

FEINBERG ON COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

EXPLAINING HOW A RELIGION AS A WHOLE CAN BE MADE ACCOUNTABLE FOR THE ACTIONS OF A FEW FAITH TERRORISTS

If some members of your religion wage religious terror -

- You simply have the right to walk away so that you dissociate yourself
- The religion is to blame if it has no prayer power to fix people or inspire people
- Blaming the perpetrator is never enough
- The religion forgives too easily prodigal son style
- The religion is more interested in membership rolls, money, outward religion such as initiation and baptism etc and thus embraces the bad as members
- Uses the "we are not all bad" as if that helps for most terrorists are normal and nice

Feinberg also argues that a group of people may share "the same fault, but only one member's fault lead to harm, and that not because it was more of a fault." He gives an example. The people at a party play the game of shooting guns within city limits. One person's bullet hits and kills another person. Feinberg maintains that liability distributes to the group and that we are all guilty of such conduct. I become guilty for the harm caused by another because I engaged in the same conduct, even though it did not result in harm to anyone. In fact, this example fails ...even though all of the party-goers are in fact guilty of the same conduct, it does not follow in the least that we are all guilty of the same crime—manslaughter or murder, in this case. This model can, at most, justify making us guilty for approving of the same conduct by engaging in the same conduct.... By engaging in the same conduct, somehow I endorse the acts of others and in so doing, supposedly become guilty of their acts. However, I am not guilty to the same extent as someone who commits a more culpable act. No, I am guilty for what others do, but for what I do as a member of the group. Further, it seems to me that saying I am guilty for the conduct of the group ... becomes superfluous in this model because I am guilty by virtue of the conduct I choose to engage in, even if it is the same conduct. If you hit Bob in the face, and I hit Ted in the face, I am guilty of hitting someone in the face, but not for hitting Bob. I am guilty because I did what I did, not because my act was the same as yours.

COMMENT: True but I am still telling Bob I'd hit him if he were Ted. And for me to decide I can hit Ted means I am deciding that Bob may be hit too even if by somebody else. The point is what I have become more than what I do. You and me are in the set of thumpers. We become a set. We become a unit. I endorse the bad side of humankind that does such things. I ratify his own evil in a sense and make it my own.

I am doing two things: one is I am practically as good as approving his evil act. Two is I am ratifying human nature as shown by him to be dangerous - I endorse his corruption and give a bad example and all to reflect that.

With collective responsibility, I must think of two types. Collective moral responsibility which is happening here. And collective legal/civil responsibility. If I hire a worker in my care home who has a history of hitting vulnerable people and he hits my inmates I am to blame but I cannot be sent to jail for hitting them. He did the hitting. That does not make me better or worse than him. Morally it makes me worse for it showed no respect for myself or him or the people in the home.

There is something noble about legally and in every way cutting from a system of faith - not the people for that is different - over what harm some members do. And even more so if the harm is murder. If you leave the Church of Mumbo over terrorism you can still be friends with the Mumboists. Polarisation is not an option and does not help. You are quitting to avoid polarisation and to make a point.