WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

Video Clip transcript extracted from the talk IS THE BIBLE HISTORY OR MYTH by Ernest O'Neill

By Ernest O'Neill

Last Sunday we tried to talk about the question, "Is there a God". You probably remember the conclusion we came to. The existence of a God of some kind is the most plausible and the most satisfactory explanation of the existence of our world, the existence of ourselves, the order and design of the universe and the presence in us of conscience and a sense of moral obligation to live better than we're doing.

Where we differ is what that supreme being is like. That's where we have trouble. Most of us believe there is a supreme being of some kind, but in a way you must agree that's not the big issue.

So, the big issue is not so much, is there a God, because it's very hard to explain the universe apart from that. But the real question is what is He like? What is the supreme being like?

Certainly, by reading Homer's odyssey, you can find out what he and his contemporaries thought the supreme being was like. You can tell what his people and his friends thought, but you can't say that he was describing facts. All he was doing was giving his idea of what the supreme being might be like through the words of Odysseus.

In other words, it's foolishness to take what is a novel and treat it as if it is actual fact. Of course, all we have here in books like Homer's 'Odyssey' are the author's own imaginary ideas of what God is like.

Well let's go to another man who is not a novelist by any means. Buddha is the recognized leader of millions of people in the world today. Buddha, in 500 B.C. had certain experiences. Those experiences are trusted by millions of people today as being authoritative accounts of what the creator of the world is like. Here in fact is the record of his first revelation in 500 B.C. when the great seer had comprehended that, "Where there is no ignorance whatever, there also the karma formations are stopped."

Then he had achieved a correct knowledge of all there is to be known, and he stood out in the world as a Buddha. He passed through the eight stages of transcendental insight and quickly reached their highest point. From the summit of the world downwards, he could detect no self anywhere, like the fire when it's fuel was burnt up. He became tranquil. He had reached perfection and he thought to himself, "This is the authentic way on which in the past, so many great seers who also knew all higher and all lower things, have traveled on to ultimate and real truth and now I have obtained it".

Now you can see what Buddha thought about the supreme being behind the universe, or can you? Well, you can't, because he doesn't even mention it. Buddha hardly even believed that there was a supreme being. Most of his sermons are concerned not at all with the possibility or existence of a supreme being but they are concerned with a method of transcendental meditation by which one can psychically and psychologically escape from some of the disadvantages of this present world.

In fact Buddha is not concerned with the supreme being and his writings do not tell us anything about the supreme being. Buddha's own method of salvation did not concern the supreme being at all.

Mohammad lived about 600 A.D., about 600 years after Jesus. Here is the record of Mohammad's first revelation.

According to Moslem tradition, one night in Ramadan, about the year 610, as he was asleep or in a trans, the angel Gabriel came to Mohammad and said, "Recite". He replied, "What shall I recite?" The order was repeated three times until the angel himself said, "Recite in the name of your Lord the Creator who created man from clots of blood. Recite, your Lord is the most bounteous one, who by the pen has taught mankind things they do not know."

When he awoke, these words we are told, seem to be inscribed upon his heart.
If you read the Koran, you read that Mohammad says, "The creator of the world is merciful and forgiving but he is also stern and righteous in his judgment and that he demands faith in his servant Mohammad." But where did Mohammad get that information?

Now do you see that that's the place we're left when we begin to look for information on the creator of our universe? You really come to a place where you're stymied. Because all you face is Homer, the Buddhist scriptures, the Koran, the Mormon scriptures, all kinds of writings by men who are speaking only from their own personal subjective experience.

In other words, it's like asking a person, "What is the creator of the world like?" And he says, "Well, I think he is like this." You can't get hold of any hard evidence on him. You can't get anybody who says, "Well, he did this and this and this and this and here it is, now you observe for yourself." Somehow, we can't get any information on the actions and words of our creator so that we can tell what He is like ourselves. All we do is, we face

opinions of other men and women. The tragedy is they're no different from ourselves.

Mohammad was no different from the rest of us. He died like an ordinary man. He himself didn't claim to perform any miracles at all. He didn't claim to be in any unique way related to the creator of the universe. It's the same with Buddha, the same with all the others like Zoroaster and Confucius. We're facing only men's personal opinions and ideas of what the Creator of the universe is like -- until you come to this book.

Full Talk: Is The Bible History or Myth by Ernest O'Neill