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**“This is exceptional reading — even funny at times . . . You needn’t buy the total Dawkins package to glory in his having the guts to lay out the evils religions can do. Bible-thumpers doubtless will declare they’ve found their Satan incarnate.”**

**☆— *Kirkus Reviews*, starred review ☆**

**PUBLICATION DATE: OCTOBER 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006**

*“The God Delusion is smart, compassionate, and true, like ice, like fire. If this book doesn’t change the world, we’re all screwed.” — Penn & Teller*

# The GOD Delusion

## Richard Dawkins

**A preeminent scientist and thinker asserts the irrationality of belief in God and the grievous harm religion has inflicted on society, from the Crusades to 9/11.**

*Discover* recently called Richard Dawkins “Darwin’s Rottweiler” for his ferocious and effective defense of evolution. The world’s foremost atheist and a world-renowned biologist, he is also brave enough to challenge the very premise of all religion. Dawkins’s critics call him hostile and confrontational, and many people wonder, What is he so angry about? Has religion, specifically Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, really done so much harm that we should actively oppose it? Well, yes. In his new book, **THE GOD DELUSION**, Dawkins examines, with wit, reason, and historical and contemporary evidence,

- **how religion fuels and justifies war**
- **how religion encourages bigotry and xenophobia**
- **how religion damages children’s intellectual development**

In so doing, he makes a compelling case that belief in God is not just irrational but incredibly harmful. In the past five years, we have witnessed the evils that men do in the name of God. Still, many religious people find it hard to imagine how, without religion, one can be good. Dawkins argues that our moral sense has a Darwinian origin, and he answers, “Do you really mean to tell me the only reason you try to be good is to gain God’s approval and reward or to avoid his disapproval and punishment? That’s not

morality, that's just sucking up." Further, and more seriously, Dawkins says, "Those who literally wish to base their morality on the Bible have either not read it or have not understood it."

But the details of the Bible aside, most people believe in God, don't they? Are they all wrong? A preeminent scientist, Dawkins respectfully deconstructs the arguments for God's existence. He examines the roots of religion as well, showing how belief in God and religious cults spring up and spread. In *THE GOD DELUSION*, Dawkins illuminates how Godlessness, rather than motivating meaninglessness, is inspirational. If all we have is now, we should be living life, every second of it, with a sense of joy and wonder. John Lennon once said, "Imagine a world with no religion," and in *THE GOD DELUSION*, Dawkins explains why it is essential that we do that — if we want to imagine all the world's people living in peace, anyway.

#### **About the Author:**

**Richard Dawkins** has taught zoology at the University of California at Berkeley and Oxford University, and he is now the Charles Simonyi Professor of the Public Understanding of Science at Oxford, a position he has held since 1995. The *Wall Street Journal* said his "passion is supported by an awe-inspiring literary craftsmanship." The *New York Times Book Review* has hailed him as a writer who "understands the issues so clearly that he forces his reader to understand them too." Among his previous books are *The Ancestor's Tale*, *The Selfish Gene*, *The Blind Watchmaker*, *Climbing Mount Improbable*, *Unweaving the Rainbow*, and *A Devil's Chaplain*. Dawkins lives in Oxford with his wife, the actress and artist Lalla Ward.

#### **About the Book:**

The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins

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"At last, one of the best nonfiction writers alive today has assembled his thoughts on religion into a characteristically elegant book. If you think that science is just another religion, that religion is about our higher values, or that scientists are just as dogmatic as believers, then read this book, and see if you can counter Dawkins's arguments. They are passionately stated and poetically expressed, but are rooted in reason and evidence."

— Steven Pinker, Johnstone Professor, Harvard University, and author of *The Language Instinct*, *How the Mind Works*, and *The Blank Slate*

"Oh, it's so refreshing, after being told all your life that it is virtuous to be full of faith, spirit, and superstition, to read such a resounding trumpet blast for truth instead. It feels like coming up for air." — Matt Ridley, author of *Genome* and *Francis Crick*

"Dawkins gives human sympathies and emotions their proper value, which is one of the things that lends his criticisms of religion such force. Many religious leaders today are men who, it's obvious to anyone but their deranged followers are willing to sanction vicious cruelty in the service of their faith. Dawkins hits them with all the power that reason can wield, demolishing their preposterous attempts to prove the existence of God, or their presumptuous claims that religion is the only basis of morality, or that their holy books are literally true." — Philip Pullman, author of the *His Dark Materials* trilogy

"This is a brave and important book. Is it too much to hope that it will dump religious bigotry in the dustbin of history, where it belongs?" — Desmond Morris, author of *The Naked Ape* and *The Human Animal*

“Richard Dawkins is the leading soothsayer of our time. Through his exploration of gene-based evolution of life, his work has had a profound effect on so much of our collective thinking, and **THE GOD DELUSION** continues his thought-provoking tradition.”

— J. Craig Venter, decoder of the human genome