

IS CHALLENGING RELIGIOUS FAITH CRUEL?

Religion is not the only thing people have faith in. Yet it seeks special protection and even some atheists enable this unfairness usually on the grounds of "tolerance". We challenge faith all the time just not religious faith. Faith is faith and we should challenge religious faith.

There are far more immediate and urgent matters than how somebody feels about their place in the universe with God and what will happen to them after death. You don't look for a crutch with more urgent and serious matters such as your child's cancer battle. A crutch is not needed or looked for in the biggest things.

If somebody has horrible side-effects from their tablets and they are still better off taking them, you do not encourage them to have faith that going off them will be for the best.

If a child is dying you do not encourage the parents to have faith that she is going to live.

If somebody needs to believe that they own property when they do not, you have to tell them.

When people of faith, seem to be helped by that faith we must remember that there is more to their faith than just religious faith. Faith is complex and consists of many faiths. Nobody has faith strictly speaking. What you have is faiths. You have faith that you will go to Barcelona in the autumn, that your kid will go to school this year, that there won't be a global nuclear war. Thus to challenge religious faith is not to challenge the rest of the faiths that a person has. The person still has plenty of crutches if you could take away the religious one.

Religious people are just bigots when they have faiths not faith and are so over-protective of their religious faith. If you intend to challenge their religious faith, you will find it helpful to help them to see how little religious faith matters to them when they think about it carefully. They need to see that it is only a small part of their faith setup.

Religious people by their manner and the way they behave and talk, forestall attempts to debate religion with them or attempts to invite them to rethink their doctrines.

The dictionary defines a bigot as an obstinate person meaning one who does not welcome hearing his faith being challenged.

The religious person has others thinking, "I will not say anything that questions what he or she believes as he or she will not thank me for it. They might complain that I have taken their faith away or tried to. They may resent me for asking them to rethink something that is important to them in terms of comfort."

When people feel that religion should be challenged and especially when its a dangerous form of religion and say nothing for the sake of peace, they are showing how they think religious people are vicious and stubborn bigots who want to stay ignorant. That is no way to promote peace and harmony. It shows you think that if you rock the boat at all they will throw off their robes of charm and holiness and show their true colours.

The impressionable religious people could end up feeling that they have to be bigots to be true servants of their religion. Anything that encourages them to put faith before truth is giving them that message.

If a believer is afraid of the way the world is going, the believer can be very insecure if his religion is challenged by those who disagree with it. This person is using the faith to cope with the fears that changes bring. The person may use religious faith to cope with sickness or the fear of death or to feel that he or she has a friend in God. A crutch is little help if it is so fragile. It is better if it breaks.

If your faith in what you call the one true faith is a crutch then you are going to by default oppose other faiths. You accuse people in other religions of being in bad faith or of not being good enough to make a crutch as good as yours or as correct.

When religious faith has meaning for a person chiefly because it helps the person feel less alone, that is an indication that the person is dissatisfied with his or her relationships and friends and needs to believe in a God that suits him so that the needs are fulfilled better. The person may be a bit of sociopath and will turn vicious if his crutch is challenged. That would be the kind of person who would describe an activist for atheism as a disgrace or fitted only for everlasting damnation.

The religionist who listens to the person who tells her why she should wean herself away from religion may say, "I regret that you are taking my faith away from me." But nobody ever can take one's faith away. We never ever change anybody's minds. We give them the tools so that they will do it themselves.

Religions that love to display their good works tend to attract the people looking for a crutch the best. The crutch seekers feel uplifted by seeing the good works.

People want to believe in something that can make life okay or bearable in times of trouble. That's what's attractive about believing in God.

What helps is belief. Many say the power of religion is not in the power of God but in the power of belief. Belief is your creation, your self-empowerment. So it's not God that helps but belief in God. But why does the belief need to be in God? Why not believe in your power to find strength within, a strength that is all your own? That would be better and more effective.

To talk about belief in belief is to talk about belief as a crutch. To say, as Jesus did, that there is a God who deserves all our love is to say that God matters even more than belief in him does. He matters more than any belief. So it's a sin for a Christian to advocate belief in belief. Belief in belief really translates as, "Belief is desirable and beneficial. It matters not what you believe as long as you like the belief. To hell with anybody who says you must try to believe only what God approves of or you must believe only what the evidence supports."

One thing for sure is that it is not right to manipulate people to think they need belief in God when this belief is really a hidden form of belief in themselves.

The Roman Catholic Church, as a faith, has deceived the people and especially the poorest and most vulnerable members of society. There is no such thing as a good Catholic. No. What is called a good Catholic is a good human being who has the Catholic label. The point is that it is people who are good - not religions. It is people who make up charities that look after the poor not charities. Same principle!

Members of religion tend to do what they like until they get older and realise that death is a possibility and then they get religious. Religion thrives on exploitation of the vulnerable.

When people accept a religion without having investigated it carefully and well, that is a sign they are using it as a crutch. They use it to indulge their laziness instead of the painful and difficult task of checking things out.

If you are in your religion just because it is there, you are using it as a crutch. That is laziness.

To take your child and influence or brainwash her into religion and into adopting it as a crutch is child-abuse. It is trying to create a form of addiction in the child. The child could end up scared of other religions in case they challenge her crutch. The child will be damaged by the manipulative tactics you have deployed so shamelessly. What if the child would not need the crutch? You have given her a crutch she does not need and made her think she needs it! How cruel! What if the child could get a better crutch?

If it is okay for you to have your religious crutch, it is certainly not okay for you to have your child needing and using a similar crutch.

I find the following method of making life bearable and more enjoyable extremely effective. The person you are most interested in is yourself. Therefore if you make the habit of recording your day in detail in a diary and putting in times and the most mundane things you are making sure you will remember the good in that day. You will be able to look back at the bad and good later with fascination. It makes the bad less bad because you know that reading about it and the lessons in it will bring you enjoyment and wisdom. When you experience something bad you can say that in years to come you will still be able to look back on it and want to. It will console you and make you more determined to live a happier and more fulfilling life. Great suffering can be waiting for you around the corner - all you can do is get through it without making it worse. If God is what gives your life meaning then surely you crave being with him? Thus your suffering will only be worsened by belief in God. The more you suffer the more you will want him and to be with him.

We all have the feeling that we will be okay at some point in the future. We all have that crutch in common unless we suffer depression or something. This is not a religious crutch though the person might mistake it for a religious sentiment. Challenging that person's religious dogma then is not the same as challenging his or her crutch.

Challenging religion is a good deed not a bad one. It is patronising to assume the person needs their faith as if they cannot

rely on themselves.

