

Dear Cvita,

I am writing to you because I noticed you are struggling with the contradictions of religion and science. I had the same issue when I was your age. When I tried talking to adults about it, I got confused and unsupported nonsense of explanations. It led to my complete rejection of religion, followed by fear and depression as I thought I was doing something wrong. Because of that I would like to give you a scientific and rational answers to your doubts. Unfortunately, as a scientist, I cannot be objective to religion, but I will try my best not to tell you what to think. I plead you not to take my words as truth, but as another set of information that will help you decide your mind on the matter.

The moral dilemma you are having is Creation vs. Evolution, Religion vs. Science. In Croatia we are mostly raised as Christians and that includes teaching Creation to children. The problem is that adults usually don't believe it, but they will not inform you of that. They kind of let you make your own mind about it. However, if you try to make a discussion about it and they still consider you 'too young' they will tell you that Creation is true and you should not question it. What is the age when people stop lying to you is forever a mystery. And if you think about it - making your own mind while not questioning adults is contradictory. Hopefully, by explaining the difference between Creation and Evolution you'll be able to build your own opinion.

First, I would like to explain what Creationism and Evolution are. Creationism is the religious belief that the universe and life originated 'from specific acts of divine creation', and Evolution is the scientific conclusion that they came about through natural processes. Or to make it simpler - creationists believe that the world came to be as it was described in the Book of Genesis. It is the belief that God (a supreme being) created humans, and animal and plant species in a week (7 days of 24 hours). The proof for that is the Book of Genesis and other truths found in the Bible. On the contrary, there is the Evolution. It is a scientific theory based on the life we find around us. The evolution was first hypothesised by Charles Darwin in the 19th century and from that point onward it was further investigated, tested, and upgraded. From the point of science, it is a valid explanation of life. It is still not complete, but nor is the rest of scientific fields, and thus that doesn't make it less legitimate.

Now, you may think it's an easy dilemma. After all, you just have to decide between religion and science. Easy, right? Well, not for many. If you are like me, you will choose logic instead of comfort. But, many won't. It is scary to disregard the purpose of life. If there is no point for us to be here, why bother? However, I see it as a liberation. A possibility to be whoever you want to be, and to do whatever you want to do (while it does not negatively affect someone else).

Another problem is that crationists like to present Creationism as science to make it more believable, thus creating 'Creation science' and 'Intelligent design'. In that way they try to persuade sceptics that their beleifs are based on something real and provable. However, if you dig deeper into their 'scientific' explanations you will immediately understand it is a lie. The biggest issue is not believing in Creation but masking it into something it's not. That is one of the ways of manipulating people, and in my opinion, every person should have the oportunity to make a descision based on facts and their preferences.

The most important message I would like to get to you about the manipulation of information is that if you ask for the explanation you should get facts that are verifiable. If you see that answers go into the loop, and the final answer is 'because it is' you can deduce something is sketchy. In science, every fact should be defined and verifiable. Also, don't judge a religion. Various forms of it exist for many years with a reason. It gives

people hope and security. If you are capable of believing it is not necessarily a bad thing. Just remember that every person is different and different things are true to them.

See you in a month.

Yours,

Andrea