

The "Not all Bad" Excuse when Religion does Harm

Smoking causes cancer. Most smokers do not get cancer. That does not at all indicate that smoking is not to blame. Most people in a religion may not turn into dangerous fanatics but that does not negate the fact that their faith leads to danger and is the key to danger. In this view, we oppose religious belief severely but do it for we value the dignity of those swept up into the belief.

If religion is seen as a collection of religious people then it is saying they are linked. The link has to be real. This means they cannot take credit for the good the religion does without taking credit for the bad as well. So the evil others do reflects on you though you are not the one doing it. You claim the good in human nature as your own in the sense that even if you are completely bad you still are part of a nature of which better is expected and possible. If human nature were evil it would still be good in the sense that it has the power to do good. You are the bad person because others are good and can be good. So human nature makes a link. It is there whether you are bad or good. So as regards this human nature link a religious person is linked to what anybody else does regardless of the other being religious or not.

If human nature is inherently religious and the non-religious are religious but blind to it then the human nature link is a religious one.

So whatever there is a link anyway.

Religion in a generalised way makes a link even between polarised religions. The acts of say a Christian or Hindu reflect on their religious polar opposites. Don't confuse this with the assertion that human nature is religious inherently.

Specific religion such as Christian or Mormon or Muslim creates another link within each ideology.

So for that reason you cannot use the good deeds of some or many to make a case that they are the religion in its ideal state meaning the religion is good in itself.

As a religion cannot expect everybody who claims to belong to it to be truly converted, it is better for a religion to be virtually continental and be bothered with too many nominal members than for it to be sparse in the world with a devoted membership. For that reason, nominal members are as much the problem as the devoted if the religion is bad. Sometimes they are the biggest problem for if there are no nominal members in Xland then there is little chance of any harmful devoted followers appearing. If there are then they will appear significantly.

Religion as in religious community or belief system are related but they are still separate things. When a religion is condemned as faith too many start ignoring the harmfulness of the faith and start talking about the good and nice people who are in the religious community. Religion is not community and more than just a community.

The "They are not all bad" excuse when religion does harm makes people in a religion and out feel that harm is fine as long as only a few of the faithful under discussion do it. It motivates the terrorists. The terrorists act in the name of everybody else in the religion and believe that those other believers must assume part of the responsibility. That makes the terrorist feel not alone - that feeling alone is all the support they need!

And the point is not that some people in a group are okay, the question is: could there be anything in their belief system that makes some people bad? Should there be more bad in it? Only the fruits can tell. So it is not a numbers game. It is bad and indirectly in some way sanctioning bad to pretend that it is.

Most people do not engage in violence and rabid hate and are okay as people that is why the good done by religious people should be considered normal not religious. This means the criteria of a good religion is, "There

must be a remarkable lack of violence and rabid hate in the religion.” A religion then must want other communities and religions to do bad so that it can look good so that you have something to compare it to.

The perception that religion leads to violence as religion though many members are still good people for they are not involved is a popular one. Though religion makes a core thing out of it that it is right it knows that it is not enough to make a religion or anything something that should be supported or encouraged. Do you encourage heavy alcohol sessions just because some people are good and good fun when they get a lot and suffer no major harm?

Today there is a problem with Islam. The politically correct hypocrites make out that Islam is not at fault for terrorism are ignoring the fact that it is as possible for a religion to be at fault for having one terrorist never mind hundreds. It is not a numbers game and it is callous to make it one. They find themselves forced to refuse to admit that any religion is at fault. Thus they declares the right or worse that there is an obligation to say one religion is as good as another. This is intolerant. It is intolerant of the truth and that is worse than being intolerant of anything else. There must be truth before there can be justice. And many religions claim to offer salvation in ways that others cannot. A religion does have the right to claim to be the only way to God.

The good done by people cannot be used to compensate for the evil the religion they freely stay and and pray in and give money to has done. They degrade their good if they see it as making the bad okay or even tolerable or forgiveable. We should do good because we are human and not because we are religious.

Religion is a community built on a supernatural belief system. A belief system that is a community is to admit a share of the blame when some members do harm. And so is one made up of individuals. The system permits individuals to be individuals which amounts to permitting them to do harm.

The argument that when harm is done in the name of a religion is, “That is the individual not the religion!” The argument does not apply if the religion claims to be or acts as a grouping of individuals. But you cannot blame a cricket club in any way for what some members do. True but you can if it will not apologise as if it were to blame. Religion never would apologise. As organised religion is given more support or value than people need it to have. Nobody dies of having no Church – being a religionist is no help when there is no food in the world. So religion is not the same as a cricket club. One is needed and the other is not. When individuals create a social structure that is not needed or one that exaggerates its value they make the argument inapplicable to them.

If a religion claims to be a family that means it is claiming a power to make people a certain way by nature or nurture so it has to take some of the blame for what a member does. Families feel responsible and should.

The argument that a religion is good because not all members are fanatics or dangerous is rubbish for there is no such thing as a community that can be all bad and a bad community needs to be good enough to stay in existence. It is irresponsible rubbish and if you have to swallow it in order to follow religion then religion is not really good.

The notion that religion is good or a type of religion is leads to people who burn Bibles and Korans being blamed for any violent retaliation from Christians or Muslims. The burners are blamed for any murders.

Let us choose a religion as an example. Our example could be Christianity too which leads to Bible inspired violence as per the actions of Mugabe. But let us use Islam. You cannot really say that the problems in Islam are not an *excuse* for hating all Muslims. That is not helpful for the simple reason that not all that hate all Muslims are using the bad deeds of Muslims as an excuse. They are making the *mistake* of tarring all with the same brush. To accuse people who may be mistaken of using an excuse for hating is quite vicious.

When a religion speaks about its members doing violence it should say, "We have done this" not, “They have done this.” You cannot say, "We have done this" when you are talking about others doing good and refuse to take corporate or collective responsibility for the bad they do. You would be an unfair hypocrite if you do that. They say religion is corporate and collective responsibility to a God and his alleged revelations and then have the nerve to disconnect themselves from what embarrassing members do and say and enable.. Corporate unity be it in community or faith [and especially with faith community for it claims there is a God connection and grace connection between the members so it is “more” of a community than a mere human one] brings corporate

responsibility. You do not get out of being guilty for the murder committed in the name of religion by another person in your religion by the mere fact that somebody else did it. True you are not to be jailed or anything but you have to answer for being in a religion that supposedly has power to help man rise above natural evil tendencies and which fails. It is ridiculous to condemn a religion as bad only if too many in it are bad for one bad member is too many.. You cannot look at violence in a religion and say the violent are aberrant believers. Why not? Because what you should check is if the religion is an aberration itself first. Converts tend to know the religion better and care about it more than those born into it. Thus too many dangerous converts to a religion is a sure sign that there is something harmful and a bad influence in the religion's faith system.

A puzzle!

It is easy for commenters to say, "There are harmful variants of Islam and Christianity—specifically the rigid fundamentalist versions." While it is true that Quran commands and revels in violence and enables violence by not saying, "Love your enemy as yourself" it is surprising that no Christian group today uses the vicious laws of God given in the Bible to the same extent that Isis uses the pro-violence commands of Allah in the Koran. Why do many Islamists carry out the murderous directives of God in the Koran while the even crueller and more detailed horrors commanded by God in the Bible which even Jesus hailed as divinely inspired get ignored by Christians? Every religious extremist starts off nice and indeed the extremist might reason, "Maybe I am going too far but there are so many wonderful people in my religion so it is not all bad for we are not all bad." The not all bad excuse is part of the reason why religion is bad.

Christianity says the humanist view that human nature is basically good was definitively refuted by the Nazi Holocaust. Read between the lines. This is a rejection of the “some not all” logic. The faith condemns itself!

What does the excuse mean?

Some say that when a religion does harm that it is not all bad meaning that it has good teachings and/or produces good people.

Some argue that even if you cannot show a religion really made somebody good you can say the religion is not all bad for there are some good people like this one in it. Sorry that will not do. A religion needs to be able to produce some good people otherwise it is nothing. Good people just being in a religion have nothing to do with making the religion in any way good or partly good.

If a religion does not produce good people, then the good people in it is irrelevant. Why? Because their goodness belongs to them as good people and is independent of their faith and religion. They were going to be good anyway. If the excuse refers exclusively or mainly to the goodness of religious teaching, you end up looking ridiculous and arrogantly insulting by saying that that the Jehovah's Witnesses who kill children through banning blood transfusions are as good as the Quakers who do nothing harmful. You end up condoning religious evil unless you are only applying the excuse to one or some religions but not all.

If man creates religion so that he can be good, how good is he? A really good person does not need a prop and cannot use one. Religion then cannot be really good if it exists as a prop.

The excuse that religion is acceptable or even terrific because its people are not all bad has to admit that there is a dark side. Religion is not all good either and that is important. The excuse wants you to dwell on the good instead and that is dangerous and irresponsible and shows supporters of the faith have something to hide.

Generally bad

When a religion is called bad, you mean generally bad. You are not saying that every person in the religion for real or just carrying the label is necessarily intentionally bad. That would be ridiculous.

Every bad organisation can have okay or good people in it. But it can never have good people in it who know what they are doing. And you need to know what you are doing to pass as a credible representative of the religion or an emblem of what it is like. A child in a bad religion – supposing a child really should be given a religious label for example or a person who has been forced to comply with the badness is an example of what we mean by

good people in a bad religion.

If religious people are not bad intentionally that means little. Good intentions are not more important than the damage that happens or may happen. A doctor who thinks holy water cures cancer is doing a lot of harm unwittingly. Religious people not being all bad does not make them harmless or their enterprise worthy of praise.

Can't just dismiss the bad members

To say some people in a religion are good is to admit that the bad ones belong to it too and to raise the question: "Are the bad ones the faithful members not the good ones?" And to ask if there is something wrong with the religion that turns some people bad? What if one or both answers should be yes? It is also to ask if the good is enough to justify people staying in the religion.

Being in a religion that turns some bad is bad for the same reason as choosing bad friends is bad. To blame the bad person in a religion not the religion is to say that even if religion is to blame you will defend it. You are worse than the bad religionist or bad religion then. A truly good person will blame the system and the faith not the person if there has to be a choice. Both are to blame.

When a religion does harm, saying "Some members are bad but not all are" means nothing for not all are at the same stage of development in the religion. If you want to use irrelevant arguments to defend a religious system of power and doctrine then you are part of the problem when it does or preaches violence or if it would if it got the chance.

To say that a religion should not be condemned for the actions of a few is to dismiss the "bad" members and thus to refuse to deal with the problem sensibly. The religion has to be looked at as a whole. It is a whole.

