

## Keith Ward: IS RELIGION IRRATIONAL?

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Despite the outrageous claims of every religion we have the likes of Keith Ward in this book assuming that religion is rational. Rational disagreement happens but not in polar opposites. If there is one right religion it follows that the rest are based on rationalising. Why is he so confident that there is such a thing as rational religion? We will look at what he says in the light of prayer for if there is one good way to describe a religion it is that the religion is a prayer system. Even accepting the doctrines is saying, "God I believe what you have revealed."

Reason says that if God is good then he will do what is best whether we ask him or not. Ward however says that prayer changes the conditions God takes into account before doing what is best (page 128). For example, John won't pray and thus won't develop a loving relationship with God. God will not give John good health because John will not use it to get closer to God and become a saintly person. If John opens his heart to virtue he will make the circumstances right for his prayer to be answered.

This means that the best God will do will not be as good as what he can and will do if John will pray. This makes prayer magical. One brief prayer by John that he forgets seconds later makes all the difference. God cannot or will not do the best unless the prayer happens. Why should prayer be more important than the help John needs? The superstition is evident.

Let us ponder more on this. Suppose prayer, regardless of how short or half-hearted it is, creates a condition for God to help.

### Scenario 1

Martha needs to be sent a good doctor to help her cancer

Martha prays

She gets sicker and dies horribly.

GOD DOES NOT HELP

### Scenario 2

Martha needs to be sent a good doctor to help her cancer

Martha does not pray.

She gets better.

GOD HELPS HER

So if she prays and good happens after it is treated as an example of the power of prayer. But why can't Scenario 2 be seen as God helping her without prayer or perhaps because she didn't pray? Its all brainwashing and using the vulnerable to do it.

Consider the two scenarios. God could help her whether asked or not. It is vile to suggest that in a matter so grievous that being asked matters especially when God helps people who don't ask. Even if he was not asked, he is boss and does not need to be asked.

If praying is made a condition for helping her, that is denying the fact that all that matters is that she needs help. That shows absence of real compassion. What would you think of a doctor who will not help a patient unless the patient sings a song for him? What would that say about his approach?

Ward's notion leads to superstition. If God can make prayers a condition before he will help, then the way is opened up for people to claim, "God will not consider curing you unless you say this prayer here. Or unless you go to Mass three times". It's rationalises magic and superstition.

Prayer is more a basic thing than religion is. If prayer is irrational then religion simply has to be irrational.