

## BAN BLASPHEMY LAWS

Religion involves belief in supernatural powers and participating in behaviour that is considered sacred such as praying or going to a place of worship. The beliefs are considered sacred. Sacred means set apart. That entails refusing to debate the beliefs like they were any other kind of beliefs. Also insulting the beliefs is forbidden.

Blasphemy comes from two Greek words. The words are blaptain and peme (page 129, The Choice of Hercules, A C Grayling, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 2007). Blaptain means to damage. Peme means reputation. So if you are a Christian then anything that criticises God or the Bible he wrote is blasphemy. Telling God to fuck off is not really blasphemy. If you are a Muslim you will regard Christians as being blasphemers even if they do not realise it for they make Jesus out to be God while the Koran is stern in its teaching that there is only one God Allah and that Jesus Christ is not to be worshipped as God.

When accused of using Satan's power to cast out demons, Jesus retorted by saying this was a heinous blasphemy. In Matthew 12, he makes blasphemy the worst possible act or crime. It can only be that bad if it is suggesting that a teaching needs ridiculing or ridicules itself. Its about reminding you that some teachings deserve only reverence even if they are wrong! Not a line of the Bible says anything against condemning people or praising a God who condemns them when these people commit the crime of having the wrong beliefs. You must judge person by their deeds first and foremost. Beliefs are to be corrected and getting personal and judging must be kept out of it. Condemning holders of beliefs for their beliefs amounts to creating thought crimes.

Some define blasphemy as unintentionally insulting God's truth by saying it is wrong or doubtful.

Some define blasphemy as intentionally insulting it.

Some accept both definitions.

Those who want blasphemy laws to protect religious doctrine from criticism - even constructive criticism - are just bigots.

Mostly those who want blasphemy laws are trying to stop intentional and wanton insults directed at religious belief. This is a hazardous position to hold because you can accuse anybody who has proof or evidence that your religion is wrong and thus who you want to silence of intentionally insulting religion and get the accusation to stick. You can get the person fined or landed in jail.

What is blasphemy law supposed to protect?

Some say it is religious belief or faith.

Some say it is the religious community.

Some say it protects God and his truth.

Some say it is one or more of these.

It protects religious belief from being insulted or refuted. Blasphemy law cannot directly protect a religious community. It cannot be blasphemous for example to show that a priest has committed child sexual abuse even though proving this tarnishes a whole group and may lead to violence against it. The religious community should have the same protections as other parts of the wider community have anyway. Blasphemy law can only protect it indirectly by protecting its beliefs. But blasphemy law is not about protecting the religious community. Many for their own ends try to make out it that it is.

Blasphemy is a victimless crime. To prosecute or punish blasphemers is simply caving into the desire many religions have to persecute critics. Those who talk about blasphemy attacking the deepest beliefs of others are confusing insult God with insulting people. Insulting people's belief is not the same as blasphemy.

Honour yourself by having the courage to blaspheme!

Ideas such as that God has the right to bully us by laying down laws to control us are harmful affirmations and they can only be burnt out by blasphemously laughing at them. Turn them into a source of amusement, make them good for something!

Laugh at adverts and beliefs that tell you that you are not good enough unless you sign up to something or buy something. That takes away any power they can get over you.

Mediums have been prosecuted by the state for blasphemously claiming to be able to talk to the dead. People have been put to death in Muslim countries for expressing their critical thoughts about Islam and thereby blasphemously questioning the truthfulness of Islam. The Roman Catholic Church butchered millions for the blasphemies of witchcraft and heresy.

What is sacred to one religion is blasphemy to another. Examples follow.

Islam blasphemes Christianity by saying Jesus was a prophet and not God.

Christianity blasphemes Allah, the God of Islam, by saying that Jesus was God. It says that he was an ordinary man and was also God. That is a contradiction for it follows that as God Jesus had all power and thus his vulnerability was fake. The Church says it cannot understand how the nature of God and the nature of man could make one person as in Jesus. What we really have here is a Church pretending that a man is God. And though it says the worship of the Eucharist would be idolatry if the bread and wine do not turn into Jesus, it worships them as God. It is admitting that it is potential idolatry if not actual. Islam is very stern in teaching that no such risk can be taken without offering an insult to God.

Christianity blasphemes the Muslim Prophet Muhammad by denying that he was a prophet of God and so that he was at best deluded and by calling him a sinner.

The Roman Catholic idea that the Mass is the same sacrifice as the Cross of Jesus and that the bread and wine are turned into Jesus himself to be eaten and drunk and rotted is extremely offensive to Christians. If bread becoming Jesus isn't blasphemous then shit becoming Jesus can't be blasphemous either. The Church praises the humility of Jesus in becoming like bread so he must be more humble if he becomes like shit. The Church blurs the difference between humility and humiliation for its purposes.

Christians find the Catholic adoration of Mary very insulting to the role of Jesus Christ as saviour and God.

Blasphemy laws conflict with the right of freedom of speech. The Church has used them to prevent anybody finding out that its doctrines are deceitful or from telling anybody that they are. It is what you would expect when a religion is man-made and wants to masquerade as the voice and authorised representative of an unerring God. It has to hide its man-made origins.

God cannot be harmed by blasphemy if he is omnipotent. If God is attractive as religion says, it follows that people don't insult or mock him but a caricature of him. Religion nevertheless has it in its Bibles that blasphemy must be punished by the Law. Under the Law of God given through Moses the penalty for blasphemy was a cruel death to be administered by God's people. The Bible which Jesus supposedly wrote says that blasphemers are to be put to death and that this is a divine command. If you are Christian and would not persecute or jail blasphemers, you will still agree with God having made those laws in days gone by. You are making the evil of those laws part of you. The evil is no less real because it is just internalised. If you were in those times you would persecute blasphemers. It is in you, in your heart.

Religion wants blasphemers punished though religion can provide no evidence that its doctrines are true and sacred and worth punishing blasphemers for. People you can see come before a God you cannot see or prove.

As long as blasphemy remains an offence, a country cannot be considered to comprehend or fully value human rights. Religion says blasphemy is wrong. In theory, the Law can outlaw whatever it chooses as long as the action is wrong. To condemn blasphemy is to confess the Law has the right to punish blasphemy if it decides to and to make anti-blasphemy laws. Religion is dangerous.

Belief in God blasphemes the dignity of humanity. What about that for blasphemy? The believer when faced with somebody who is enduring the worst life can offer has some routes to take. He can say, "Evil is not a thing or a power. It is just good falling short of what it should be. God is not entitled to give us any more good than he gives." That implies that the suffering should be praised and compassion is bad. It also suggests that instead of being horrified about the evil, we should be focusing on the good in it. He can say that suffering is somehow good or worthwhile and indeed must be when God allows it to happen and makes the forces that cause us such pain. This implies that the person either deserves to suffer, needs to be hurt so that other people may grow spiritually by helping him, or both. It calls evil good. Even if you say that we have free will and God lets us do evil that does no good at all, you are still saying the evil should have been permitted to happen. It happened for the good purpose of respecting free will. If a mother let a criminal hurt her child to respect his free will we would condemn her. We would say she was evil for putting the will of the criminal before her own and the will of the child to be cared for. It seems she could only be justified for a real good purpose that made the suffering worthwhile so

that takes us back to the idea that God allows evil to produce a greater good. Why should my will to harm be put before the will of the victim to be safe? Again it can only be justified if God has a plan for my evil and is sure he can put it into effect.

A person who fails to doubt God or deny God's existence when he or she sees terrible suffering is a person who is refusing to let the horror destroy what he or she believes. To say, "Your suffering is not as bad as it looks because there is a God or may be one and we want it to stop" shows less compassion than, "If there is no God then your suffering is totally abhorrent and useless and we want it to stop." Compassion starts by acknowledging how much the person is suffering or how bad it is. The unbeliever in God who thinks there is only this life, is being far more sacrificial than a believer who believes God has a plan and evil will turn to good that makes his allowing it to happen more worthwhile. The unbeliever admits how evil it is and fights it despite not expecting a reward.

Without belief in God, there is no condoning even to the slightest degree. With belief in God there has to be some condoning. An evil person assumes a murderer had justification for what they did. Christians assume the same about their God so God is an evil dangerous filthy belief. Christians should suffer the extremes of sacrifice for others if they want to have the right to condone, to any level, suffering.

How can Christians stoop so low as to adopt belief in an all-powerful and all-good God in the face of suffering? They like to feel safe and chosen. They are being insensitive to the suffering that others face to obtain that comfort for themselves. They are arrogantly thinking they are better than the victims for they are okay or that God considers them more precious and won't hurt them or at least hurt them very much. They think the good things they have are part of God's plan while others have to suffer as part of the plan. There is something disgusting about that attitude.

Secularism ignores religion and supernatural beliefs and so it refuses to enforce them or encourage them or punish those who insult them. Religion and supernatural beliefs give people more stuff to be offended by and that is bad in itself. If people want faith, the faith should only contain beliefs and attitudes and ethics that mean minimal or no harm is done should the faith prove to be false.

Blasphemy is usually defined as speaking disparagingly against the sacred. Sometimes it is defined as insulting the religious beliefs of others. Sometimes both. Jesus said we must love God with all our powers and this is the most important commandment. Loving neighbour is only second runner up. Clearly religion has to accept the definition that blasphemy is speaking disparagingly against the sacred. Insulting the believers by insulting their beliefs is not as important. To accept the definition indicates that blasphemy law should only protect one religion and not the rest. That is because what is blasphemy to one faith is sacred to another and the law will soon become unworkable if all religions start to initiate legal campaigns against blasphemers.

The onus of proof is on the offended believer to prove that they really believe. You can't accuse someone of offending your belief unless you show that you really believe first. That will require a lot of evidence and require you to be able to defend your faith eloquently and reasonably. And the problem is that if you persecute or punish somebody for insulting your faith, you are acting like somebody that is insecure in her convictions. So proving the offended person who wants to put you in jail for offending them is sincere or sincere enough is not easy. It is not workable. And when religious people get some beliefs protected by civil law they soon add more beliefs in that they want protected.

Blasphemy laws are about protecting religious belief from criticism. That is a dangerous course for any nation to take. Belief by itself does not deserve protection and should be able to stand up for itself. And once you do away with freedom of inquiry, you end up doing away with belief. Only free inquiry and thinking for yourself helps you see what you should accept to be true. If faith needs protecting from free thinkers, that means that if it commands that they be murdered then we have no way of thinking clearly for ourselves to see that that would be wrong. Religions trying to get the law to punish those who question their beliefs or who laugh at them will only encourage blasphemy. People who are told not to blaspheme will do it quicker for the sake of free speech.

Most Catholics, including Pope Francis, in the wake of the Charlie Hebdo atrocity, where Islamists murdered journalists in France for insulting Islam, stated that the attacks were not wholly unexpected and were not wholly unprovoked. They say that the magazine insulted the religious beliefs of others and that this was intolerant hate speech and that you do not have the right to deride and belittle the religious beliefs of others. They say that those who defended the magazine did so in the name of freedom of speech and democracy but that they are hypocrites for they deny a right to verbally abuse another's race, family or sexuality. They call for more stringent blasphemy laws.

So they would have the magazine shut down by the civil authorities for blasphemy while nothing is done about those who are ready to kill whoever insults their beliefs? They do not consider it blasphemous to adore a murderous God.

So they imply the French journalists who were murdered were not wholly innocent and partly deserved and asked for what they got. Even if the Catholics believe the murders were wrong they are still saying the journalists fully asked for it. So do

the Catholics mean it when the blame lies partly with the journalists? Not if they asked for it! To say that they asked to some degree to be murdered shows the true colours of the Catholics. And if Catholics are asked to stop working against Islam by teaching Catholicism, they won't be saying, "It wasn't entirely unprovoked" when Catholic teachers lie dead at the feet of the terrorists.

So they try to make out that insulting somebody's religion is in the same league as insulting their race or family or sexuality? But practicing religion is a choice. It is not the same thing. And religion is belief. Belief is not on the same level as race or family or sexuality. Belief should not be protected but people should. There is a difference.

So they say that there is a slight excuse for murdering you when you blaspheme religious beliefs. That is sick considering that no belief is that important. The lowest of the low makes a slight or any other kind of excuse when somebody is killed for blaspheming because religious beliefs are merely guesses and assumptions. A religious belief is not in the same league as a belief that antibiotics help you get better from bacterial illnesses or any other kind of well established belief. Because there is no reality check, you have Mormons saying God is a man, Catholics saying he is a Spirit and Muslims saying he is a psycho and Hindus saying that nothing about God can be known so we have to make do with symbols and idols. No decent person would silence another for challenging or ridiculing a religious belief even if they would if the person was saying 2 and 2 were 5 or asserting something else that is clearly untrue.

So they deny that there is no excuse for somebody being so dedicated to their beliefs that they would kill those who lampoon or debunk them.

If blasphemy is bad, then there are worse forms of it than others. In the Catholic world, you will get more hate and demands for the law to penalise you for insulting the Virgin Mary than you will God. In the Muslim world, saying Allah is evil is treated as preferable to saying Muhammad was just a misguided man who imagined he was a prophet. But reason says that the biggest blasphemy is accusing God of neglecting those innocents who suffer and of being the type of tyrant who urges us to be hypocrites who condone and even praise his evil as good. This form of blasphemy is often ignored. Yet if that should be ignored then all blasphemies should be ignored. Even Stephen Fry got away with it in Ireland in 2015 where blasphemy is illegal, when he called God evil on Irish Television. Blasphemy laws are really often just tools for political manipulation. They are often unjust in practice and not just in principle.

What if somebody says in public that God is a bastard for standing by and not helping sick babies? Having anybody prosecuted for blasphemy against God would amount to banning somebody having such a strong sympathy for suffering people that they get enraged against God! That would be sick. But belief in God and the wrongness of blasphemy says he should indeed be prosecuted and treated as a filthy criminal. It is the principle. Belief in God should be discarded for principles are latent evil when they are wrong but they are still evil and paving the way for people to suffer.

That the question, "Should people be punished for saying certain things against religion?" comes up is disturbing. It shows lack of respect for freedom of speech. What would you think of a person who sees a little dog on the street who says, "Should that dog be burned to death?"

Even asking if blasphemy should be banned suggests that you are open to persecuting those who say things against religious doctrine that you object to. It is a violation of secularism.

Some feel that blaspheming Islam or Muhammad is irresponsible as it can result in some Muslims baying for blood and actually killing the blasphemers. But sadly, if we suspect people are addicted to God or Islam or faith or any religion, we cannot know how dangerous this is unless we provoke them. We have to know. If a religion is essentially fanatical but does no harm for it feels no need to, that is only fine until it does need to!

Deism is the notion that apart from giving us reason, God gives us no means to work out if he probably or actually exists. It denies that he appoints prophets to speak for him. It denies that Jesus really is the revelation of God. Deism always accused Christianity of blasphemy for saying God said what he didn't say. It always accused Christianity of blasphemously saying God commanded wars and battles and executions in the Bible. There is no doubt that the Bible and the Koran and the Book of Mormon (which speaks of the Holy Spirit commanding a murder in order that a group of people could steal brass plates with scriptures on them) are indeed blasphemous. The Bible God threatened Israel with retribution if it failed to keep all his commands which included the law that certain sinners such as heretics and false prophets and fortune tellers and homosexuals must be tortured to death by stoning. Jesus demanded devotion to its version of God and claimed to be his only Son. He claimed that those who sin risk eternal torture in Hell forever. Christians say that the torture there is self-inflicted but not a word of the Bible so much as hints at that. It is God's torture chamber for the Bible clearly teaches that God is okay with torture as long as you act on his orders.

Blasphemy is related to sacrilege. Sacrilege is like blasphemy that is done rather than spoken. It leads to the disgraceful situation where say Christians get "hurt" and "outraged" over an attack on their Church as if that matters more than the poor

old lady's house being vandalised. An attack on a Church is vilified as an attack on the religious community while an old person living in the locality getting beaten up gets less rage and less attention.

Blasphemy needs to be abolished. Blasphemy needs to be normalised because that is the only thing that gets rid of blasphemy laws once and for all. There is a difference between CONSTRUCTIVE blasphemy and blasphemy for the hell of it. The way to tell the difference is to ask, "Will the believer be led to see the horror of their position by what I say?" and come up with yes.

#### BLASPHEMY LAW COMMENT

<http://freethinker.co.uk/2015/08/09/uae-enacts-stealth-blasphemy-law/>

Current Catholic teaching is that there is a civil right to worship as you please but there is no moral right to do so. So the law should let you worship pagan gods as long as you are not creating civil unrest. But that does not mean any morally minded person or God has to agree with it. No it is their duty to try and get you to rethink. The Church however does agree with blasphemy law but only against the Catholic Church. The idea that a law protecting a false God from being insulted is unjust for it is not real and while the worshipper's feelings are a concern it has to be handled differently from the feelings of a Catholic worshipper. A Protestant Church then in the Catholic eyes can only be blasphemed if it is an attack on a doctrine shared with the Catholic Church.

The secular state needs to see religion not as a possible revelation from God but something man says is a revelation. It is to be regarded as no more sacred than somebody's devotion to a television programme. God's role in revelation is irrelevant for you are still taking man's word for it.

Until each nation treats religious opinions as merely human opinions, the door to blasphemy laws coming in will always be open. Blasphemy is really about refusing to let people realise it if a religion is man-made nonsense.

Once a state makes a blasphemy law, it becomes a theocracy even if the rest of its principles are secular. Secular principles founded upon religious opposition to freedom of belief and the right to criticise religion only overlap secularism. They look secular but they are not. Think of the principle. Freedom of inquiry is no freedom at all if there are limits. You cannot trust anything unless you get freedom of thought.

The trouble with blasphemy laws is that if pompous and smug man is pretending to channel God's word then the more blasphemy there is the better.