

If one does not have 'sufficient evidence' to support the truth of a belief in the 'Perfect Being' God, what must one do? -- If there is 'significant evidence' that this God does not exist, what must one do?

***Skeptical Non-Theism** ('Agnosticism') asserts that one must 'suspend judgment' and one should not 'believe' (affirm, and act on the basis of the affirmation, that God exists.)

- Therefore, apparently, one must live "as if" there is no God.

***"Progressive" theists** sometimes redefine 'God' so that God may be believed in such a way that does not contradict evidence, and would be consistent with at least some evidence.

***'Fideists'** go ahead and believe in God irrespective of the lack of sufficient evidence or the existence of significant evidence that God does not exist.

But **William James**, in his classic essay **"The Will to Believe,"** held that it is *sometimes* rationally permissible (as well as personally desirable) to believe in something ***because you want to / choose to do so - based upon one's "passional nature."***

His requirements for such **"willed beliefs"** are:

1. It must be an issue where reason cannot decide one way or the other. Where there are good reasons / evidence both against and for acceptance of a belief. And for and against its denial.
= an **'Ambiguous' Issue**
2. Belief must be a **"Live Option."** It must be something that is psychologically possible for a person to believe.
3. Belief must be a **"Forced Option."** The circumstances must require that one make / live a choice one way or the other.
4. Belief must be a **"Momentous Option."** The belief, or lack of belief, must be of great importance – not a trivial issue.

James held that ***for some people belief in God is a live, forced, and momentous issue*** and that they have ***the right to believe / go on believing in God even though there is 'insufficient evidence.'***

But, what James termed **"willed belief"** would be **better termed "willed-hope."**

Action / living life based upon hope (living "as-if" that which is judged "possibly true" is actually the case) could be ***practically indistinguishable from action/ life lived upon belief*** (living "as-if" that which is judged "probably true" is actually the case.) This stance would constitute **'Skeptical Theism.'**