

## A RELIGIOUS DEBATE TRIES TO WHITEWASH THE DANGER OF FAITH IN THE QUR'AN OR BIBLE

Based on the Hitchens vs Blair debate: Is Religion a Force for Good in the World?

Christopher Hitchens in his debate with the wily Tony Blair points out on page 40 that the Bible has caused a lot of bloodshed and war over its declaration that God gave Israel to the Jews and its their land and nobody else's. He also pointed out how the Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, called in archaeologists to help find evidence for the Bible's claims so that he could prove it belonged to Judaism. No evidence at all was found.

He pointed out that Muslims believe in holy lands that belong to them too and feel that if they let anybody have them they are letting God down.

Blair refused to deal with this and do what an honest person would do: admit that faith in the Bible is dangerous.

Blair says on page 49 that he does not to any degree claim that a person of faith is in any way better than a person without faith in terms of being good and doing good works. He says that religion however gives many people an impulse to do good that they would not have otherwise. A total contradiction! Its very judgemental and arrogant for him to claim that he knows they would not have otherwise done the good! Very insulting to atheists!

To those who say that people who are good would be equally inspired to do so by humanism or atheism, Blair replies that believers sense something bigger than themselves and that gives them humility (page 48). But that is not necessarily true! We all know very religious people whose arrogance is astonishing! And to avoid anger against God, the holy person has to give God permission and consent to do whatever he wants in the person's life - be it nice or be it horrendous. The person then manages to keep feeling in control - it is control to consent to God doing whatever he wills. The person reasons, "I will only make my life feel worse if I refuse to accept the things I cannot change." It is not about humility. What on earth would Blair know about humility?

Hitchens had pointed out earlier that there is a human need not to take all the credit for what we do. I'd say that if we fear making mistakes we will not want to be put on a pedestal by others. Hitchen's was pointing out that the human need inclines us to want to believe in a God who is the real doer of the good we do.

In his response, page 42, Blair says that Hitchens strongest argument that religion is bad is that the scriptures of a religion command harm in the name of divine authority. Blair's argument was that the scriptures were speaking of past circumstances and that the essence of scripture is love expressed through Jesus Christ. He then concludes by saying that the argument is difficult to answer but he thinks there is an answer to it.

Thinking there is an answer is not good enough. You need a clear and confident answer. Blair cannot expect people to accept his peaceable interpretation when its only his opinion. And to point to the good in the Bible only makes the book worse not better for then there is no excuse at all for the nasty bits. And Blair cannot give us any Bible verses to justify his interpretation. And if there is a God, there is no doubt he can have the right to tell us to liquidate another nation. If he has rights over life, then he can delegate that right to human beings.

And as for the essence of scripture being love as expressed through Jesus, the Old Testament - despite attempts to distort it - does not prepare for the coming of Jesus and it is not concerned about any Messiah or Christ never mind Jesus. And Jesus was abusive in Matthew 23 and called a suffering girl a dog. He never did anything normal to help the poor and the suffering. Like a rich man giving out of his abundance because it was easy for him and he had nothing to lose, Jesus only helped people with magic and miracles. Clearly its a case of a man who was useless socially and so the Church had to invent miracles about him to make him seem to be different from the temple-rioting sociopath he actually was. And we know today that punishment is not about helping the criminal or bad person but about teaching them new ways to do evil. Jesus endorsed punishment. He even spoke of eternal punishment. Blair is only taking advantage of the fact that many Christians know little about their godman Jesus and that they think he must have been wonderful.

Blair said that the scriptures were speaking of past circumstances and that the essence of scripture is love. If he means that the violence commanded by God in the Bible was justified and was loving for the circumstances were so extremely bad that violence became the only way to to treat them then he is just an evil person who holds that divine revelation endorsing violence is to be obeyed. The Israelites were told by God to keep away from the other nations surrounding them and they had to take God's word for it that they had to cruelly liquidate them. So the Israelites did not know if the corruption of the

other nations was bad enough to justify such an attack. And those Christians who bomb abortion clinics are influenced by scriptures such as those. In fact, what the Christians do makes more sense than say the Israelites slaughtering the Canaanites. At least its a direct attack against a perceived evil. And if Canaan was sacrificing children to its gods, what about the children slain during the war with Israel?

Blair's knowledge of the nastiness of the Bible and his willingness to desensitise us to it makes us ask if the Bible encouraged him in the unjust war against Iraq? Iraq was a non-Christian nation. Was that why he felt it was okay to attack it on the basis that it had weapons of mass destruction that it never had? His partner in war-mongering Bush the US President like Blair was also Christian ....

HITCHENS VS BLAIR, IS RELIGION A FORCE FOR GOOD IN THE WORLD? THE MUNK DEBATE, BLACK SWAN, LONDON, 2011

