

EINSTEIN. Albert Einstein (1879 - 1955) was a German-born physicist. He is known for his theory of relativity, which was deemed the greatest feat of thinking about nature, the greatest scientific discovery ever made. **O**f interest to me are this great thinker's views on religion and ethics. By his own definition Einstein was deeply religious, though he deemed religious beliefs "childish superstitions, the product of human weakness." **H**e believed persons who are religiously enlightened are those who have liberated themselves from the fetters of desire; they are occupied with ethical thoughts, regardless of whether they believe in God. Then religion is the quest of humans to be conscious of righteous values. **E**instein did not believe in the God of religion: "If something is in me that can be called religious, then it is the unbounded admiration for the structure of the world so far as our sciences can reveal it."

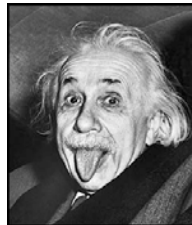
see also my blog 946 and the corresponding page in the Appendix

Einstein's beliefs are influenced by the thinking of philosophers of the Enlightenment, in particular the Portuguese/Dutch Baruch de Spinoza (1632 - 77). Spinoza contended that everything that exists in nature is one and there is only one set of rules.

He argued that God and nature are two names for the same reality - or energy - that underlies the universe. Spinoza's (and Einstein's) ethical doctrine is that the knowledge of - as well as the love for - God / Nature are dependent on reason and order.

Einstein's general theory of relativity describes the phenomenon of space/time curvature - which explains gravity - and foresaw that massive objects bend light, which enables scientists to measure the enormous distances of galaxies in the cosmos.

Relativity also confirms the existence of mysterious, invisible black holes. However, I must say, since I am not shocked by these matters (theory of relativity, quantum mechanics etc.) it means (according to physicist Niels Bohr) that I do not understand them.



HAWKING. It was Stephen Hawking (1942 - 2018) who led me to Albert Einstein. He was instrumental in my awakening to science. His book *A Brief History of Time* is on a very short list of my very favorite books. **N**ow it is followed by *Brief Answers to the Big Questions: Is there a God? Is there other intelligent life in the universe? Will artificial intelligence outsmart us? Will we survive on Earth? Should we colonise space?* **T**hese questions touch on the issues raised in my essay THE FUTURE 2.

see also COSMOS, EXISTENCE, FUNDAMENTAL ISSUE, THE FUTURE 2, WHY and go to my blog 909