In the year 1928 AD, Ismail Mazhar published the magazine "The Ages" in Egypt, calling for atheism and defamation Arabs and Arabism with disgraceful defamation as he tried to restore the glories of the history of populism by accusing the Arab mentality of stagnation and degeneration, praising the glories of the Banu Israel (children of Israel) and their activity, superiority and diligence [IX].

Then a group was established in Egypt in 1928 AD to spread atheism under the slogan of literature, and the center of magazine "the Ages" was a base for it. Its name was the Association of New Literature and its secretary was, Kamel Kilani, who repented to Allah after that, so we ask Allah to forgive him.

Number of atheists in the world: There are no accurate statistics on the number of atheists in the world. Most of the atheists follow a certain religion - apparently - because they were born Christian or Buddhist. Some societies fight atheists, so it is difficult to count the number of atheists correctly. This explains the great difference between the statistical centers over the number of atheists. France 24 mentioned "According to a study conducted by the Association of Polling Companies WIN / Gallup International in 2015," atheists of conviction "represent only 11% of the total population of the world which are the special minority in the African continent and the Middle East and represent the majority only in China 61%. Moreover, contrary to public tendencies during the twentieth century, atheism did not spread in recent years, as the same association conducted a study in 2012 that stated that 13% of the total world population in that period considered themselves atheists with conviction.

In another study conducted by "Pew Research Center on Religion and Public Life". Which is an American studies and research center specializing in religions and beliefs besides other departments. Its result confirmed that atheism has become the third "religion" by number in the world after Christianity and Islam, and that Islam is the most spreadable religion, distributed among 87 And 90% of the Sunnis, and the rest of the Shiites. Judaism is the weakest of religions, and just under half of its followers reside in occupied Palestine. It also clears from the results of statistics, that Hinduism has a large share of future expansion as well, but "Pew Forum" considered it the religion of almost one nation "as more than 94% of Hindus reside in India." According to the information contained in what Al-Arabiya.net has seen of summaries and tables included in the statistics from which one can draw conclusions that undoubtedly faith is still active in the world, even though one out of every 6-atheist people does not believe in anything. It is clear from the map, which published by Al-Arabiya.net Quoting those who carried out the statistics and the study, which is about the geographical distribution of those who classified themselves as religious,

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they do not believe in any belief, they are “Nihilists” without any association with metaphysics, that the lowest percentage of them are found in the Middle East, where they are no more than 0.2% of the billion and 100 million "Atheist" according to what they call the divine religions, and their number, as shown on the map, is only two million and 100,000.

Next to them are atheists of the African continent with the exception of Egypt, Sudan and North African countries. They account for 2.4% of the total followed by 4% in Latin America and the Caribbean. Then 5.2% in the United States and Canada. Then 12% in Europe, and the rest in Asia and Oceania. Moreover, 76.2% representing More than 858 million, of whom 62.2% are in China alone, almost 586 million who born, live and die, as if nothing had happened.

As for those whom the study considered believers or having faith in something, according to what they classified about themselves in the statistics, there are two billion and 200 million Christians, or 31.5% of the adult world population in 2010, more than 6 billion and 900 million people.

Next to them are the Muslims, who number one billion and 600 million people, or 23% of the population, followed by a billion people from Hindus, or 15% of the world's population, then 500 million Buddhists (7%), followed by 14 million Jews, who are only 0.2%, and less than half of them stay in Israel.

In the world, more than 400 million people, or 6% of its population, have classified themselves as practicing rituals or ritualism without clarifying any religion. Most of them are in China or from the tribes of Africa and the Red Indians in the American continent or the “The Aboriginal” indigenous people in Australia and their similarities in the Far East countries. Like the Micronesian Islands in the Pacific Ocean, even in Europe where some practice rituals that do not belong to any religion, but practicing ritualism for their followers is an act of faith.

Statistics also revealed that there are 58 million people, or less than 1% of the world's population, who can be considered "confused" in any religion they belong to, including the Baha'is, Sikhs, Zoroastrians and "Wiccan", a religion established in Britain in the 1950s, and the "Jains" their beliefs are prevalent in India in particular. The "Taoism" which is popular in China and its neighborhoods, as well as the similar religion " Tenrikyo" is a Japanese new religion which is neither strictly monotheistic nor pantheistic, originating from the teachings of a 19th-century woman named Nakayama Miki, known to her followers as Oyasama said that she was "receiving a revelation from heaven" according to what they claim [VIII].

#### **IV. The Numbers Of Atheists In The Islamic World Between Truth And Misinformation**

There are no valid and reliable statistics on the numbers of atheists in the countries of the Islamic world. However, the certainty agreed upon by the research centers is that the percentage of atheism in the Islamic world is the lowest atheism in the world. In these lines, we try to find an estimated percentage of atheism in the

Arab and Islamic world. In 2015, BBC Arabic tried to address the phenomenon of atheism in the Arab world. The site stated that it is difficult to get the accurate number of atheists in the Arab world. However, some religious parties pointed to some numbers. According to statements issued by the Egyptian Fatwa House in January 2014, there are about 866 atheists in Egypt, while other sources estimate their number in the thousands. In the same year, several Saudi media outlets circulated a study conducted by the "Wayne Gallup International Research" in which it was revealed, "five percent of Saudis said they were atheists," which means in a country with a population of 29 million.

### **The Philosophy of Scientific Atheism**

Stephen Hawking (8 January 1942 – 14 March 2018) He wrote his book "A Brief History of Time: From the Big Bang to Black Holes". Richard Dawkins (March 26, 1941 (age 79 years). Evolutionary biologist and animal behavior Richard Dawkins was born in 1941 in Kenya during the British rule of Kenya. His family was interested in studying animals and natural sciences. At the age of eight, he moved to England and then entered a Christian school and considered himself an Anglican. A Christian upbringing arose, but after learning about the theory of evolution, he no longer believed in the existence of a god. He believed that religion did not answer his questions and that the theory of evolution. Later he joined the University of Oxford and graduated with a degree in animal science. Then completed a doctorate under the supervision of the famous animal behavior doctor " Nikolaas Tinbergen (15 April 1907 – 21 December 1988)". Then worked as a teacher at the University of California. He states that he came up with the idea of his book "The Selfish Gene" after the electricity went out in his home. He published his book in 1976 AD. This book was considered by the proponents of the theory of evolution as a revolution in understanding biological development and social behavior. Dawkins explained in the book that natural selection works at the gene level, not the organism or group. He explained that the body is only a tool for passing genes.

Many scholars opposed the idea of the book and Dawkins' supporters claimed that the title was misunderstood. Dawkins sees the selfishness of a gene that does not mean the selfishness of the individual On the contrary, the continuation of the gene requires cooperation and altruism among the members of the group. Despite this campaign against the book, it sold more than one million copies and translated it into more than twenty-five languages.

Then he wrote his book "The Blind Watchmaker" in 1986. Then Dawkins wrote his book "The God Delusion" in 2006 AD, which is the most important book of Dawkins, and even one of the most important books of atheism in our time, and the book won wide fame in the scientific community. His book won the prize for the best audio book in Britain in the year 2006 AD. The book has been translated into 35 languages, including Arabic.

William Donald Hamilton was the top person among the British evolutionists who influenced Richard Dawkins. When Hamilton died, Richard Dawkins paid tribute to him in the British newspaper, The Independent.

### **Online Atheism**

When researching the pages of atheists on social media, the researcher concluded that there are dozens of pages that talk about atheism. The page "Tunisian Atheists" includes more than 10 thousand followers, and "Sudanese Atheists" that includes more than 3,800 followers, and the "Syrian Atheists Network" that includes more than 4000 followers. On Twitter, the number of followers of accounts that their owners announce atheism ranges between hundreds and thousands, for example, the number of followers of the Arab Atheist account exceeds eight thousand.

Some of them say that his goal is to create reason and spread knowledge, and there are those who say that his tweets are directed at atheists. There are those who describe themselves as "infidels and atheists" and publish posts claiming, "Islamic discourse encourages violence against other religions." On YouTube, some Arab atheists have created many channels that attract thousands of subscribers. The owners of these channels often post videos against the Islamic religion with such titles "Myths of Religion" and "The Brutality of Islam". Some more, on the Internet, some Arab youth launched a television channel on the Internet called "Free Mind". In addition, the "Free Mind TV" website identifies itself as "one of the secular media outlets that aims to provide distant news from the dominance of religious and governmental oversight to the peoples of the Middle East and the world.

The researcher has followed some pages that are concerned with atheism on social networks, and it was noticed several things that must be taken into consideration when talking about the numbers of atheists in the Arab world.

- I. First: The followers of these pages are not all atheists, but researcher can say that most of them are not atheists. By extrapolating the pages of a random sample of followers of atheistic pages, the study found that these are of two types.
  - i. The first type: Committed Muslims or ordinary who have nothing to do with atheism and these are more than half of those followers of these pages. They have two sections. The first section: a department entered out of curiosity and perusal only. Second section: A committed entrant to respond to atheists and see their suspicions.
  - ii. The second type: Anti-religious and indignant against the followers. Also, divide into two parts. First section: Some of them are secular and liberal, but not atheists. The second section: they are Atheists and it is noted that the last section is the smallest number among the sections mentioned above.



- II. Second: The researcher noted that many who showed an interested in atheism, follow most of the pages in the Arab world. You find the same name repeated on every page of atheism, so we cannot count everyone on the page of Sudanese atheists who are atheists from Sudan.
- III. Third: The volume of comments on each publication on the pages of atheists is relatively few. For example, the Sudanese Atheists page, most of the comments do not exceed twenty comments; some of them do not exceed the single digits, despite the presence of a large number of followers. Moreover, the page since 2014 no longer publishes anything new.
- IV. Fourth: Most of the pages containing emotional atheism in which there are no scientific discussions. Where the supervisors and controllers offer such graphics that offend Islam and the Prophet Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, and writings that mock Islamic teachings. Moreover, they present Islam as a religion that killed and oppressed women, without entering into scientific discussions about the existence of the Creator, resurrection, punishment, etc. those issues facing atheism in their books. I can say that the goal of most of these pages is to defamation Islam only among all religions, and this is clear from the large number of publications that criticize, defame and challenge Islam as opposed to the rare publications that talk about Christianity or Judaism.

#### **The Consequences of Atheism on Individuals and Societies**

- I. Permanent psychological anxiety.
- II. Moral and behavioral decadence, spreading of alcohol, drug and adultery among atheists.
- III. Lack of self-censorship and crime orientation.
- IV. Selfishness and fail to keep the spirit of cooperation.
- V. The prevalence of foundlings (of abandoned children), due to the lack of recognition by the atheists of the family system.

#### **V. Conclusion and Recommendations**

After this brief presentation of the phenomenon of atheism via the Internet, through which it clarified the types of atheism and the most important social networking pages that are a platform for many atheists, this conclusion comes in which I present the most important results and recommendations.

- I. Atheism is a very dangerous phenomenon that threatens Muslim youth.
- II. Atheistic activity via the Internet, which is considered one of the most common issue experienced by Islamic societies.
- III. The causes and types of atheism vary, and this requires the preachers to study this phenomenon and take care of it in all its aspects.

Also the researchers recommend the following points:

- I. To hold a session for preachers about atheism and rehabilitating them in order to fulfill their duty towards this phenomenon.
- II. The preaching institutions should play a more powerful and comprehensive role to confront this phenomenon through special websites on the Internet.
- III. Paying attention to young people and protecting them, removing suspicions that they face, and working to establish the strong faith in their hearts through mosque and institutional programs.

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